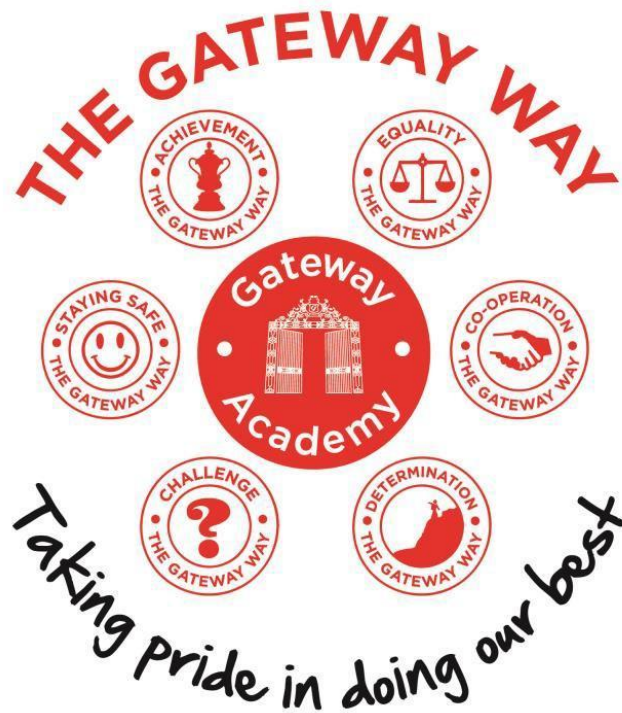


Gateway Academy



Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Lisa Breslin and Claire Cleary FGB 22/09/26
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Last reviewed on:	September 2026
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Next review due by:	September 2027
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GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Pupils' achievement is directly influenced by attendance and punctuality and suffers when they are unsatisfactory. Gateway Academy aims to encourage all pupils to achieve their potential through regular attendance and punctuality. Regular attendance and good punctuality are legal requirements and are essential for children to access a broad and balanced curriculum and to fulfil their educational potential. It is our policy to work with the Local Authority to ensure attendance rates are high and always improving. Poor attendance and punctuality is monitored and followed up swiftly.

AIMS OF THE POLICY

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#)

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- › Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- › Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- › [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- › [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- › The [Equality Act 2010](#)

It also refers to:

- › [School census guidance](#)
- › [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

- › [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- › [Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit](#)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing Board

They are responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the Headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy

CoHeadteachers

They are responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the deputy headteacher to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

They are responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes

- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

Mr Wood is the DSL for Attendance at Gateway Academy.

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day, advising when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Mr Wood

Registers

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once after lunchtime. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

The school day starts at 8:45am and ends at 3:15pm

We operate a soft start to the day for Key Stage 2 pupils, with doors opening at 8:35am. Key Stage 1 pupils line up with their teacher in the playground and enter the building together by 8:45am. Pupils must arrive in school and be sat down in their classroom by 8:45am.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible.

Absence due to illness may be authorised for up to 2 days. If the illness is serious enough to be longer than 2 days, we expect parents to seek medical advice. The school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card / text or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

When pupils are persistently absent with under 90% attendance; the school may request medical evidence of illness, consult with health professionals, and refer to the school nurse before authorising further absence.

Medical or dental appointments

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Where possible, the pupil should:

- Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment
- Wear school uniform to their appointment, to make it easier to return to school afterwards

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and Punctuality

Any pupil who arrives after 8:45am is given a late slip marked with the time they arrived. This helps the teachers know what time the pupil arrived. This will be recorded in minutes late on the register.

If the parent is present, they are given a letter regarding punctuality. If the parent is not present at the gate, they will be phoned to inform them that their child has arrived late to school. This is a safeguarding measure to ensure good communication between home and school.

Registers are closed at 9:00am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be manually registered at the office in the entrance. Arrival after 9:00am is classed as an unauthorised absence. Arrival after the lunchtime register is closed will count as a second unauthorised absence.

If there are 10 or more unauthorised absences in a rolling 10-week period then the local authority expects the school to refer for a fixed penalty notice fine.

If the number of unauthorised late sessions is reaching this threshold, the school will invite parents in to discuss how we can improve your child/children's punctuality.

After the meeting, if punctuality fails to improve, and threshold is met, the school will refer to the local authority to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Routine

Time	Action
8:35-8:45	School is open for a soft start. KS2 children go straight to class. KS1 children meet in the playground. Nursery and Reception children are dropped via the gate on Frampton Street.
8:45 – 9:00	Registration. If a child arrives after the registration but before 9:00 they are handed a late slip to give to their teacher with the minutes late recorded.
9:00	The register is closed.
From 9:00	The pupil is manually registered at the office in the entrance. Arrival after 9:00am is classed as an unauthorised absence

The Academy:

To register attendance and notify the Local Authority of Absence from school.

