



Attendance Policy

Author/Person Responsible	<i>Headteacher</i>
Date of Ratification	<i>Sep 2024</i>
Review Group	<i>Local Governing Board</i>
Ratification Group	<i>Local governing Board</i>
Review Frequency	<i>Every 2 years</i> <i>Subject to local education authority and/or national policy change</i>
Review Date	<i>Sep 2025</i>
Previous Review Amendments/Notes	<i>Jan 2023 - updating</i> <i>Feb 2021 - updating</i> <i>Jan 2019 – Re-write</i> <i>Oct 2017</i> <i>May 2016</i> <i>Feb 2015</i> <i>January 2014</i> <i>Nov 2013 – Re-write.</i>
Related Policies	<i>Medical Needs Policy, Inclusion Policy.</i>
Chair of Committee Signature	



Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) Part 1: EIA Screening

Policies, Procedures or Practices:	Attendance	DATE:	January 2014
EIA CARRIED OUT BY:	S Botten	EIA APPROVED BY:	S Botten

Groups that may be affected:

Are there concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for a positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly; issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		X
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication)	X – Considered within the policy.	
Gender reassignment (transsexual)		X
Marriage and civil partnership		X
Pregnancy and maternity		X
Racial groups (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		X
Religion or belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)	X – Considered within the policy	
Sex (male, female)		X
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		X

- Any adverse impacts are explored in a Full Impact Assessment.



Blackhorse Primary School Attendance Policy

1. Rationale

- 1.1 Regular attendance at school is essential to each child's academic success and life-chances. Research links attendance with achievement, indicating that even occasional broken weeks can have a negative effect. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. In promoting good attendance it is also hoped that this will lead to the development of habits of good attendance and punctuality for the future. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 **Regular school attendance** is essential to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils. By `regular` our policy is that all pupils attend each and every day that they are expected to attend. There may be exceptional circumstances when absences may be agreed in line with national attendance code guidance.
- 1.3 **Health Needs and attendance.** About 60 % of all register absence marks relate to illness codes. In order to ensure health needs are addressed we will take full account of the health needs policy as set out in the following link:
<https://find-information-for-adults-children-families.southglos.gov.uk/kb5/southglos/directory/advice.page?id=Sp7puUlj3Ek>

2 Purposes

- 2.1 To ensure that parents/carers understand their duties to see that their children are present at school, for the morning and afternoon sessions, on the days that the school is open for pupils except where circumstances are deemed to constitute an authorised absence (see 3.3)
- 2.2 To ensure that teachers and other school staff are aware of the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence and the procedures for recording and reporting such occurrences.
- 2.3 To enable action to be taken quickly where unexplained absence or regular lateness occurs.
- 2.4 To ensure that officers of the Local Education Authority are informed where necessary so that they can fulfil their statutory obligations.



3 Registration Guidelines

3.1 Attendance registration. We have a legal duty to register all pupils in the attendance register in the morning and afternoon. We will code according to national guidelines. Where there is a pattern of absence and no clear supporting evidence of acceptable reasons for absence we will mark these as unauthorised. (See 'health and attendance').

3.2 The registration period will be deemed to be:

REC 8:50 am to 9:00 am and 1:00 to 1:10pm

KS1 8:40 am to 8:50 am and 1:00 to 1:10pm

Y3 8:45 am to 8:55 am and 1:00 to 1:10pm

KS2 8:45 am to 8:55 am and 1:30pm to 1.40 pm

After these times the registers will be deemed to be closed.

3.3 Any arrival the register closes will be regarded as late and marked accordingly using the (L) code. Arrivals after 9.15 am will be recorded as unauthorised (U) code. Pupils will be recorded as being present in school if arriving after 9:15am by being recorded in the 'Late Book'. An entry for that child will be made in the Late Book kept in reception and will be dated, timed and any reason given recorded. It will be available for inspection by the Educational Welfare Service and used to reconcile the class register in the event of a school evacuation or fire drill.

3.4 Persistent lateness: We believe that a pupil arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. Arriving late can be unsettling for the pupil and may cause classroom disruption. Parents who bring children to school persistently late will be invited to attend a School Attendance meeting and could be liable for a fixed penalty notice if the threshold is met. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

3.5 First Day of Absence Call: It is essential that parents provide an explanation as to why their child is absent from school as early in the school day as possible so that the school knows that the child is safe and hasn't been injured or abducted if walking to school alone. We will regularly request updates of parent-carer contact information. Adults who have day to day care of a pupil are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance. We will ensure that we know where children are via our First Day Absence procedure outlined below:

- Parents have a responsibility to call the school before school and leave a message on the office answering machine/ or via the Arbor App or email, to let the school know if a child is absent from school on that day, along with the reason for this absence. A



note will be made on the digital register next to the absence mark explaining the absence.

