

Policy Statement for

Attendance



Change History	Summary of Key Changes
Oct 2016	Updated to include guidance on the reporting of Children Missing Education (CME), references to safeguarding and registration times in the school day plus appendix 1
Feb 2017	Updated to include contact details for CME referrals and links to Jan 2017 guidance from GCC and info from KCSIE Annex A
June 2018	Attendance procedure flowchart and addition to appendix
Dec 2018	Added 'our response to CME' (pg 9) and that all governors are aware of this (pg 7)

Attendance Policy

Together at Nailsworth, we are inspired by the challenge of becoming successful human beings.

Every child is given the encouragement to flourish through developing their hopes and dreams and the skills and talents needed to make them happen. A fundamental element of this school's ethos is that education is a partnership between school, parents and children.

It is the right of every child to receive a full time education and it is the parent/carer responsibility to ensure their child attends school they are registered at. Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Nailsworth School, it is our aim to:

- develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality
- provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome
- safeguard our children and investigate persistent absence
- consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

From September 2016 schools are required to follow guidance on the reporting of Children Missing Education (CME). This has been issued by the Local Authority and Nailsworth Primary school has adopted the guidance. This is now incorporated into our policy. (https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf)

Further detailed guidance, in relation to Children Missing Education, is provided in *Keeping Children Safe in Education*, Sept 2018, Annex A:

https://consult.education.gov.uk/safeguarding-in-schools-team/keeping-children-safe-in-education/supporting_documents/Keeping%20Children%20Safe%20in%20Education%20Proposed%20Revisions.pdf

Further general guidance on attendance can be found at

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/564599/school_attendance.pdf

Gloucestershire guidance can be found at

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18446/pdf-attendance-guidance-for-schools-updated-311017.pdf>

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Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments
- days of religious observance
- exclusion
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents employment
- family bereavement
- involvement in a public performance

Children need to be in school and working towards a target of 100% attendance. On occasion there may be a need to attend appointments such as dentist or medical appointments. Parent's/ Carer's should always aim to have appointments outside of school time. However, when this is not possible, appointment times from 1:30pm onwards are best to ensure pupils receive the vast majority of their learning that day and by making appointments after 1:30pm this has less effect of the attendance data for your child as they will be present for morning and afternoon registrations.

If an appointment cannot be made in the afternoon we would expect that the child attends school first thing in the morning to register with their class before being taken out of school for their appointment. Following the appointment we would expect children to be returned to school in time for afternoon registration. For example, if your child has an appointment at 10:30am at the local dentist or GP for instance. We would expect parent/carer to ensure children arrive and register at school 8:40am before being collected at 10:00am to attend their appointment at 10:30am and to be returned to school before afternoon registration at 1:10pm. This way the child attends school as fully as possible and is in school for both morning and afternoon registration.

Where this is not possible, we may ask to see evidence of any appointments made during school time, for example a letter or text message confirming your appointment date and time.

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Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** normally be authorised by schools in the following circumstances:

- when no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (eg shopping, minding the house, etc);
- for family holidays

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence level set by Government guidance. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her non attendance is more than the Government guidance (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Admissions Register

The law requires all schools to have an admission register **and** a daily attendance register. We place pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, we are required to notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

It is important that the admission register is accurate and kept up to date. Parents should inform us of any changes whenever they occur. This can assist us and the local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

The school is obliged to notify the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of **10 school days or more**.

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Where a parent notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address, **we** are required to record in the admission register:

- the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live;
- the new address; and
- the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, we must record in the admission register:

- the name of the new school; and
- the date on which the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

We are required to notify the local authority **within five days** when a pupil's name is added to the admission register.

The school must also notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register. For further details about the conditions for deletion of a child's name, please see the full government guidance:

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/550416/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Attendance Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. School expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.50 am and again at 13.10 pm. The morning register closes at 9.00 am so pupils arriving between 8.50 and 9.00 am will be marked with an L indicating they are late for school. However pupils arriving after the register has closed will be registered with a U showing they are present in school but were late enough to affect their learning. By arriving to school after 9:00am children with a U will have effectively 'missed' morning registration and as schools use an electronic registration system (SIMS) that means they will be marked as missing the whole of the morning session (therefore on the electronic system for data and attendance your child will have missed ½ or 50% of the day which will affect their overall attendance percentage data).

In considering attendance levels, the form register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the

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Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

The School's policy with regard to registration will be regularly communicated to parents/carers/carers/carers.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a half termly and yearly basis;
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc); match attendance trends with attainment trends;
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers/carers.

First Day Response

As a vigilant and caring school we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a text message.

