



Attendance Policy

June 2024

Approved by the Governing Body Strategy Group 27/06/24

**This Policy is due for renewal in Term 6
2025–26**

ATTENDANCE POLICY

OF

GODINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

SECTION ONE – INTRODUCTION

At Godinton Primary School, we want our children to be happy and keen to come in through the gates in the morning, ready to enjoy the exciting day ahead of them. Our school is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our children and regular attendance is critical if our children are to be successful and to benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

Our attendance target is 100%.

Ensuring regular and punctual attendance is very much a partnership between home and school. Godinton Primary School provides a supportive environment where regular and punctual attendance will:

- Give children the best possible start in life
- Help children make the most of educational opportunities
- Instill in children good timekeeping habits
- Prepare children for the world of work

Our school team works hard to build strong and trusting relationships with children and parents to support good attendance and to put the right support in place to remove any barriers to attendance, which are wide and complex and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Securing good attendance therefore cannot be seen in isolation and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with other aspects of school policy including: behaviour, bullying, Special educational needs and disability (SEND), pupil wellbeing and mental health and effective use of resources including pupil premium and requires the involvement of the whole school team.

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' (applies from 19 August 2024), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- 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

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school policies for Safeguarding (child protection) and Behaviour.

SECTION TWO – LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, ability and any special educational needs they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education elsewhere. Where parents register their child at a school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance by the school.

This policy is based on the Department for Education’s (DfE’s) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) 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 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil’s attendance: guidance for schools](#)

It should be read alongside additional statutory guidance documents including:

- [Children Missing Education](#) (2016)
- [Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions](#) (2015)
- [Suspension and permanent exclusions from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units](#) (2022)

SECTION THREE – ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

All members of the Godinton Primary School community (staff, parents, Governors and children) have the responsibility of supporting our children's positive attendance at school and ensuring that this continues to improve.

Jill Talbot, Headteacher, is the designated Senior Leader for Attendance (also known as the Senior Attendance Champion) and is responsible for leading, championing and improving attendance across the school.

Emily Clark (Admissions and Attendance Administrator) has overall responsibility for monitoring attendance issues and for the day-to-day management of attendance, including maintenance of the school registers.

Miss Talbot and Mrs Clark can be contacted via the following means:

Email: office@godinton.kent.sch.uk or headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk

Telephone: 01233 621616

Our team are available to support with all aspects of school attendance. If parents have a query about their child's attendance, such as requesting an absence report or an administrative issue they should contact Mrs Clark in the school office. If parents require any assistance or support in managing their child's attendance at school, please contact Miss Talbot or our Family Liaison Officer, Jacqui McGibney.

Full details of the roles and responsibilities of the following members of our school community and how they can help support a child's attendance at school, can be found in Appendix One of this policy.

- Headteacher – Miss Jill Talbot
- Senior Attendance Champion – Miss Talbot
- Admissions and Attendance Administrator – Mrs Clark
- Family Liaison Officer (FLO) and Pastoral Teaching Assistant – Mrs McGibney and Miss King
- Class Teachers
- Other Support Staff
- Governors

The responsibilities of the Local Authority in supporting good attendance at school is also outlined in Appendix One.

The responsibilities of parents and children in supporting positive attendance are outlined in Appendix One.

SECTION FOUR – RECORDING ATTENDANCE

4.1 Attendance Register

Godinton Primary School keeps an electronic register onto which all pupils are placed. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement under (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024).

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of school each day and then again after lunch to record attendance in the afternoon session. Attendance in the morning and afternoon equates to two sessions per day.

The school day starts at 8.50 a.m. (gates open at 8.35) and ends at 3.20 (3.10 for children in the Reception classes).

Children must arrive at school by 8.50 each day.

The register for the first session will take place at 8.50 and will remain open until 9.15. The register for the second session is taken at 12.40 for Years R and 1, remaining open until 12.50, at 1.00 for Years 2 and 3, remaining open until 1.10 and at 1.30 for Years 4, 5 and 6, remaining open until 1.40.

Registers are marked using the appropriate National attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. These codes can be found in Appendix Two of this policy.

Registers record whether every child is

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

We will also record,

- for children of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a child is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of inability to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Any amendments to the attendance register will include: the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made and the name of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry is kept on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

A child's parent must notify the school of the reason for an absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.50 a.m, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office, who can be contacted via the school absence line on 01233 621616.

