

St White's Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy - Pupils

Date of Review: January 2025

Date of Next Review: January 2027

Signed, Chair of Governors:

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Summary of Changes:

Date	Page/ Section	Text Added	Text Removed	Reason & approval
April 2024	12.8	Additional section regarding parental disputes over collection		HT
September 2024		Revision regarding new penalty notice code of conduct and clarification around authorised absence		Change to Penalty Protocol. HT, Governors
January 2025	2.4, 6.2.3, 6.3	Revision to include information about Notice to Improve		New Notice to Improve protocol HT
April 2026		Revision to include required good level of attendance to represent the school at sporting events		HT

1. Introduction – St White's School Attendance and Punctuality Policy - Pupils

Introduction

The school's vision is to be a beacon of excellence, delivering such a high level of education that we are sought out in the area. For our pupils to be "Always Learning" so that they leave this school, not only secondary ready, but life-ready, we believe that it is vital that pupils attend school regularly. Only then will they be able to reap the full benefits from their education and achieve their potential.

Regular Attendance

The level of attendance that St White's School aims to achieve is 100% with no unauthorised absences. The Education Act 1944 and the Education Act 1996 require pupils to attend school regularly. St White's Primary School defines regular attendance as an expectation that pupils attend every session available to them, unless the reason for absence is one that meets the school's criteria for authorising absences. The only exceptions are for authorised reasons such as sickness absence and isolation as required by DfE expectations.

2. Aims of The Policy

PREVENTION	INTERVENTION	TARGETTED SUPPORT
• High-expectations • High-quality, engaging curriculum including a wide range of enrichment opportunities • Wide variety of Clubs • Engaging educational Trips • A variety of rewards including individual badges, weekly class certificates, 100% attenders wall • Letters home to celebrate improved attendance • Senior leaders take attendance phone calls daily • Regularly inform parents of children's attendance. • Transition meetings	• Clear Policy • Regular monitoring • Targeted and timely letters • Meetings to share information and support • Penalties for holidays in line with guidance • Involvement of Educational Inclusion team as necessary to support • Daily contact by 10am to check attendance • Where necessary, home visits by school staff	• Support Packages • Formal Intervention • Involvement of GCC legal and/or representatives of Inclusion Team • Attendance contracts • Notice to improve • Legal Sanctions as advised

This policy will make reference to:

- *Working together to improve school attendance* ***https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf***
- Guidance for Schools: Securing Regular and Punctual Attendance
- *Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police*
- *Keeping Children Safe in Education*
- *Working together to Safeguard Pupils*
- GCC Code of conduct for issuing education penalty notices
- *Home Education Information for Parents in Gloucestershire available here: https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/home-education/*
- *LA Guidance Schools: Supporting Children with Medical Needs*
- *DfE Preventing and Tackling Bullying*

2.1 To support the attendance policy, the school will:

- Treat attendance as a priority.
- Aim for the target of 100% attendance for every child.
- Provide a safe, happy and stimulating environment for all pupils so that they feel valued and welcomed and know that their presence in school is important.
- Promote good attendance at every opportunity, including at parent/carer consultation evenings and other meetings, at staff induction, in newsletters, in assemblies, on notice boards and on the website.
- Always ensure that there is telephone contact on the first day of absence.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance.
- Keep parents/carers regularly informed of their child's attendance levels.
- Make good use of attendance data by specific analysis. Analyse data and respond by targeting support for families and using county and national policies to ensure the school and parents adhere to their responsibilities.
- Notify Governors at each full governing body meeting of attendance levels and what the school is doing to improve them.

2.2 Impact

- The school's attendance exceeds that of local and National comparator schools and is always striving to continue to improve.
- The school has positive feedback from the school community as well as outside agencies such as Ofsted and the local authority regarding attendance.

2.3 Responsibilities

2.3.1 Parents/carers will:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time, is appropriately dressed and equipped and in a fit state to learn.

- Bring their child to the reception desk to sign in, if they are late after registration closes at 8.45.
- Let the school know, by telephoning or emailing the school office before 9.00 am, on the first day of absence from school, why their child is absent and when they are expected to return.
- Let the school know if they are having difficulty with attendance so that early help and support can be offered.
- Collect their child promptly from school at 3:15pm or adhere to the designated time of collection for after school clubs or wrap around care.
- Inform the school office, as soon as possible, if they are going to be late collecting a child for any reason, and agree to any relevant wrap around care and fees if required.
- Inform the school of arrangements that they make in relation to:
    - Designated people who have responsibility for collecting children at the end of the day, whether that is at 3:15pm or after a club and/or wrap around care;
    - Permission that they give for their children to walk home independently (year 5 and 6 children) either at the end of the school day, or after clubs and/or wrap around care.
- Seek permission from school, prior to any absence that is not medical, in writing.
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.
- Notify school if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.

2.3.2 School will:

- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a high priority.
- Be consistent in their attendance practices.
- Make suitable arrangements for the safe, daily reception of pupils.
- Keep and mark registers accurately. Where any amendment is made to the attendance register, it will include details of the original and amended entries, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the person amending it.
- Follow up any unexplained absences.
- Ensure that all staff understand the importance of good attendance by pupils and use this information when reporting or discussing their progress with parents.
- Ensure that all staff are clear about what to do if a pupil is absent from school, including when to report a child missing in education (CME).
- Ensure that parents provide information in relation to:
    - Designated adults who have permission to collect the children;
    - Permission that they give for their children to walk home independently (year 5 and 6 pupils) either at the end of the school day, or after clubs and/or wrap around care.
- Ensure that staff challenge if an adult other than designated adults arrive to collect children and do not allow them to take children until confirmation is ascertained from the parent and their permission given.

- Retain children if their understanding of arrangements in respect of collection, or walking home alone, are different to the records that the school holds until this has been confirmed by the family.
- Take the child to the office if they are not collected before 3:30pm, and once checked with contacts, put them in Wrap Around and charge the parent for this session if not collected immediately.
- Follow the key principles and guidance set out in the GCC Primary School Absence Advice
- Notify parents/carers, regularly of their child's attendance levels.
- Notify the Local Authority (Education Inclusion Service) of pupils who have poor attendance, leave school to be educated at home, go missing, or are suspended or excluded.
- Share attendance information directly with the LA and the Department for Education.

2.4 The Headteacher (Senior Attendance Champion) will:

- Champion improving attendance across the school and set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Ensure that registers are kept for both sessions of the school day, that the coding and recording is accurate (Statutory)
- Communicate with the LA to report:
    - Deletions from the register (Statutory)
    - 10+ days continuous unauthorised absence (Statutory)
    - Pupils on part-time timetables
- Ensure that everybody at school treats attendance as a high priority.
- Promote the importance of good attendance to staff, pupils and their parents/carers.
- Oversee attendance procedures.
- Be the lead professional and hold regular attendance meetings with the attendance officer
- Be available to discuss attendance concerns with pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Remind parents regularly, of attendance procedures.
- Analyse attendance data and report regularly on attendance information to the governing body and other stakeholders and what the school is doing to continually improve the school's attendance rates.
- Challenge poor attendance and use guidance and support from a range of agencies to hold parents to account in relation to their child's attendance.
- Where there is a lack of engagement, this includes holding informal and formal meetings with parents, agreeing attendance contracts with families and where necessary requesting notices to improve from GCC.

2.5 Governors will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

- Regularly review attendance data, discussing and challenging trends, and helping school leaders focus efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3. Registration

3.1 The school has a responsibility to ensure that all stakeholders are fully aware of the school hours:

- The school gates open at 8.30am, classroom doors open at 8.35am and close at 8.45am. Children arriving after 8.45am will be recorded as late (L). Children arriving after 9.15 am will be recorded as unauthorised absence (U). School finishes at 3.15pm.

3.2 The school has a duty of care to ensure all children are safe during school hours. Therefore, school must:

- Keep up to date attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll.
- Ensure that the class teacher calls the register twice a day so that every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site in accordance with the instructions set out on SIMS.
- Ensure that classroom doors are unlocked for registration and then locked at 8:45am.
- Ensure that staff take registration between 8.35 a.m. and 8.45 a.m. for the morning session and at 1pm (EYFS and KS1) and 1:10pm (KS2).
- Use approved codes, to show whether an absence is authorised or not.
- Register pupils electronically.
- When this is not possible, the office must be informed by 9.00am so that attendance can be recorded, including absences or late arrivals.
- Ensure that if a child has not been marked for morning registration between 8.35am and 8.45am that the school makes concerted attempts to contact parents/carers as soon as possible.

3.3 Pupils arriving after the registration period is over will be marked with an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness, when they will be marked with an authorised absence mark. Failure by parents to make contact with the school will result in an unauthorised absence and may result in further action to ensure the child is safe.

3.4 Absence, legally, has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised and reported on to the DfE and in some circumstances to the LA. Only the school can decide whether an absence is authorised or not and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

4 Authorised Absence

4.1 Is when a pupil:

- Is, in exceptional circumstances, absent with the prior permission of the school
- Is too unwell to attend school or is attending a medical or dental appointment
- Is away for a day set aside by their parent's religion for religious observance
- Has suffered a family bereavement
- Has been suspended
- Is of traveller parents, who are travelling in connection with their work.

It is the Head Teacher who decides whether an application for absence is classed as exceptional circumstances. Parents may be asked to provide proof of the reason for absence, and the Head will take into account the child's past attendance record in making the decision. This means, for example, that absence to attend the wedding of a close family member may be granted for a child with good attendance, but is not likely to be authorised for a child who has already had any unauthorised absence.

4.2 An approved educational activity is not recorded as an absence and will be marked when a pupil is on a school/educational visit, is attending an approved off-site activity, or is receiving special off-site tuition.

5 Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Is when a pupil:

- Is absent and no explanation or an unacceptable explanation is offered by the parent/carer.
- There is evidence to suggest that the explanation given by parents is untrue. In this case, the evidence will (where possible) be shared with parents so they understand the school's decision. Evidence may be gathered, for instance, by attending the house if parents report that a child is unwell when the school has reason to believe that they are on holiday.
- Arrives after the registration period has closed without an acceptable reason.
- Is away from school for any absence not authorised by the head teacher.

6 Holidays in Term Time and Penalty Notices

6.1 Holidays in Term Time Education *(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006*:

6.1.1 The Government states that there is no right to holiday in term time and has removed the phrase, 'up to ten days holiday, in special circumstances', from the Education Act 2006.

6.1.2 The law states that leave of absence may only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

6.1.3 Following changes to the 2006 Education Act, which took effect from 1 September 2013, all schools - including St White's Primary School - are not allowed to authorise any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

6.1.4 An application must be made in advance in writing. Any request made for a holiday during term time will be reviewed and if it does not meet the definition of exceptional circumstances, it will be declined and the pupil's attendance record will be marked as 'unauthorised' should the holiday still take place. The school will write to the parent/carer to confirm this and advise of the current guidelines regarding prosecution.

6.1.5 The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met. Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the LA Penalty Notice Code of Conduct: Attendance and absence from school | Gloucestershire County Council If issued, each parent must pay £80 per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days, the LA can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice – note there is no right of appeal in court by parents against a fixed penalty notice. The national framework for penalty notices sets out that a maximum of 2 penalty notices per child, per parent can be issued within a rolling 3-year period (the second one being payable at £160 with no option to reduce the fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the LA will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

6.1.6 For the purposes of education law, the department of education considers a 'parent' to include:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person - this could be an adoptive parent, a step-parent, guardian or other relative
- any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. they live with and look after the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

6.1.7 This policy will be reviewed on receipt of updated guidance from the DfE or Local Authority.

6.2 Other Penalty Notices

6.2.1 A penalty notice may be issued where an excluded or suspended pupil is found in a public place during school hours on a school day.

6.2.2 A penalty notice may be issued for persistent lateness of a pupil arriving at school after the registers have closed (recorded as Code U on the school attendance register). The school should issue a letter to parents warning that if there is a further unauthorised absence within fifteen school days, a penalty notice may be issued.

6.2.3 A penalty notice may be issued where a pupil has unauthorised absence during a Notice to Improve period (See section 6.3)

6.3 Notice to Improve

6.3.1 A Notice to Improve request may be submitted to Gloucestershire County Council when a pupil has been recorded as absent for 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days) within 10 school weeks, with one or a combination of the following codes:

- **Code G**: Absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday.
- **Code N**: Circumstances of the pupil's absence not yet established.
- **Code O**: None of the other rows of Table 3 in regulation 10(3) of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.
- **Code U**: Attended after the register ended but before the end of the session, where no other code applies.

