

# **Gordon's School Student Attendance Policy** **(including missing student policy)**

*'The core principle that guides everything we do is **putting the interests of students first**'*

## **Introduction**

This policy meets the requirements of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education \(DfE\)](#). This policy links with the schools safeguarding and child protection policy, Behaviour policy, supporting students with medical conditions policy and our alternative provision policy.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Working in a support first approach.
- Promoting good attendance.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every student has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school.
- Punctuality in attending lessons.

We will work collaboratively with all partner agencies to successfully treat the root cause of absence and remove barriers to attendance.

We will do this in the following way:

- **Expect:** We aspire to high standards of attendance from all students and parents/carers and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- **Monitor:** We rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.
- **Listen and understand:** When a pattern is spotted, we will discuss this with students and their carers to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- **Facilitate Support:** We will work to remove barriers in school and help students and their carers to access the support they need to overcome barriers outside of school. This may include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- **Formalise support:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, we will work with partners to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.
- **Enforce:** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, we will enforce attendance through statutory intervention such as a penalty notice in line with the national framework or prosecution to protect the students right to an education.

## **1. Roles and responsibilities**

### **The Governing Body**

Chair of Governors [chair@gordons.school](mailto:chair@gordons.school)

The governing body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **The Headteacher**

Andrew Moss [head@gordons.school](mailto:head@gordons.school)

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.

### **The Senior Attendance Champion**

Clair Gill [cgill@gordons.school](mailto:cgill@gordons.school)

The Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school.
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes.
- Having an oversight of data analysis.
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families.

### **The Attendance Officer**

Louise Mouldale [absence@gordons.school](mailto:absence@gordons.school)

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.
- Run an attendance report after morning registration and after period 5 every day to identify any absences and do everything reasonable to trace those students unaccounted for.
- Send a school comms alert to parents/carers of any students unaccounted for by 10:00am.
- Run an attendance report 15 mins into each lesson period to monitor for any missing students and do everything reasonable to trace those students unaccounted for.
- Notify the Designated Safeguarding Lead of any unexplained absence of any student who is subject to a Child Protection plan, Child in Need plan or working with Youth Offending services, and also notify the allocated workers.
- 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 designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher.
- Working with Surrey School Attendance Support Team to tackle persistent absence.

### **House parents, Heads of House, form tutors and class teachers**

House parents will inform the Attendance Officer of any residential students' absence before 08:15am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day.

Form tutors and class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information into the electronic registers.

Form tutors will complete morning registration by 08:20am. Class teachers will complete a lesson register, for every timetabled lesson, within the first 10 mins of the lesson.

## **Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time.
- Contact the school to report their child's absence before 08:20am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return. Absences can be reported by emailing [absence@gordons.school](mailto:absence@gordons.school), copying in the child's generic house email. A voicemail can also be left 24/7 on the main school answer machine- 01276 858084, option 1.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

## **Students**

Students are expected to attend every timetabled session, on time.

## **2. Recording Attendance**

### **Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day during registration and within the first ten minutes of every timetabled session. It will mark whether every student is:

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

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of the circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The punctuality of student and will mark attendance with a 'L' code if the student is not present at the point of the registration completion.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 08:15am on each school day for the start of the school day at 08:20am. The formal education part of the school day finishes at 15:35 and then moves into the co-curricular part of the school day where attendance continues to be recorded and monitored.

The register for the first session will open at 08:20am and will be kept open for 30 minutes. The register for the second session will open at 13:45 and be kept open for 30 minutes.

Students in the sixth are required to attend school for the whole school day and not leave school site to return home until after 15:35pm (Period 6).

### **Unplanned absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:15 or as soon as practically possible.

In the first instance, for all illness and unplanned absence parents/carers must email [absence@gordons.school](mailto:absence@gordons.school) and copy in the student's generic house email address.

Parents/carers can also call the school absence line on 01276 858084 and use option 1 to leave a voicemail.

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, we may ask the student'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 we are not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Following up unexplained absence**

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence and each subsequent day to ascertain the reason.
- If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or alert appropriate authorities, including Children's Services, the Police, or Surrey Attendance Service.
- 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.

### **Planned absence- medical and dental appointments**

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

Parents/carers must contact [absence@gordons.school](mailto:absence@gordons.school) and copy in the student's relevant house to alert them of such appointments.

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

### **Planned absence- not medical or dental**

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

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 in writing to [head@gordons.school](mailto:head@gordons.school) as soon as it is anticipated that a leave of absence is required. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

## **Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be via termly written reports and correspondence from the student's house team. Parents/carers may also access student attendance information via The My Child At School portal.