Contacting the school on the first day of an absence is an essential safeguarding requirement so that all parties know of a child's whereabouts and that they are safe. Parents should update the school on any subsequent day of absence and inform the school when their child is returning. The school has a designated telephone line on which parents can leave a message to report a child's absence.

Illness will be marked as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or if there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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.

If children are sick or have diarrhoea, then they should not attend school for 48 hours.

4.3 Planned Absence

Parents should do all they can to arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school hours and a full day of absence for a local medical appointment would usually be unnecessary. If an appointment has to be made during the day, the child should attend school during the morning and be collected in time to go to the appointment. They then must return to school after their appointment if fit to do so.

Parents must inform the school of medical or dental appointments made for their child in advance by contacting the school office and should show any letters or appointment cards relating to this.

Parents must apply for other types of term time absence as far in advance as possible of the date of the requested absence. Any exceptional request for absence should be directed to the Headteacher. Further information about this is provided in section five.

4.4 Following Up Unexplained Absence

Safeguarding our children is of paramount importance, so when a child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending without reason, the school will take the following action:

- Call parents on the first day of absence by telephone. It is parents' responsibility to ensure that contact information is up to date and that the school is notified of any changes. If contact cannot be made with a parent, if possible, a telephone message will be left to explain that the child has not been registered as being present at school and to ask the parent to confirm that the child is safe. The school office will be persistent in calling parents until contact has been made and a reason for the absence ascertained. It may be necessary to contact one of the other emergency contacts held on record if parents cannot be contacted.
- Where there has been no communication from or with parents, letters or emails are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence. External agencies (such as the police) may be alerted or a home visit (by two members of staff) carried out if the school is unable to make contact with a parent whose child is absent.
- On a child's return to school, the parent must provide a written or verbal explanation for the absence, if this has not already been provided, in order for the school to ascertain whether an absence will be authorised or not. An absence will only be

authorised if a legitimate and acceptable reason has been provided by the parent. If no explanation is received, the school will telephone to request a reason for a child's absence from school. If the parent does not respond, a second call will be sent out. A ParentMail request for the parent to contact the school will also be made. If still no response is provided, then the child's absence is marked as unauthorised.

- The school is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation as a reason for granting an authorised absence; a letter or call from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. The school's Admissions and Attendance Administrator will review the given reason for a child's absence and if they feel the absence may warrant being unauthorised; they will refer it to the Headteacher for consideration.
- The school may ask for evidence to support the reason for an absence.
- The school reserves the right to carry out a home visit, if we are in any way unsure about a child's absence, regardless of how long this is for and whether or not a parent has been in communication with the school. This enables us to fulfil our safeguarding duties. Home visits will always be conducted by two members of staff.
- Any unexplained absences may be referred to the KCC School Liaison Officer for attendance.
- Where appropriate, the school will offer support to the pupil and / or their parents to help improve attendance (please see section seven for further information).
- The school will also identify whether the child would benefit from the involvement of wider partners such as Early Help, as quickly as possible and make any necessary referrals.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent.
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with the following action may be taken: issue of a notice to improve, issue of a penalty notice or other legal intervention. Please see section five for further information.

4.5 Lateness

Lateness is monitored by the school on a regular basis. We want to encourage punctuality in all our children so that they don't miss out on key early morning learning activities in the classroom. Arriving late can be very unsettling for a child and can impact on their wellbeing for the rest of the day.

A child who arrives late:

- Before the register closes at 9.15 will be marked at late, using the appropriate code (L).
- After the register has closed at 9.15, will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U) and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Parents must accompany children, who arrive after 8.50 a.m., to the school office and will be required to enter the reason for the lateness into the EntrySign monitor.

If a child arrives late without a parent, the parent will be contacted and asked to provide a reason for their child's lateness.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed will be discussed with parents and / or the School Liaison Officer for Attendance and measures put in place to support prompt attendance at school e.g. incentive chart, piece of work delivered by the school's FLO. Ongoing, persistent lateness could provide grounds for a Penalty Notice or prosecution. More information about Penalty Notices is provided in section five of this policy.

SECTION FIVE – AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities (e.g. some sporting events), or to attend other schools or settings e.g. Year 6 secondary school taster days.

With thirteen weeks of school holidays every year as well as weekends available to enjoy days out and special occasions, the expectation is that arrangements will be made so as not to impact on attendance at school.

The headteacher 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 include:

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

All requests for leave of absence are granted at the Headteacher's discretion. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. By 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Headteachers can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can also be used to determine the length of the authorised absence.

The following reasons are examples of absence that **will not** be authorised and are not considered to be exceptional circumstances:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing
- Confusion over school dates

- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Leisure activities e.g. trip to a theme park, shopping, theatre trip
- Family Holidays (with some very rare exceptions)
- Surprise holidays or bookings arranged by friends or family

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, removing the Head Teacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for a family holiday. Requests for holidays in term-time will therefore not be authorised.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted to the Headteacher as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 6 weeks before the absence. This should be done via letter or email. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher's decision is final. Parents will be notified in writing as to the Headteacher's decision. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as the school premises being closed.

Further information is provided in the document ‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance.’

5.2 Sanctions

At Godinton Primary school we want to create a culture where attendance at school is valued so that sanctions are only applied as a last resort. We want to support and promote positive school attendance so that children want to attend punctually and regularly.

Godinton Primary School will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

5.2.1 Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with the law introduced through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered.

A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during a rolling period of 100 possible school sessions (50 days of schooling) – these do not need to be consecutive.

Penalty notices can be issued for holiday absence. If holiday absence is not authorised and the absence is taken anyway, a penalty notice will be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during a rolling period of 100 possible school sessions (50 days of schooling) – these do not need to be consecutive.

In cases of holiday absence, a penalty notice will be issued per parent, per child, for example three siblings with 5 days of unauthorised absence, would result in each parent receiving three separate fines

A Penalty Notice can 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.)

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

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 school attendance for that child

- Whether further support, a notice to improve or other legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2020 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in June 2020.

Payment of a penalty notice must be made directly to the Local Authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The first time a penalty notice is issued for unauthorised term time holiday, or other unauthorised absence of 10 sessions in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the penalty will be £160 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three 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 could include prosecution through the Magistrate's Court.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

Working Together to Improve School Attendance provides statutory guidance for schools and Local Authorities regarding the issuing of penalty notices. This guidance has been updated and new measures come into force on 19th August 2024.

5.2.2 Notices to Improve

If the national threshold has been met and attendance support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school 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
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

5.2.3 Sanctions for Lateness

10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed (Lateness Code **U**) during a rolling period of 100 school sessions (50 school days) will lead to a Penalty Notice warning letter.

The Penalty Notice warning letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absences (Lateness code **U**) is to be recorded.

If unauthorised absence (Lateness Code **U**) is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)

When a penalty notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority may instigate court proceedings.

SECTION 6 – ATTENDANCE MONITORING

6.1 Monitoring Attendance

Attendance is monitored daily by all members of our school team. We are alert to children who may not be present at school for different reasons, to phone calls that may come into the school office or to things that children may say regarding their attendance. This may trigger informal responses of support on a day-to-day basis.

The Admissions and Attendance Administrator monitors attendance and absence data on a termly basis across the school and provides termly reports to the Headteacher on individual attendance, class attendance figures and persistent and severe absenteeism. Reporting and analysis takes place on the attendance of vulnerable groups such as children with Special Educational Needs (SEND), English as an additional language (EAL), Children in Care or those in receipt of pupil premium. This is so we know how best to help support children and families with school attendance.

The school has granted the DfE access to its management information system so that data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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

The school benchmarks attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against National and local statistics.

6.2 Analysing Attendance

Through monitoring and analysing attendance, the school is able to identify individual children, groups or cohorts that may need further support with their attendance and punctuality. Children whose absence may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence are identified.

The school looks at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence and develops strategies to explore these further.

6.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

Data and monitoring helps us to provide children and parents with the best possible support to improve school attendance.

Our school:

- Develops targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual children, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provides targeted support to the children it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence.
- Shares data (not at individual pupil level) with the Governing Body in each Headteacher report in order for Governors to understand the school's position regarding attendance.
- Shares data with class teachers, the Assistant Headteachers or the FLO to aid conversations with parents regarding attendance and to help put suitable support in place. Class attendance data is shared with class teachers on a regular basis so they can help identify patterns of attendance within their class.

6.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absenteeism

The National definitions of attendance are used at Godinton Primary School:

Persistent absence is where a pupil has missed 10% or more of school sessions.

Severe absence is where a pupil has missed 50% or more of school sessions.

Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

For all pupils at Godinton Primary, our staff will:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers.
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence.
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance (Miss Talbot – Headteacher).
- Be in tune with absences that may cause concern or times when children may not be happy about coming to school and take swift action to address this such as calls to parents by the class teacher or FLO.

For children at risk of becoming persistently absent, Godinton Primary School staff in addition will:

- Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance.
- Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance.

For Persistently absent pupils, Godinton Primary School staff will:

- Provide continued support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent
- and:
- Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.
 - Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future.
 - Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the School Liaison Officer assigned to the school from the Local Authority and through Targeting Support Meetings, identify ways in which children and their families can be further supported.
 - For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help referral and where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through Children's Social Services.
 - Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings.
 - If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners, including the KCC PRU Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best-placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners.

- Home visits may be made to support children in the home and to maintain positive links between home and school.

For severely absent pupils, Godinton Primary School will:

- Provide continued support as for persistently absent pupils and:
- Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the Local Authority.

Letters are sent out to parents to alert them to concerns about attendance and notifying them of the expectation for this to improve. Parents may be asked to attend meetings where reasons for poor attendance are discussed further with the Headteacher or FLO.

SECTION SEVEN – SUPPORTING GOOD ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

At Godinton Primary School, we strive to establish a culture where children want to come to school and are keen to arrive in the mornings. However, we recognise that good attendance can be challenging for some children and in these cases, we look at what we can do to help remove barriers to attending school. We are supportive and bespoke in our approach, putting the needs of the child at the centre of our support.

The measures outlined in section six help to support children in attending school and to attend on time. In addition to this we support all children with their attendance in the by putting in supportive measures often individualised which include but are not limited to the following:

- Friendly welcomes to the children coming into school in the morning from the Headteacher, Assistant Headteachers, EYFS staff and FLO on the gate to help children to cross the threshold into school.
- Making special arrangements for those who find coming into school challenging such as adopting a V.I.P route into school.
- Encouraging good attendance and punctuality through individual attendance charts and certificates throughout the year.
- 1:1 sessions with our pastoral support team to help address barriers to learning e.g. anxiety.
- Meet and Greets in the classroom to settle children into the day.
- Sharing attendance data and celebrating success through newsletters and displays in school so that children feel a sense of wanting to contribute to overall positive school attendance figures.

Specific groups of children within the school may also require additional support with their attendance.

Our team provide support for:

Cohorts of children with lower attendance than their peers by:

- Proactively using data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them.
- Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance.

Children with medical conditions (including mental health) or **SEND** with poor attendance by:

- Maintaining the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance.
- Implementing pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan. If applicable, the school will ensure that the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. This may require the involvement of the **SENCo** or **FLO**.
- Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.
- Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at **Governing Body** meetings and with the **Local Authority**.
- The school **Children with Health Needs who cannot Attend School Policy**. This outlines the specific approach that school will take to managing schooling for these pupils.

Children with a social worker by:

- Informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and working with outside agencies to provide support

Children with complex barriers to attendance by:

- Working with the **FLO** and pastoral support team.
- Involving outside agencies to help support.

Children who are returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence will be supported by the school's pastoral team and by agencies involved with the child e.g. hospital staff. This may include a phased return to school.

SECTION EIGHT – REDUCED TIMETABLES

8.1 Part Time Timetables

All children of compulsory school age are entitled to a full time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs.

Part time timetables should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent who the child usually lives with
- Have clear ambition and be part of the child's wider support, health care or reintegration plan
- Have regular review dates and a proposed end date to ensure that it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Be reported to KCC online.

The school operates a phased introduction to school for our new EYFS children over the first few weeks of term in order to help their transition to primary school. During this short period of time, children attend school on a part time basis.

8.2 Flexi-Schooling

Parents may make a request to the school for a flexi-school arrangement to be put in place. This request should clearly outline a parents reasons for wanting this arrangement for their child. In this circumstance, a child is usually enrolled at a school and attends on a part time basis with the remainder of their education usually taking place at home.