6.3.2 The improvement period is set at 6 weeks, with the expectation of no more unauthorised absences during this period. The request will be reviewed by the Inclusion Officers and if approved the Notice will be sent to the parents by email. School will monitor the pupil's attendance during this period.

6.3.3 If unauthorised absences occur during the improvement period, a penalty notice may be issued.

6.3.4 If the penalty notice is unpaid within the time frame, the usual procedures to progress the case through the Magistrate's Court.

7 Appointments For Pupils

7.1 If appointments have to be made during school hours, school should be pre-notified. However, parents/carers should avoid such arrangements where possible.

7.2 Parents collecting pupils from school mid-session should come to the school office to sign the pupil out. The class teacher and school office must be notified in advance. If present at registration no amendment to the register is necessary.

7.3 If the pupil is absent at registration, the register should be marked with an authorised absence mark. Parents must bring pupils to the school office to sign them in on their arrival or return.

8 Frequent Absences for Medical Reasons

8.1 When a pupil frequently misses school for medical reasons, medical services may be consulted, including the school nurse service and appointment cards or other evidence may be requested.

8.3 Where necessary, a referral will be made so that an evaluation of the pupil's health and educational needs can be made.

9 Longer Periods of Absences

9.1 Pupils, who have been absent for a long period of time, will be positively welcomed back and will be helped to catch up with missed work through a range of strategies agreed by the class teachers.

9.2 Friendship groups will be monitored for a period to ensure that the pupil is happily settled back into school life.

10 Late Collection of Pupils

10.1 The school takes late collection of children very seriously. It accepts that emergency situations can arise due to unforeseen circumstances. Notification, however, must be given to the school as soon as the situation arises.

10.2 In the event of a child not being collected, the school will make every effort to contact their parents/carers. If this proves to be impossible, then the school will try to contact the alternative emergency name, who is authorised by the child's parent, to collect them on behalf of their parent/carer. If no contact has been established with the parents/carers, or emergency contact, within 45 minutes of the usual collection time, the school will follow their child protection procedures i.e. it may contact the Children and Families Services emergency duty teams on 01452 426565 or the police to report their concerns.

10.3 Persistent late collection of a child will be monitored. If the child is collected late after 3:30pm, a charge will be incurred and an invoice issued as the child will be put into Wrap Around Care. The purpose of the charge imposed is to meet the additional costs that the school incurs from the late collection. Failure to pay will lead to further action being taken.

10.4 If a child is collected late from a club, the school will attempt to contact the family through the emergency contacts list. The child will be placed in Wrap Around and the parent will be charged for this service.

10.5 If a child is not collected promptly from Wrap Around, the school will attempt to contact the family through the emergency contacts list. The child will remain in the office with staff while they try to contact the family. If the child is not collected before 6pm and no parent/carer/ emergency contact can be reached, social care and/or the police will be informed to support the school in organising care for the child.

10.6 The DSL will keep detailed, timed records of the action taken and the calls made.

10.7 In extreme cases, persistent late collection could be considered as abandonment or neglect of a child. In the event that the school finds itself repeatedly looking after children who have been persistently collected late from school (more than three times in a term) the school will contact the Children and Families Services emergency duty teams on 01452 426565 to report their concerns.

11. REWARDS

11.1 St White's Primary School actively encourages good attendance by recognising and rewarding excellent attendance of pupils and classes.

11.2 Weekly attendance certificates are given for the infant and junior class with the highest attendance in the previous week. These are given in the weekly celebration assembly. Termly badges are awarded for 100% attendance and there is a gallery of photographs for those who achieve a full year's 100% attendance.

11.3 The school will write to parents of pupils whose attendance has improved following concern letters or attendance meetings to thank them and offer further assistance if necessary.

11.4 Pupils will be invited to represent the school at sporting and other events if they have a good level of attendance. Pupils who have any unauthorised absence are unlikely to be chosen for these activities.

12. SCHOOL PROCEDURES

12.1 The attendance officer and office staff monitor the registers in the morning and afternoon to ensure they have been completed and to enter absence codes and comments.

