

# COALWAY COMMUNITY INFANT SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE



Reviewed annually

Date implemented: Sept 2024

Review date: Sept 2025

Signed

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'K. Turner'.

Chair of Governors: Kaye Turner

Date: 25/9/24

## Aims and objectives

Our core values of kindness, respect, support, wellbeing and success are at the heart of what we do and how we work with our families.

At Coalway Community Infant School, we believe that improving attendance is everyone's business and that providing a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment, where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn, is the foundation of securing good attendance.

Working together to put the right support in place at the right time, in conjunction with all staff in school, parents/carers, pupils, Gloucestershire County Council and other local partners, we aim to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships.

Regular attendance is fundamental to the future success of children. We have high expectations and high regard for our pupils. We expect pupils to be in school for every session of the school day and for every day that the school is open.

Our objectives are to promote good attendance, ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled. By acting early to address patterns of absence we aim to reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence.

## Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## Roles and responsibilities

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends on time, every day
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:15, when the register closes, on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Proactively engage with support, offered informally or formally, to help your child overcome any barriers to attendance

**Pupils are expected to:**

- Attend school on time, every day
- Be school ready, wearing the correct uniform

**The governing body are expected to:**

- 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
- The Chair of Governors, Mrs. Kaye Turner, is the link governor for attendance. As part of their role, all governors will monitor pupil attendance. This will be whole school, cohorts, groups and individuals who are persistently or severely absent from school.

**The headteacher is responsible for:**

- Implementation of this policy
- 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
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

**The Senior Attendance Champion, Headteacher Mrs. Hayley Alliston, is responsible for:**

- Championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Establishing and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure they are followed by all staff
- Having a strong grasp of absence data to focus the collective efforts of the school
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes
- Communicating messages to pupils and parents
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Where there is a lack of engagement, holding more formal conversations with parents and raising the issue of the potential need for legal intervention.

**The school attendance officer Mrs. Roz Edwards [redwards@coalway-inf.gloucs.sch.uk](mailto:redwards@coalway-inf.gloucs.sch.uk) is responsible for:**

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion and/or the Headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., Pastoral Support and SENDCo to tackle persistent absence

- Advising the headteacher (or other member of staff authorised by the Headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

**The class teacher is responsible for:**

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office as soon as possible after the register is completed at 8:45 but no later than 9:15 when the register closes.

**School administration/office staff are responsible for:**

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on SIMS, the school system
- provide teachers, Pastoral Support and SENDCo with detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls (electronic) and communication with parents

**School processes for recording attendance and absence**

We will keep an electronic attendance register on SIMs and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent

Any amendment 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
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not by using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from regulation 10 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils should arrive at school between 8:35 and 8:45. On arrival, pupils will go straight into class.

The register for the morning session will be taken at 8:45 and will be kept open until 9:15, no longer than 30 minutes. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30.

## **Absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9:15 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school on 01594 833457, and speak to either Mrs. Cornes or Mrs. Edwards. If you are unable to speak to a member of the office staff, please leave a message. They may return your call to gather further detail. If a parent has not contacted the school, a member of the admin team will contact the parent so that we can update our attendance records. If we are unable to contact the first parent, the other contacts will be contacted.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide 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/carers will be notified of this, by the admin staff.

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

### **Ongoing punctuality issues**

The school's strategy for improving punctuality starts with the communication between the class teacher and the family. The class teacher will remind the parent of the timings of the start of the school day and the learning the pupil has missed.

Where punctuality intensifies, the Pastoral Support, SENDCo and class teacher or Headteacher will meet with the parents to understand barriers and agree actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. This is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment. These actions will be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families. An attendance contract could be completed to set targets to improve punctuality.

In all cases, the school should monitor the impact of any intervention(s) and make adjustments where necessary in discussion with the parents and any other partners involved as part of any whole family plan or team around the family. Where interventions are failing, all parties should work together to identify the reasons why and either adjust or change the approach.

### **Planned absence**

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

Please follow the school procedures for notification of a planned absence by completing a 'Request for Leave during Term Time' form.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

- The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

An example of an exceptional circumstance is a family wedding.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible from the school office or website. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad (Code C1)
- Attending a medical or dental appointment (Code M)

- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution (Code J1)
- Studying for a public examination (Code S)
- Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school (Code X)
- Compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable (Code C2)
- Exceptional circumstances (see example above) (Code C)
- Parent travelling for occupational purposes - The pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place (Code T)
- Religious observance - where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart (Code R)
- Illness (Code I)

#### Procedures following unexplained absence

- The school admin staff will call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will follow the missing protocols by contacting the Local Authority, social care if the pupil has a social worker or the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- 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
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will follow the missing protocol and contact the Local Authority attendance team.

#### Strategies for promoting attendance

School celebrates good attendance through teachers praise and recognition and celebration assemblies.

#### Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysing

The school will:

- Inform parents of their child's attendance levels, at least three times per year through letters, reports etc.
- Monitor attendance and absence data daily, weekly, half-termly, termly, annually, across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, Pastoral Support, SENDCo and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

#### Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Consider the 'Steps to take before initiating legal proceedings' document to ensure all voluntary support options have been tried.
- Maintain records of all the intervention that has been offered, and what impact it has had on the child's attendance.
- Formalise support or use legal sanctions, in conjunction with Gloucestershire County Council, for example through using a parenting contract, engagement with social services, Education Supervision Order or consideration of attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court

#### Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) to 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 Local Authority Penalty Notice Code of Conduct [Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/attendance-schoolsnet)

If issued with a fine or penalty notice each parent must pay £80 (per child) if paid within 21 days rising to £160 thereafter. If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority 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 fine by making payment earlier). If the national threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) time within 3 years, the Local Authority will consider prosecution through the magistrates' court under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

In Education Law (Section 576 of the Education Act 1996) 'parent' means:

All natural parents, whether they are married or not

Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or pupil

Any person who has care of a child or pupil i.e. lives with and looks after the child

#### Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

This policy also links to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is update, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review the policy will be approved by the full governing body.