➤ Teachers are responsible for:

- Marking the register accurately and ensuring that children who come late are entered appropriately in accordance with Academy policy
- Requesting reasons for absence and entering these appropriately.
- Celebrating good attendance

➤ **The Senior Team are responsible for:**

- Developing an Academy policy
- Checking periodically to ensure registers are being entered correctly
- Following up absences that are causing concern
- Liaising with Family Help
- Making formal referrals to Family Help
- Organising rewards for good attendance
- Giving all parents, an update on children's attendance at the end of every half term.

➤ **The reception office:**

- Making first day contact when children are absent
- Will sign in any pupils who arrive late. After 9:00am, late arrivals will be noted on SIMS.
- Bringing concerns to the Senior Team

The Authority:

The Local Authority is responsible in law for enforcing the regular school attendance of registered pupils of compulsory school age. The Early Help team works together with schools and families to help ensure that attendance is satisfactory. The Early Help team will formally check attendance and will consider prosecuting parents in the magistrates' court where there is evidence of unauthorised absence.

Absence During Term Time

The CoHeadteachers will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The CoHeadteachers will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#).

These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the CoHeadteachers' discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours. As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

A leave of absence will not be granted just before and after a school holiday.

Any request should be submitted in writing in advance of the absence and not during. The Co-Headteachers may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Attendance contract

We use attendance contracts as a form of attendance support.

An attendance contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and the school to address irregular attendance at school. An attendance contract is not legally binding, but it provides a more formal route where previous support has not worked or would not have been appropriate.

Parents cannot be compelled to enter an attendance contract, and the school cannot agree an attendance contract in a parent's absence.

Where an attendance contract would be an appropriate form of support, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent (and pupil if they are old enough to understand) to discuss how we can work in partnership to improve the pupil's attendance.

Where parents fail to comply with an agreed attendance contract, the school may seek an alternative course of action. In the first instance, this will include discussions with the parents to seek explanations and determine whether the attendance contract remains useful. Where there is further non-compliance following these discussions, the school may take further action.

Penalty Notice Fines

The Co-Headteachers (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at **£160 if paid within 28 days**. This will be reduced to **£80 if paid within 21 days**.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of **£160 if paid within 28 days**.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the local authority may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis

- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period

Following Up Unexplained Absence

If a child fails to attend, the academy will follow these procedures:

- Absence phone calls and other messages are noted
- Information from registers, absence calls is brought together in order to identify children absent without explanation.
- 'First day call' procedure carried out for those children absent without explanation:
 - Calling everyone on the contact list until there is an answer
 - Leaving messages if there is a voicemail option
 - Noting an overseas ring tone (Has the family taken unauthorised holiday?)
 - Call the contact list at least twice
- If there is no reply, we consider whether any children have additional agency support, such as a social worker. If so we contact the agency.
- Make a prompt home visit.
- If there is still no answer we refer immediately to children's services / MASH / Police and request a welfare call.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority. This may involve working in partnership with different agencies and this could include our School Navigator, Children's Social services, the school nurse, CAMHS etc.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

Parents should consult the NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school?](#) when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary

Reporting to Parents

Every half term, the academy sends home a copy of their pupil's attendance record. This includes their current attendance percentage, the numbers of lates, the number of days absent so far this year, and the number of lessons missed.

Key to Attendance Percentage -

Attendance Percentage	Meaning
99% or better	Excellent
96% or better	Very Good
94% or better	Satisfactory
below 94%	Unsatisfactory
below 92%	Very Poor
below 90%	Great cause for concern

Academy attendance incentives

At the start of the academic year 'great attendance' is the focus of a class assembly. The **Early Bird** initiative is introduced to the children.

As part of this:

- At Friday's celebration assemblies, the class in a year group with the highest attendance and punctuality is awarded the attendance award. The winning class keeps the award for the week.
- The Attendance display in the atrium is updated every Friday afternoon.
- Details of the winning classes are published in the weekly newsletter.
- Every week, any child who has 100% attendance will be entered into a prize draw in the Celebration Assembly.
- At the end of every term, all children with 100% attendance and punctuality are awarded a certificate and an **attendance** badge.



Attendance & Loss of Nursery Place

If attendance and/or punctuality are low and /or falls below 90% parents will be asked to attend a meeting.

If, following a monitoring period, there is no improvement in attendance within an agreed period, then the child may lose their place. Parents will be notified of the loss of place in writing.

For more information or support about attendance, you can make contact via the school, with the following Attendance Champions –

Mr Wood, Deputy Headteacher

Ms McTaggart Assistant Headteacher

Miss El-Guennouni, Attendance Officer

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

E Safety Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
I	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

Absent – other authorised reasons

T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes

Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays