

Gillespie Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy October 2024

POLICY FOR ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

1. INTRODUCTION:

At Gillespie we believe that pupils from nursery through to year 6 must attend school regularly if they are to achieve. It is important for children to develop a positive attitude towards school, good habits of punctuality and regular attendance. We recognise that this can only be achieved through a close partnership with parents. Children need to see themselves as an important part of the school community and to value and respect school life.

It is the joint responsibility of parents/carers, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or are leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy has been reviewed and updated taking account of the *School Attendance Regulations 2024*

2. AIMS:

In setting out this policy we aim to:

1. Achieve over 96% whole school attendance
2. Reduce disruption of lessons by latecomers
3. Identify and minimise truancy or other unauthorised absences.
4. Ensure all children have every opportunity to achieve as well as they can.
5. Ensure children have equal access to the curriculum and are not deprived of this through poor attendance
6. Safeguard children by knowing their whereabouts thus lessening the chances of them being at risk

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF:

GOVERNING BODY

The governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is strongly promoted by the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Every three years or as required by legislation changes, review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Take a lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up to date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year or any changes;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording and analysing attendance data

SCHOOL LEADERSHIP TEAM

The school leadership team will:

- Be active in their whole-school approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;

- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness including regular policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy, procedures and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Appoint a senior manager to be the lead person for attendance taking responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision
- Report to the governing body each term on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings;
- Make referrals to the Access and Engagement Service (formerly EWS) where it is appropriate to escalate action.
- Make all reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of a pupil where they have not returned to school following an authorised absence or have been absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days.

TEACHERS AND SUPPORT STAFF

The school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance & punctuality to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement;
- Ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue;
- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily;
- Complete registers at the start of the morning session by 9.05am and complete again within ten minutes of the start of the afternoon session;
- Complete registers using the correct attendance and absence codes revised September 2024 as outlined in paragraphs 285 to 411 of the 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' document (as they are legal documents).

PARENTS/CARERS

We request that parents/carers:

- Carry out their statutory duty ensuring that children of compulsory school age receive full-time education. This means that they are responsible for ensuring that children attend regularly and stay at school unless alternative arrangements for their education are made;
- Ensure that children not of compulsory school age but fortunate to have a place at our nursery, attend regularly and are on time;
- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home;
- Ensure that children are at school by 8.55am each morning;

- Contact the school as early as possible before 9.30a.m if a child is going to be late or absent due to any unforeseen circumstances;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours;
- Let the school know in advance if a child has a pre-arranged appointment that cannot be made outside of school time;
- Complete in advance, an 'Application for leave of absence' form where they would like to take their child out of school. Parents/carers should understand that authorising any leave is the responsibility of the school and will only be given where circumstances are exceptional (see 4.4 - 4.6);
- Arrange family holidays outside of school terms. Holidays are not deemed to be 'exceptional circumstances' in most cases;
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.

4. CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE AND PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABSENCES

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

4.1 Persistent and severe absence

Pupils missing 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) are classified as persistently absent from school. Any pupil will be persistently absent when they have missed 38 sessions (19 days) during the academic year. The school work closely with families to reduce the number of pupils in this category.

Children who miss 50% or more of school and are absent from school more than they are present are deemed to be severely absent from school. In these cases, the school will work hard to establish the barriers to regular attendance and take every measure available to improve attendance.

4.2 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day of absence before 9.30. When the child returns to school they should bring a note from their parent/carer explaining the absence or alternatively an email can be sent to the office – this is for the school's records.

Where children have minor coughs and colds, parents are encouraged to bring them to school and will be contacted for pick up where minor conditions develop and worsen.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as an appointment card, hospital letter or a recent prescription.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where this is not possible, they should get the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Parents are encouraged to make appointments during the school day if absolutely necessary, between 9.30 and 1.00 to minimise recorded absences from school.

4.4 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil may be at risk of being removed from the admission register.

4.5 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents/carers should ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time.

Schools are **not obliged to authorise** any holidays during term time.

Parents/carers do not have the automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for this reason.

Requests for leave from school must be made in writing at least 4 weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel soon to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents/carers should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

The school will consider all requests for absence individually according to the particular individual circumstances of the case, which relate to the conflicting demands of the educational needs of the pupil with the circumstances surrounding the trip and the family. The school will take into account relevant factors such as:

- *Age of child*
- *The time of year proposed for the trip*
- *The nature and purpose of the trip*
- *The circumstances of the family and the wishes of the parents*
- *The distance being travelled and whether the trip is seen by the family as a rare event during the child's school career*
- *The duration of the proposed trip*
- *The overall attendance pattern of the child*
- *Why the trip could not be undertaken in the school holiday*

No one factor should be regarded as conclusive

Only in exceptional circumstances will the leave be recognised as authorised.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents/carers may be issued with a penalty notice.

Penalty Notices

From September 2024, the new National Framework for Penalty Notices came into force.