- **Should a parent not ring the school**, before 9:30am the school office will send a text to remind the parent that they need to call. They will send a second text 30 minutes later. Should neither text be responded to, the school office will call the parent and ask for an explanation for the absence. *Parents should not rely on the office phoning them as this wastes valuable administration time.*
- **Should the parent not answer the phone**, other contact numbers will be tried to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- **Should the parent still not be contactable**, the Headteacher will assess the risk to that child based on evidence available. The school will then either conduct a home visit, or ask Social Services or the police to do so, to establish that the child is safe.

4. Health and Attendance

Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence with supporting information (for example repeat reference to medical aspects by young person, parent carer, prescription information, medical appointment cards, information from other health professionals) we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with the South Gloucestershire Council Medical Needs Policy <https://find-information-for-adults-children-families.southglos.gov.uk/kb5/southglos/directory/advice.page?id=Sp7puUlj3Ek>

- 4.1 Where there are occasional absences such as for sickness and diarrhoea there is no requirement for medical supporting information. For repeat absences we will follow government guidance and agree to absences where there is appropriate medical supporting information.
- 4.2 Where a parent/ carer maintains that absences are regularly the result of ill-health, yet no evidence of this is provided, the school may choose to not automatically authorise such absences unless there is medical evidence to do so.
- 4.3 Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork, examinations or variable moods. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly - in many instances, attendance at school may serve to help with the underlying issue as being away from school might exacerbate it, and a prolonged period of absence may heighten anxious feelings about attending in future.
- 4.4 Some pupils face more complex barriers to attendance. This can include pupils who have long term physical or mental health conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities (SEND). Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as it is for any other pupil but additional support may need to be provided. There is a comprehensive approach led by our Inclusion Lead and SENDCO for these children and plans will be put in place where necessary.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

- 5.1 The decision to authorise an absence is made by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right for an absence to be authorised.



5.2 Absence can be authorised if:

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs so that the pupil could take place in a religious observance set apart by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs.
- Taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad: in line with a licence issued by a local authority or Justice of the Peace or a body of persons approval (BOPA).
- Attending an interview: for entry into another educational institution or for future employment where requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with.
- Study leave: for public examinations, as agreed in advance with a parent the pupil normally lives with. Please note this does not include any internal examinations such as mocks as study leave should not be granted in such cases.
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable: where the pupil is of compulsory school age, both the parent who the pupil normally lives with and school agree the pupil should temporarily be educated on a part-time basis for exceptional reasons and have agreed the times and dates when the pupil will be expected to attend school as part of that timetable.
- Exceptional circumstances: All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. It must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.
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5.3 Absence will be counted as unauthorised if:

- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday.
- No explanation is forthcoming. The school should be informed on the first day of any absence and the reason and expected length of absence given.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil stays at home to mind the house or look after siblings.
- The pupil is shopping during school hours.
- The pupil is absent for unexceptional special occasions.

5.4 The 2024 Working Together to improve school attendance document requires parents and carers to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified and where there are unauthorised absences we will seek to engage with parents-carers and the young person. Where efforts to address attendance have not led to a reduction in unauthorised absence consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

6. Penalty Notices:

6.1 In cases where parents or carers take their child on holiday during term time we will follow the Statutory Guidance. Penalty Notices will be requested by Blackhorse Primary and issued by the Local Authority to the parents/carers of statutory school age children, per parent, per child. For



example: two children in a family absent from school for a leave of absence may result in each parent receiving a Penalty Notice for each child. The rules mean you will no longer be able to take your child out of school for one week's holiday without a penalty notice being issued.

- 6.1 The national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to 5 school days) within a rolling 10 school week period for when a penalty notice must be considered.
1. From August 2024 there will be an increase in the penalty fine from £60 to £80 if paid in 21 days. If the fine is not paid by the first 21 days, it will rise to £160 if paid within 28 days of being issued.
 2. If a second penalty fine is issued to the same parent for the same child within a 3-year rolling period, the fine will automatically rise to £160 with no option to pay the lower rate of £80.
 3. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3-year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider other enforcement options available to them.
- 6.2 Other than for holidays in term time, the decision regarding the issue of a Penalty Notice will be taken as part of the legal process between the school and local authority (i.e. at Attendance Panels and Reviews).