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at Nailsworth we:

- have clear procedures - registers close at 9.00 am and 1.20 pm (ensure your child is in school every day at these times)
- publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers/carers;
- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement;
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality;
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons;

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- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality regularly. The Governing Body are kept informed on attendance figures and are aware of our response to CME.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form (Appendix 1) and any request can only be authorised in accordance with this policy. Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence of more than 5 days will be asked to make an appointment to see the Headteacher to discuss the circumstances. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation, penalty notices may be issued where the trigger of 5 days is met or if there has been a history of unauthorised attendance or lateness for morning registration.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013) (http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2013/756/pdfs/ukxi_20130756_en.pdf)

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at School, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class;
- during an assessment/test period – Key Stage 2 SATs
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence
- due to interrupting learning at other times of the school year;

Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's progress, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

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Parents/carers commit an offence if their child fails to attend school **regularly** and those absences are classed as unauthorised. Regular attendance at Nailsworth CofE Primary School can be defined as our expectation that every pupil attends every day (every session) that the school is open unless a reason acceptable to the school is given and we are able to authorise the absence.

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days. Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60. In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of 5 school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or 10 school days lost to unauthorised absence in 2 consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered. In cases of unauthorised absence parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of Penalty Notice being issued. This will state the extent of the child's absences and give parents/carers 15 days to bring about an improvement. In that time the child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

In cases of unauthorised holidays warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, Penalty Notices may be issued without a warning.

Penalty Notice code of conduct can be found at

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18443/pdf-pn-code-of-conduct-311017.pdf>

Absence for religious reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register. If parents/carers require an additional day this must be requested in advance and this can only be authorised if it is felt that exceptional circumstances apply (this would be marked in the register as 'C').

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Our Safeguarding Response to Children Missing Education (CME):

- We will ensure admission registers are accurate and kept up to date.
- We operate First Day Response: making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence, usually through a text message.
- We will notify the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.
- We will carry out reasonable enquiries. This may include checking with relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved.
- We will keep records of any of these procedures undertaken.

If anyone thinks a child is at immediate risk of significant harm they should contact the **The Front Door (Children's Helpdesk) on: 01452 426565** or **in an emergency always call 999**. In the case of needing medical help fast dial NHS 111. ***Anyone can make a referral and this must be done without delay.***

Any professional should alert the LA when they suspect that a child might be missing from education. To make this process as easy as possible, a referral should be sent to:

Education Performance and Inclusion team
 Shire Hall,
 Westgate Street,
 Gloucester GL1 2TP
 Tel 01452 328033 / 427800

Further guidance and referral forms can be found via this link:

<http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/children-missing-education/>

Please also refer to our Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

Flow chart of attendance concerns at Nailsworth CofE Primary

This flow chart is for guidance and may be used flexibly by the school as every family situation is different. The school offers support to meet particular needs of families and children to aid and support attendance, but parents/carers are expected to ensure and facilitate regular attendance in full cooperation with the school. Aiming towards the target of 100% attendance for each child.

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1. Teacher/TA/member of staff may discuss with parents/carers any concerns or queries they have to understand any issues at home or reasons for child's absence from school at any time during the school year.
2. If attendance of any child at school goes **below 95%** a letter home and a copy of GCC leaflet will be issued <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18441/pdf-leaflet-for-parents-school-attendance-oct2017.pdf> Parent/carer may be contacted by the school office, class teacher or family link worker (FLW) to discuss any concerns, issues or support required to improve and ensure we are working together towards the target of 100% attendance for your child.

Parents/carers may request a meeting at school to discuss their situation or needs at any time during the year.

3. If attendance of any child at school goes **below 90%** - A letter home and a copy of GCC leaflet will be issued <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18441/pdf-leaflet-for-parents-school-attendance-oct2017.pdf> and you will be contacted by the school office, class teacher or our family link worker (FLW) to discuss any concerns, issues or support you may require to improve and ensure we are working together towards the target of 100% attendance for your child.

If attendance of any child at school goes **below 90%** legal parents (all adults with parental responsibility) of the child will be asked to attend an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) with the Class teacher, FLW and/or Inclusion Manager. At AIM we will discuss your circumstances and offer support in terms of Breakfast Club, signposting to community services, additional help, referral for home support or whatever is deemed appropriate and proportional to improve the situation and work together towards the target of 100% attendance for your child.

4. Following an Attendance Improvement Meeting (AIM) a review will normally take place **within 6 weeks** to determine if attendance has improved or not. If at this stage attendance of your child has not improved significantly you may be asked to meet with the Inclusion Manager and or the Headteacher to discuss your situation and family needs further. We may also invite outside agencies in support for the school and family in improving attendance. We may also liaise with the local authority regarding your family situation and attendance and decide if it is appropriate to issue formal procedures for issue of fixed penalty notice (see appendix).
5. At any time the school may consider penalty notice procedures if there has been a previous history of unauthorised absence, persistent lateness to school (arriving after 9am and missing morning registration) or if current attendance levels are below 90%.