A penalty notice will now be considered if:

- any pupil has been taken out of school for a holiday without authorisation.
- A pupil has had 10 unauthorised sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10-week period. These unauthorised sessions can be e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 weeks. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years, e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the summer term and a further 8 within the autumn term.

Where the threshold is reached for any pupil, school will consider carefully each case individually and make judgements based on the given circumstances surrounding the child/children involved and their families.

4.6 Religious observance

Gillespie recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. One day authorised absence will typically be granted for religious observance. Parents/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school notification in advance.

4.7 Lateness

Poor punctuality is taken seriously and strongly discouraged. Pupils arriving late miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of lessons. This can reduce their chances of success. Poor punctuality can also cause social disruption as children may feel uncomfortable and embarrassed arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. One pupil arriving late can disrupt the teacher and the rest of the class, compromising everyone's learning.

Procedures followed

- Classroom registration begins at 8.55am and finishes at 9.05am. Pupils who arrive after this time will be marked late using either code (L) or (U);
- The late code (L) is entered in the register where a child is late before the register has closed for the session and the time of arrival recorded. Late codes are entered by either the class teacher or by the school office if registers have already been returned;
- Children arriving after 9.30am are marked in using code (U). This means the pupil arrived at school after the register has closed for the session;
- Where children are late three or more occasions (L) or (U) within two weeks, a 'late letter' is sent home. The times of arrival specified;
- Where lateness continues to be a concern following a letter home, parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the reasons for the lateness so that together the situation can be resolved as quickly as possible.

4.8 Children absent from education

Unexplainable and/or persistent absences from school for prolonged periods of time is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and can be a warning sign of a range of potential safeguarding concerns including leading to a child going missing from education. Early intervention using the schools sickness and absence procedures to respond to persistent absence can help prevent this risk.

4.9 Children Missing from Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

The School will maintain accurate and up to date admission and attendance registers to identify children at risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation or radicalisation, and to help prevent the risks of them going missing in the future.

Parents are required to provide three emergency contact numbers if possible and an absolute minimum of two.

The school takes advice from the DfE Statutory Guidance for LEAs 'Children missing education', Sept 2019 and follows the Children Missing Education Protocol set out in the Islington LEA publication 'Access to learning: Attendance Matters' Sept 2015 for reporting a pupil missing from

school. The procedure includes the requirement to record any incident, the action taken and the reason given for being missing. The School is required to inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the School's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

The School must exercise its duty under Section 175 of the education Act 2002 and section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 and ensure that its functions are discharged with regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

From the first day that a child does not attend school and there is no explanation or authorisation of the absence, the following steps are taken:

- The office will make contact with the parent/carer to seek reassurance that the child is safe at home.
- The outcome of the contact should be assessed by the School Attendance lead and if there are, any concerns a consultation with the school's designated safeguarding lead should take place to consider the child's vulnerability.

In the following circumstances, a referral to Children's Social Care and/or the Police should always be made promptly:

- The child may be the victim of a crime.
- The child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan.
- The child is subject of Section 47 enquiries (potential Police Protection or Emergency Protection Order).
- The child is looked after.
- There is a known person posing a risk to children in the household or in contact with the household.
- There is a history of the family moving frequently.
- There are serious issues of attendance.
- Islington's local protocol requires schools to notify the local authority, using the **Missing Pupil Notification Form (appendix 1)**, of any pupil who has been absent for **10 consecutive school days** without permission AND all efforts to engage the parents have failed to secure the pupils return to school.
- The local authority will investigate their absence and let school know whether the pupil still needs a place at the school. This will be done as quickly as possible to ensure that the place can be reallocated to another child as necessary. A pupil will be kept on roll until the local authority authorises their deletion from the school's register.

If a child is missing from school for four weeks and is then removed from roll, the LEA Children Missing Education Officer must be informed. In accordance with School attendance regulations 2024, the school must make a return to the local authority when a pupil's name is deleted from the admissions register

5. Daily attendance sharing with the DfE

One of the key changes from the 2024 school attendance regulations is the requirement for schools to share their daily attendance data with the Department for Education (DfE). All school must now:

Submit daily attendance figures: Schools are required to report their daily attendance figures to the DfE. This data submission is essential for monitoring attendance patterns and identifying areas that need additional support.

The easiest way to share attendance data is via Wonde.

Wonde connects directly to the schools MIS to extract and securely transfer this data automatically, each day. This will include any changes to the data from previous days.

6. RECOGNITION OF GOOD ATTENDANCE

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance we aim to reward good attendance by:

- Publishing class attendance and punctuality levels in newsletters home;
- Awarding annual individual certificates of attendance and prizes, for those children who achieve 98%+ attendance;
- Awarding weekly certificates and the school 'attendance cup' to the class who has achieved overall the best attendance in weekly assemblies;
- Awarding the 'Early Bird' certificate to the class who has been the most punctual each week;
- Awarding a prize to the class that achieves the best attendance rate across the year.

7. CHILDREN RETURNING TO SCHOOL AFTER LONG ABSENCES

Where children are returning to school after a long absence for whatever reason, they will be welcomed back into school and given positive support where necessary, to help them settle quickly and happily back into school life.

APPENDIX 1 Missing Pupil Alert

Where there is a risk to life or likelihood of serious immediate harm, professionals should report the case immediately to police, including dialling 999 if appropriate.

Islington's local protocol requires schools to notify the LA of any pupil who has been absent for ten consecutive school days or more without permission using the Missing Pupil Alert. In such cases, the pupil must be kept on roll until the LA authorises their deletion from the school's register.

Please ensure this form is typed (not handwritten) and all sections are completed.

1. PUPIL'S DETAILS	
Name:	Photo: <i>(In colour if available)</i>
Known as:	
DOB: Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female <input type="checkbox"/>	
Address:	
School:	
UPN: NCY:	
Nationality:	
Ethnicity:	
Religion:	
Pupil's contact details (if available): Mobile: E-Mail: Social Media:	
GP Details: GP Name: Surgery Address: Contact Number: Child's NHS Number:	If travel-card or bus pass details are available please provide the reference number:

Attendance Figure for This Academic Year:		Attendance Figure for Last Academic Year:	
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2. PARENT/CARER DETAILS	
PARENT/CARER 1	PARENT/CARER 2
Name:	Name:
Address:	Address:
Contact Number(s):	Contact Number(s):
E-Mail:	E-Mail:
Relationship:	Relationship:
Parental Responsibility: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Parental Responsibility: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Lives with Child: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Lives with Child: Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1. KNOWN SIBLINGS

NAME	DOB	SCHOOL

2. OTHER KNOWN CONTACTS

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	RELATIONSHIP

3. EMERGENCY CONTACT

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	RELATIONSHIP

4. AGENCY INVOLVEMENT

(E.g. Children's Social Care; Families First; Mental Health services; Youth Offending service etc.)

NAME	CONTACT DETAILS	AGENCY	TICK IF CURRENTLY INVOLVED
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>

5. DECLARATION

I confirm the pupil remains on the school roll in line with Islington's procedure for Missing Pupils.

Head teacher's signature

PLEASE COMPLETE THE RISK ASSESSMENT OVERLEAF AND RETURN TO
PupilServices@islington.gov.uk

Missing Pupil Risk Assessment Record

RISK NUMBER	Risk Factor	Please tick			
		CURRENT	PREVIOUS	NEVER	NOT KNOWN
1.	Has a Child Protection Plan	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2.	Is a Child in Need (CIN)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Is a Looked After Child (LAC)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4.	Needs essential medication/treatment (e.g. asthma inhaler, insulin etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5.	May not have the physical ability to interact safely with others or in an unknown environment (e.g. visually impaired, history of abuse or inappropriate adult/stranger relationships, SEN etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6.	Lacks reasonable awareness of the risks associated with running away (e.g. learning difficulty)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7.	Known to associate with adults or children who present a risk of harm e.g. Sexual Offenders, Offenders against children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8.	Mental illness or psychological disorder that may increase risk of harm to themselves or others	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9.	Drugs and/or alcohol dependency	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10.	Suspicion of abduction	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11.	Suspected suicide or self-harm	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12.	Involved in violent and/or racial incident or confrontation immediately prior to disappearance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13.	Concerns about state of mind e.g. unusual behaviour prior to disappearance or disappeared with no prior indication, or seemed troubled etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14.	Inclement weather conditions where exposure would seriously increase risk to health	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15.	Family/relationship problems or recent history of family conflict/abuse	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16.	Family employment problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17.	Family financial problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18.	School or college problems	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19.	Ongoing victim of bullying, harassment, or exploitation e.g. racial, sexual etc.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20.	Previously disappeared and suffered or was exposed to harm whilst missing	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
21.	Victim or potential victim, of forced marriage, FGM or trafficking, incl. for sexual exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
22.	Any known gang affiliations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
23.	At risk of radicalisation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
24.	At risk of sexual exploitation (CSE)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. SUMMARY		
Identified Risks Please provide additional details (if any) for the risks identified above.	RISK NUMBER	DETAILS
Other Risks Please comment on any other risks not covered above.		

7. CHRONOLOGY OF ACTIONS TAKEN			
DATE	CONTACT TYPE	WHO WAS CONTACTED	OUTCOME
<i>Example: 23/06/2017 Please delete</i>	<i>Telephone Call (01234 567 890)</i>	<i>Mr Joe Blogs (Dad)</i>	<i>Attendance Officer has attempted to call Mr Blogs on 01234 567 890. The phone rings with an abroad tone. Voice message has been left requesting a phone call back. – NO RESPONSE RECEIVED</i>

8. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

9. REFERRER DETAILS	
Completed by (full name)	
Signature	
Date	
Direct telephone number	
Email	
If the pupil returns to school, please call 020 7527 3747 immediately	

PLEASE ENSURE THE DECLARATION AND RISK ASSESSMENT ARE SIGNED AND RETURNED TO:

PupilServices@islington.gov.uk