7 Parental Engagement regarding attendance:

- 7.1 We believe regular attendance is so important in ensuring best outcomes for our pupils that we will review our attendance performance each term. We will regularly look at the pupils where there is a pattern of absence. Where a child has a pattern of Broken Weeks we will contact parents and may arrange to meet and review progress. There is clear national evidence that children who are on Free School Meals attend less than pupils as a whole. We will ensure that support to ensure attendance of all pupils who are on FSM is prioritised. The school will discuss attendance concerns with parents at the earliest opportunity as working in partnership is the most effective way to improve attendance.
- 7.2 **Appendix 1** shows the action that will be taken to engage with parents, initially through informal discussions or a standard awareness raising letter, then through more formal School Attendance Plan Meetings and School Attendance Panel meeting, where:
- there are five broken or incomplete weeks in each old-style term (Autumn, Spring, Summer).
A broken week is one where there is at least one late or absence mark in the register;
 - attendance is below 90% over a term;
 - there have been repeat late or U code marks with or without other attendance concerns.

8 Removal from Roll

- 8.1 There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.



- 8.2 If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.
- 8.3 If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Police and the Access and Response Team immediately.
- 8.4 If the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school, they will update **Arbor** Management Information System (MIS). Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.
- 8.5 If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team immediately. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Policy <http://www.southglos.gov.uk/education-and-learning/schools-and-education/behaviour-and-attendance/children-missing-education/>

9 Part-time timetables

- 9.1 All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs and this decision is made by the Head Teacher in consultation with external agencies. A part time timetable is time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed every two weeks within the time limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C2).

10 Attendance Data

- 10.1 Whole School Attendance Data is shared with the Governing Body as part of the Headteacher's Report and is published on the school website annually.
- 10.2 Targets to improve attendance are set by the Governing Body annually.
- 10.3 There is a named Attendance Governor who monitors the school's attendance procedures along with the Headteacher.

Appendix 1 - STAGES OF PARENTAL CONTACT:

STAGE	THRESHOLD	CONTACT/ ACTION
Stage 1	Where there are no prior concerns regarding attendance in previous academic year:	Attendance Letter 1 - explaining that attendance has fallen below the school's expected threshold, offering support and informing parents that



	<p>Year to date broken weeks greater than 5% OR 5 or more broken weeks in an old-style term (e.g. T1-2, T3-4, T5-6),</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p><i>Attendance less than 95% with no clear, valid explanation (e.g. single illness).</i></p>	<p><i>attendance will be monitored more closely for the next two terms.</i></p>
Stage 2	<p>Two terms or more > 5% broken weeks</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p><i>Attendance less than 95% with no clear, valid explanation (e.g. single illness).</i></p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p><i>Attendance less than 95% AND >5% or more broken weeks in the previous academic year.</i></p>	<p>‘School Attendance Plan Meeting’ held with parents & HT/. DHT and/or Education Welfare Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • set attendance targets • consider creation of Individual Health care plan • notify parents of possible Fixed Penalty Notice. • Set review period
Stage 3	<p>Continued broken weeks AND/ OR insufficient improvement in attendance since last School Attendance Meeting.</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Attendance less than 90% AND/ OR 10 or more broken weeks in the <u>previous academic year</u> despite School Attendance Meetings during this period.</p>	<p>Further School Attendance Plan Meeting with HT and/or Education Welfare Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • discuss impact of missed learning • investigate reasons for absence and solutions • explain final, short review period before start of legal process (Attendance Contract Meeting). • notify parents of possible Fixed Penalty Notice.
Stage 4	<p>Continued broken weeks AND/ OR insufficient improvement in attendance since final School Attendance Meeting</p> <p>AND/ OR</p> <p>Attendance less than 90% AND/ OR 10 or more broken weeks in the <u>previous academic year</u></p>	<p>Attendance Contract Meeting Held.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advise parent/carer that a contract meeting will take place. • School Attendance contract meeting takes



	despite <u>final</u> School Attendance Meetings during this period.	<p>place (Letter sent to arrange)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents warned about possible legal action if attendance doesn't improve.
Stage 5	If no improvement after 4 weeks of Attendance Contract Meeting.,	<p>Attendance Panel review chaired by LA representative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LA considers beginning legal process for non-attendance.