Agreement to put a flexi-school arrangement in place is at the Headteacher's discretion. The Headteacher will usually discuss this request with the parent in order to decide what they consider to be in the best interests of the child.

SECTION NINE – CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion and Attendance Service when appropriate. Please see the circumstances below:-

Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:-

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

SECTION TEN – STAFF TRAINING

Training is provided for staff as required in order to fulfil their role and responsibilities.

Attendance forms part of staff safeguarding induction.

All staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that they 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

Training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data.

School staff attend area network meetings in order to share good practice with colleagues from other schools and to receive attendance updates from the LA.

SECTION ELEVEN – INFORMING PARENTS ABOUT ATTENDANCE

Parents are informed three times a year of the child's attendance figure. This is sent out on school reports. Parents may request attendance information about their child at any time.

The school has an attendance information page for parents on the school website.

General attendance updates are provided regularly to parents via the school newsletter and using ParentMail.

Concerns about a child's attendance at any point will be communicated to parents verbally or via email or letter.

SECTION TWELVE – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At Godinton Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all members of our school community irrespective of race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnership or socio-economic background. We are determined to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality by challenging stereotypes and by creating an environment that champions respect for all. At Godinton Primary School, we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit us.

All school policies have an explicit aim of promoting equality and will be reviewed in terms of their contribution and effectiveness in achieving this aim.

Whilst this policy is applied fairly and consistently, the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance will be considered, along with the schools' obligations under the:

- Equality Act 2010: guidance – GOV.UK
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

SECTION THIRTEEN– CHILDREN IN CARE As for all our pupils, Godinton Primary School is committed to helping every Child in Care to achieve the highest standards they can. Staff are aware that Children in Care can be at risk of underachieving at school because they have experienced disruption to their family life and education. Some may have low expectations, poor emotional and psychological health and a lack of family support. Godinton Primary School will support Children in Care to achieve good attendance and punctuality.

SECTION FOURTEEN – MONITORING AND REVIEW

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher and by the Governing Body. This policy is reviewed every two years or sooner in response to revised National guidance.



APPENDIX ONE – FULL DETAILS OF THE ROELS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THOSE SUPPORTING POSITIVE ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

The Role and Responsibilities of School Governors

For all pupils at Godinton Primary School, the Governing Body will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, supporting the school to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures.
- Recognise and promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents
- Make sure that the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance, providing support and challenge
- Make sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance and the role that they play in supporting good attendance.

The Roles and Responsibilities of School Staff

The Role of the Headteacher

The headteacher is 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 fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising The School Admissions and Attendance Administrator to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND.
- 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 need
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents through all available channels

The Role of the Designated Senior Leader Responsible for Attendance

The designated Senior Leader (also known as the ‘Senior Attendance Champion’) at Godinton Primary School is the Headteacher, Miss Jill Talbot. In addition to the responsibilities above, the Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations, progress and processes in attendance
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- 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 to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with children and their parents

Miss Talbot can be contacted via email at headteacher@godinton.kent.sch.uk or via the school office 01233 621616.

The Role of the School Admissions and Attendance Administrator

The School Admissions and Attendance Administrator is responsible for:

- Ensuring that school registers are up to date and that appropriate attendance codes have been accurately recorded in line with statutory requirements
- Ensuring that calls or emails are made to parents to ascertain a child’s whereabouts on the first day of absence where no communication has been received.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data using benchmarking to identify areas of focus for improvement. Ensuring that attendance is shared with the DfE daily via Wonde.
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher (who is also the Senior Attendance Champion)
- Working with School Liaison Officers for Attendance to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- In the absence of the admissions and Attendance Administrator, the office team will undertake these duties.

The attendance officer is Mrs Emily Clark and can be contacted via the school office at 01233 621616 or office@godinton.kent.sch.uk

If parents have a query about their child’s attendance, such as requesting an absence report or an administrative issue, they should contact Mrs Clark in the school office.

The Role of Class Teachers

Class teachers, or the member of staff covering the class, are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis using the electronic register and submitting this to the school office.

Class teachers are also responsible for promoting good attendance within their class and sharing any concerns regarding attendance with the Headteacher or FLO.