## **Supporting students with medical conditions**

Where a student has an identified and evidenced medical condition we will work with the student and their family to ensure the correct support is in place for their educational, social and emotional needs. This will include agreement with how absences will be managed and education will be accessed. Please further look at the policy 'supporting students with medical conditions'.

### **3. Missing Student Protocol**

If a student is identified as missing, either through an N code report or notification from the house, everything will be done to investigate the whereabouts of the student. This will include talking to other students and staff, and checks made to ensure they are not in the classroom, medical centre, another house or on a regulated school activity.

Staff must inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead and the Attendance Officer immediately if a student is suspected of being missing.

If it is decided that the student has probably left the school grounds, CCTV will be checked and parents/carers should be informed and asked to inform the school of any contact they may have with the child.

In all cases, after an hour of the student being reported missing, parents/carers will be informed. At this point a decision will be made regarding informing the Police.

If the student is particularly young, or considered vulnerable, parents and the police will be informed after a reasonable search time during the day which may be less than one hour after the student was reported missing (and in some cases immediately).

Parents/carers will be informed immediately if a student is missing from their Residential House at night, and a decision will be taken as to whether to call the police.

When the student is located, all involved must be informed at once. On return, the student will be supported and a sanction may be considered depending on the circumstances surrounding why they went missing.

At the conclusion of any incident of this nature an incident overview will be recorded on the student's safeguarding file.

### **4. Attendance Monitoring**

#### **Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance at each period of the school day to ensure that registers are complete and N codes are followed up.
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Student-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.

### Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

A weekly attendance analysis report is shared with the wider leadership team, the attendance team and house team. The report provides an overview of the attendance for the whole school as well as a breakdown of attendance for the sixth form, key stage 3 and key stage 4. There is a persistent absence report for students with attendance below 90% and the report highlights Key Group attendance.

There is an additional half termly, more detailed, report created and shared with the key staff groups cited above.

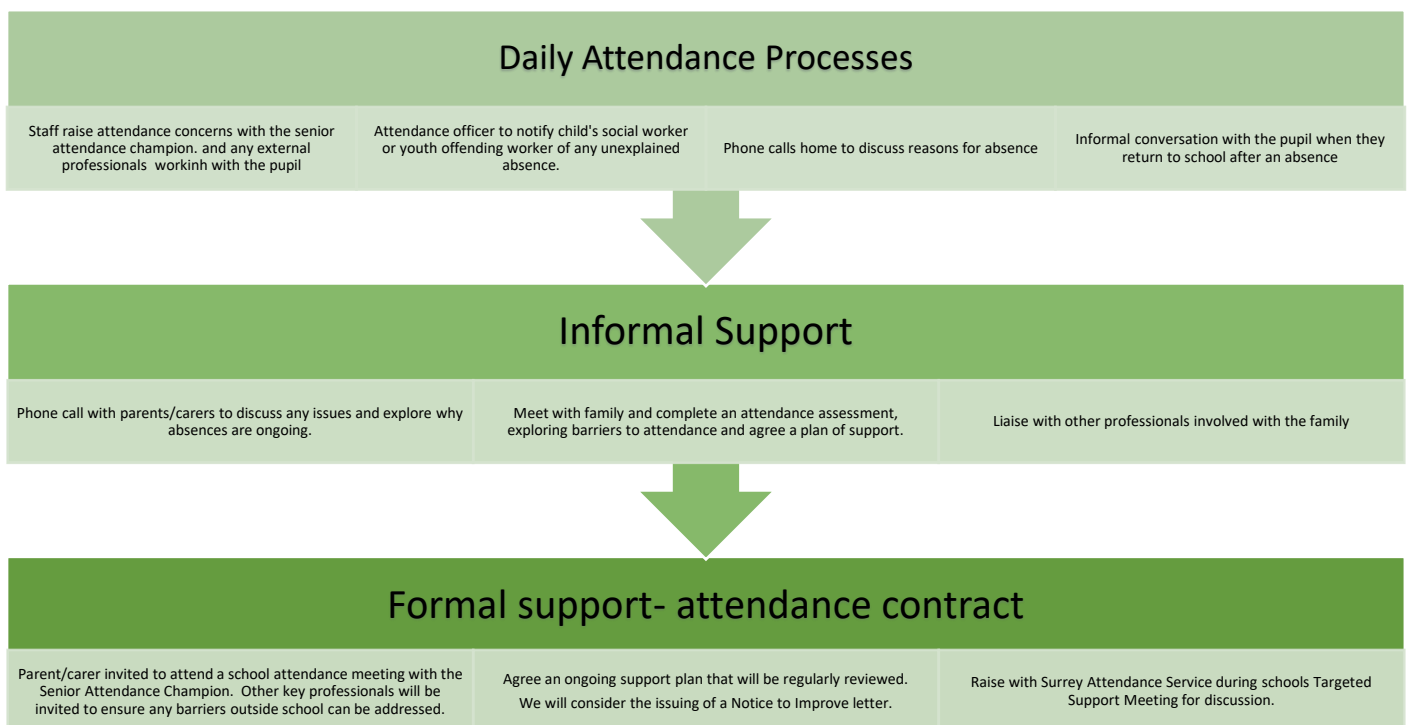
### Reducing persistent absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, over a full academic year this would be 38 sessions (19 school days; equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year). Severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of students at risk of poor attendance, students with poor attendance, and persistently and severely absent students.
- Intervene early by taking a support first approach to reduce absence before it becomes habitual.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of students 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.