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APPENDIX A: EXAMPLE OF PENALTY NOTICE WARNING LETTER:

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18444/pdf-sample-warning-letter-for-penalty-notices-oct2017.pdf>

Leaflet on penalty notices for parents

<https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/18439/pdf-leaflet-for-parents-penalty-notices-oct2017.pdf>

APPENDIX B: EXAMPLE TEMPLATE of LETTER HOME TO PARENTS

Date:

Dear <<>>,

We have noticed that unfortunately <<>> has missed school on several occasions, and this means that HIS/HER attendance has fallen below 00%, which is below the target we aim to achieve. We aim towards 100% attendance at Nailsworth CofE Primary school.

Looking ahead we would like to talk to you about how we can improve this, and as such would like to invite you to discuss your situation and how we can help you improve your child's attendance at school.

Our Family Link Worker (FLW) is working together with families to talk through any reasons that there might be which are causing your child to be absent from school.

Education is an essential part of a child's life and the routine, structure and the social benefits of being in school are hugely important in the development of each child. A leaflet is attached explaining more about this.

Our FLW will be in school each Wednesday's and can be reached by email - fcooper@nailsworth.gloucs.sch.uk, or by phoning the school office (01453 832382.) if you would prefer to talk to a non-teaching member of staff.

Should you wish to view the school's Attendance Policy, it is available on our website. I can, of course, provide you with a copy should you require one.

I look forward to meeting with you soon

Yours sincerely

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APPENDIX C: EXAMPLE OF ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT MEETING (AIM) TEMPLATE

Education Performance and Inclusion

Education Act 1996 and Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003

Attendance Improvement Meeting

School: _____

To be completed as a contemporaneous record of the meeting and a copy given to all attendees at the close of the meeting. If parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend a copy of this record should be sent to them by post.

Name:	Year:	D.O.B.
Date Plan Drawn Up:	Where AIM is held :	
Present:		
Current Attendance	% sessions absence authorised	sessions absence unauthorised
Background information provided by school		
Reasons for absence given by parent/carers, student/ pupil		
Please tick and date any of the following that have been previously offered/completed		
<input type="checkbox"/> Pre arranged home visit to discuss how to improve attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Referral to other agencies (please state) <input type="checkbox"/> Communication with tutor, head of year, head of house , attendance officer, other, to discuss attendance concerns, e.g. telephone call, e-mails, letters, meetings <input type="checkbox"/> Alternative Curriculum <input type="checkbox"/> Reduced timetable Any other relevant intervention offered (please detail):	Date	

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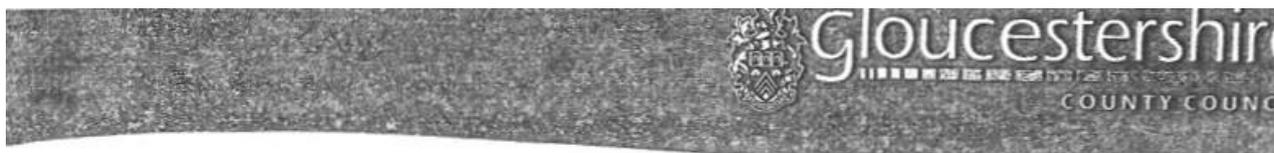
Plan to Improve Attendance

This should detail any new intervention that either school, parent or pupil feel would be beneficial.

Student/Pupil agrees to: See guidance notes	
Parent(s)/Carers(s) agrees to: See guidance notes	
School agrees to: See guidance notes	
Please give details of any other agencies currently involved and the work they are undertaking	
Agreed Attendance target for the next 4 school weeks % *NB This can be a target of no unauthorised absence during the review period. Review Date	
As Parent /Carer of I understand that failure to meet these targets may result in legal proceedings taken against me. Signed: Parent Parent Date: Pupil School Other Date:	
For use if parent(s)/carer(s) do not attend	
Date plan posted to parent(s)/carer(s): (This should be within one day of plan being drawn up) Signed: Date:	

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APPENDIX D: LEAVE REQUEST FORM



Children and Young People's Directorate
 Education Welfare Service, Grange Road, Tuffley, Gloucester GL4 0DJ
 Tel: 01452 550505 Fax: 01452 550556

REQUEST TO TAKE A CHILD OUT OF SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

PLEASE REMEMBER

Absence from school can seriously disrupt your child's continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away; they are also less well prepared for lessons upon their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which together we must seek to avoid.

I would like to take my son/daughter out of school during term time

Absence: Dates-From.....to

This absence must be in term time because:

Signed(Parent/Guardian) Date

Relationship to Child

Authorised/Unauthorised by(Headteacher) Date:

This form must be completed and returned to the child's school no less than 2 weeks before the planned absence.

Dear parent / guardian,

Re: (Child's name)

Current Attendance %

Further to your recent request for leave of absence.

Leave of absence authorised for medical appointment/other reason
 betweenand

Leave of absence unauthorised for holiday request/other reason.

Any absence from school between and..... will be marked as unauthorised and referred to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice up to £100 (Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996).

Signed : (Headteacher) Date:

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