They may be required to attend pastoral meetings regarding a child's attendance and to work with children and parents, under the guidance of the Senior Attendance Champion, to implement strategies to support positive school attendance.

The Role of the Family Liaison Officer (FLO)

If support is required in managing a child's attendance, parents should contact their child's teacher, our Family Liaison Officer (Jacqui McGibney) or the Headteacher.

If support is required in managing a child's attendance, parents should contact their child's teacher, our Family Liaison Officer (Jacqui McGibney) or the Headteacher.

The Role of Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers of all children must:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies.
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance.
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible.
- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal sup

The Role of the Local Authority

Our Local Authority (LA), Kent County Council (KCC), are committed to ensuring the good attendance of all children within the county. Godinton Primary School works pro-actively with the LA to ensure positive attendance outcomes for our children.

For all pupils, the LA will:

- Implement a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.

- Have a School Attendance Support Team (PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service – PIAS) that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
- Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance.
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners in cases where absence is persistent or severe.
- Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts, where appropriate, and education supervision orders in cases where children are persistently absent.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners.
- Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort).
- Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools.
- Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families where children are absent due to ongoing or long term medical issues.
- Ensuring suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education.
- Regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker in their area.
- Put in place personal education plans for looked-after children.
- Secure regular attendance of looked-after children as their corporate parent and provide advice and guidance about the importance of attendance to those services supporting pupils previously looked after.



APPENDIX TWO – ATTENDANCE CODES (WITH EFFECT FROM 19TH AUGUST 2024)

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	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: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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

APPENDIX THREE – INFORMATION LEAFLET FOR PARENTS

The school has a dedicated page on the school website where further information about attendance is available for parents.



Be an Attendance Hero...



Here

Everyday

Ready

On Time

WHY IS GOOD SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IMPORTANT?

Good school attendance gives your child the opportunity of success and helps develop skills for life. Your child should attend every day unless there is an unavoidable cause such as illness. Missing school damages a child's learning, disrupts routines and can impact on their wellbeing.

UPDATED SEPTEMBER 2024

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS UNWELL?

Children should not attend school if they are genuinely too unwell to do so. If they are sick or have diarrhoea, then they should not attend school for 48 hours. However, they can come to school if they have a mild cold, cough or runny nose. Further information about how to assess whether your child is well enough to attend school can be found in document on the attendance page of the school website. Parents must telephone the school as early as possible on the first morning of each absence to give the reason. The school has a designated telephone line for the reporting of absences. (Tel 01233 621616). Parents must ensure that their contact details in the school office are up to date and advise us as soon as possible if any details change.

Please make routine dentist and doctor appointments after school or during school holidays. If you have to make an appointment during school time, help your child to be at school for most of the day and let us know about the appointment.

You may be asked for medical documents or an appointment card if your child is regularly absent due to illness or dental/ medical appointments or if their absence due to illness causes a concern. If your child has an ongoing diagnosed illness, you are advised to let us know and to keep copies of letters from health professionals and also any appointment cards or prescriptions.

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF MY CHILD IS STRUGGLING TO ATTEND SCHOOL?

We want all our children to be happy and keen to come in through the gates in the morning, ready to enjoy the exciting day ahead of them. However, we recognise that sometimes, some children need support in attending school.

If your child is struggling to attend, parents must:

- Talk to your child – try to find out why
- Try to understand what is happening for your child and help them to resolve the problem.
- Talk to a member of our school staff (your child's teacher, our Family Liaison Officer (FLO), Mrs McGibney, a member of the Management Team) to discuss the situation and look for solutions. We may be able to signpost you to other agencies for further support such as the school nursing service or Early Help.

The school may be able to help with the administration of prescription medicines during the school day. Further details about medication in school is outlined in our medical needs policy, which is available on the school website, alternatively, please contact the school office.

We can also work with our Local Authority appointed, School Liaison Officer to help with your child's attendance and look for further strategies to help improve their attendance.

WHAT IF I WANT TO GO ON HOLIDAY DURING TERM TIME?

Holidays in term time are not authorised unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Please refer to the school's attendance policy for further details. Please be honest about your intentions; you must always ask permission from the Headteacher if you are intending on taking your child out of school for the purpose of holiday.