When attendance become a concern we will follow the steps below:



If there is no improvement in school attendance after following above, we will consider legal interventions in conjunction with Surrey Attendance Service.

## **5. Attendance Legal Intervention**

Where voluntary and formal attendance support options are not successful, or not engaged with, the law protects students right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts. Decisions to use attendance legal intervention will be made on a case-by-case basis, and in conjunction with Surrey Attendance Service.

We may consider use of the following attendance legal interventions as outlined in [Working together to improve school attendance \(August 2024\)](#):

- Education supervision orders.
- Attendance prosecution.
- Parenting orders.
- Penalty notices in line with the National Framework for penalty notices.

## **6. Strategies for promoting good attendance**

We will promote and celebrate good attendance. We will do this in the following ways:

- Attendance displays in houses.
- Annual attendance celebration with recognition for students with good attendance and improved attendance.
- Promotion and celebration of punctuality for students who have no L codes on their registration certificate.
- Communication to parents/carers about the importance of good attendance via the weekly school communication.
- Staff facilitating discussions with students and families about good attendance.

## **7. Co-Curricular Attendance**

Co-Curricular attendance includes all period 7 activities and Saturday period 7 activities.

All students must have timetabled period 7 activities and must attend punctually. Attendance is expected in the same manner as the academic school day, and is monitored and analysed in the same way. The co-curricular team are sensitive to checking for period 7 clashes and a student will not be sanctioned if this situation occurs.

Period 7 teachers will complete a lesson register on SOCS, for every timetabled session, within the first 10 mins of the lesson. Where a student is identified as missing for a period 7 activity the 'missing student protocol will be followed (section 3).

### **Planned Saturday period 7 absence**

The student's parent/carer must also apply for planned co-curricular absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student 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 student is authorised to be absent for.

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 in writing to [head@gordons.school](mailto:head@gordons.school) as soon as it is anticipated that a leave of absence is required. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

### **Un-planned Saturday period 7 absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:15 or as soon as practically possible.

In the in the first instance, for all illness and unplanned absence parents/carers must email [absence@gordons.school](mailto:absence@gordons.school) and copy in the student's generic house email address.

Parents/carers can also call the school absence line on 01276 858084 and use option 1 to leave a voicemail.

## **8. Prep Attendance**

Prep runs daily from 18:15 to 19:30. Students have the option to leave prep at 19:00 with preauthorisation from parents/carers via the students house. The students house will add a note to the prep register confirming the student may leave at 19:00.

Attendance at prep is encouraged and parents/carers are expected to confirm which prep sessions students will regularly attend, in advance, with their child's house.

A register will be completed at the start of each prep session. Where a student is expected to attend and is noted to be absent a communication will be sent to the parent/carer. The parent/carer is asked to contact the prep duty mobile on 07881 824311 immediately if they are concerned about the child's absence and are unable to contact their child.

Planned absences from prep should be send via email to the student's house.

## **9. Parade Attendance**

All students are expected to attend scheduled parades.

For authorisation in advance of a planned Parade absence, please email the Head via [head@gordons.school](mailto:head@gordons.school).

For unplanned parade absences the student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence as soon as possible. In the in the first instance, for all illness and unplanned absence parents/carers must email the student's generic house email address.

Written by: Designated Safeguarding Lead

Date: September 2024

Review: September 2025