12.2 Where the register shows an unexplained absence and there has been no message received at school by 9.00 a.m. a phone call will be made to the parent/carer to find out the reason for absence and the date of expected return. If there is no reply, staff will leave answerphone messages and send text and emails to parents. Staff will also try other emergency contacts.

12.3 If no response is received, all communication will be recorded on Myconcern.

12.4 If the school has been unable to make contact with any emergency contact, staff will consider making a home visit to ensure that the child and family are safe. Contact with the police will be considered at this stage, to request a welfare check. Written communication will be sent on the 3rd day of absence, requesting the reason for absence. If there is still no response the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

12.5 Where the register shows 5 separate late marks, during or after registration over a school term, school will contact parents.

12.6 Where the register shows 10 separate late marks after registration closes over the previous 10 weeks, the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice. A written warning of this will usually be issued, in the first instance, by the school.

12.7 Any concerns about attendance or punctuality will be referred to the headteacher who will contact parents/carers to try to resolve any issues. If these issues cannot be resolved and there is unauthorised absence the matter may be referred ultimately to the Education Entitlement and Exclusion Team at Shire Hall and where it is deemed necessary Social Services will be contacted.

12.8 If there is a dispute between parents about who is collecting a child, either during or at the end of the school day, the school will contact both parents and invite them to meet to resolve the situation. The child will be kept safe in class, or wraparound care, until a decision is agreed.

13. The Law

Set out below are the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.
These requirements are contained in:

- 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, 2016 amendments)
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended
- The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

13.1 The law says that:

- By law, all children of compulsory school age (between 5 and 16) must get a suitable, full-time education.
- As a parent, you are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering your child at a school or by making other arrangements which provide a suitable full-time education.

13.2 Once a child is registered at a school it is the parent/carers responsibility for making sure he or she attends full time and regularly.

13.3 If your child fails to attend regularly, even if they miss school without you knowing, the Local Authority (LA) may take legal action against you.

- Local Authorities may enforce:
  - A Parenting Order
  - An Education Supervision Order
  - A School Attendance Order
  - A fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')
- Maintained schools must allow the LA to inspect their registers
- The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities.
- Schools must report to the LA pupils who fail to attend regularly.
- Parents are responsible for making sure that their registered children regularly attend school and any alternative provision arranged for them.
- If you think you might need to take your child out of school, discuss the reasons with the school as soon as possible.

13.4 **Unauthorised absence** may lead to the LA taking full court action if attendance issues cannot be resolved.

13.4 **Formal meetings** (Attendance Improvement Meetings) will be held with parents whose children's poor attendance may lead to legal proceedings and attendance plans or parent attendance improvement contracts will be drawn up.

13.6 **Elective Home Education** The school will follow procedures set out in GCC Elective Home Education policy and guidance for schools in providing information for families who inform the school that they are considering this option.

13.7 The school will follow procedures set out in GCC Elective Home Education policy in notifying the LA and removing a pupil from the school roll if parents decide on elective home education.

14 School Attendance Procedures

14.1 The attendance officer will monitor attendance regularly and report to the Head Teacher, providing regular lists of pupils whose attendance is a concern.

14.2 Letters will be sent from the Head Teacher to any families whose attendance is becoming a concern, offering advice and support and Local Authority information about good Attendance.

14.3 Pupils falling below 90% attendance will receive a letter from the Head Teacher inviting parents to a meeting to discuss their child's attendance (or home visit).

14.4 Pupils falling below 85% attendance will receive a letter from the Head Teacher inviting parents to a formal Attendance Improvement Meeting.

14.5 Attendance Improvement Plans will be put in place and reviewed appropriately.

14.6 Attendance Improvement Meetings and Reviews will be documented.

15. Consistency of Policies

This policy links with a number of other school policies and procedures, as well as the school's curriculum, including:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Positive Behaviour Policy
- E Safety and AUP Policy
- The teaching of PSHE, including mental health and SMSC
- Acceptable Use Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Early Help Offer
- RHSE Policy
- Safer Recruitment and Induction Policy
- SEND Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct
- Whistleblowing Policy
- https://www.gscb.org.uk/i-work-with-children-young-people-and-parents/guidance-for-working-with-children-and-young-people/