Dates of school holidays are always issued a year in advance and are available on the school website, enabling parents to plan ahead.

You might be at risk of a penalty notice if you go on holiday in term time and the absence is not authorised. New penalty notice rules come into force in August 2024 and see a sharp increase in fines for unauthorised absence.

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE AND THE LAW

It is important parents and carers promote regular school attendance, understand their responsibilities and the consequences of their child having absence from school.

Parents and carers commit an offence if a child does not attend school regularly and the absence is not agreed by the school (i.e. the absence is unauthorised). A child's unauthorised absence from school could result in one of the following:

1. Penalty Notice

The penalty is £80 payable (per parent, per child) within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between 22 and 28 days. A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution; it does not require a court appearance, but still aims to improve school attendance. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

Penalty notices may be issued by the Local Authority, where a child has 10 or more sessions (1 day=2 sessions) of unauthorised absence within a 50 school day period, These days do not have to be consecutive.

Steep rises in penalty notices come into force in August 2024.

2. Prosecution

Under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Prosecution could result in a criminal record and fines of up to £2500 and / or 3 months imprisonment. A range of other disposals are also available such as parenting orders or community sentences.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY CHILD'S PUNCTUALITY?

The school gates open at 8.35 a.m. for early morning work and close at 8.50. All children must be in school by 8.50 a.m. Arriving late can be immensely unsettling and can impact on a child's wellbeing for the rest of the day. They also miss out on learning opportunities.

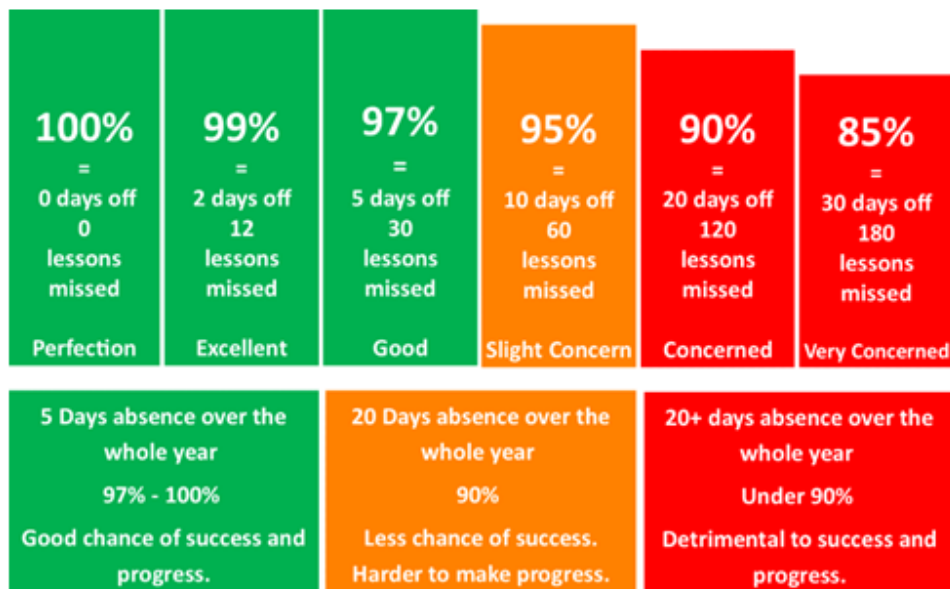
In order to help your child arrive on time...

- Make sure your child gets up in good time to have breakfast.
- Encourage your child to pack their bag and lay out their clothes the night before.
- Give yourself enough time to travel to school, ensuring that you make allowances for possible traffic delays. Remember that traffic is always heavier on wet days, so walking to school is far more reliable. Please remember that if you do drive to school, park at Chimney's car park.
- Walking to school means you are better able to gauge how long your journey will take.

The school runs a Breakfast Club from 7.50 a.m every day of the week. The children are able to have breakfast and enjoy a range of different activities. For details about availability of places and charges, please contact our Breakfast Club team breakfastclub@godinton.kent.sch.uk

IMPACT OF POOR ATTENDANCE

Poor attendance soon builds up and will have an impact on your children's academic progress and wellbeing.



**HELP YOUR CHILD TO BE AN ATTENDANCE HERO AND REMEMBER,
EVERY SCHOOL DAY COUNTS**