



Halton Model School Attendance Policy

GORSEWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL



**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

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Working together to improve attendance

Expect

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parent/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

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, discuss with pupils and parent/carers to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parent/carers to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might 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, partners should work together 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, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

1. Introduction

The Governors and staff at Gorsewood Primary School are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Gorsewood Primary School values all children. As set out in this policy we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance Leader and Attendance Officer will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success! Attendance concerns will be raised with parent/carers if reasons are not known by the school, e.g. a long period of illness, this information may be shared with the Local Authority following concerns. Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the schools escalated approach to improving attendance. The schools escalated approach is child-centred and prioritises support and developing strong working relationships with families.

Our aim is to always to work in partnership with parent/carers and any referral for consideration of a legal action is deemed to be a last resort at **Gorsewood Primary School**.

2. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil 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 make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- Ensure the school is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Work closely with the local authority Education Welfare Service.

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parent/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority;
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos;
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources;
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance

- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The 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 pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Referring to the local authority Education Welfare Service when appropriate for consideration of legal intervention. Legal sanctions include Parenting contracts, Education supervision orders, Attendance prosecution under S4441(1A) of the 1996 Education Act, Parenting orders and Fixed penalty notices
- Referring to the *Local Authority Education Welfare Service within 5 days if a new child is joining the school roll (outside of the usual transition points).*
- Inform the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of children whose parent/carers have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of Children Missing in Education
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of all suspensions and permanent exclusions.
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of all children on part time timetables not accessing a full time education offer to which they are entitled.
- Notify the Local Authority Education Welfare Service of any child who has missed or is likely to miss 15 days or more of education due to health reasons.
- Work together with the local authority Education Welfare Service to discuss attendance at Targeted Support meetings in particular children who are persistently or severely absent from school.
- Working with the parent/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Work together with other agencies including the local Authority Early Help Team to access support for families to help address the barriers to poor attendance where appropriate.
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parent/carers through all available channels

4.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parent/carers/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parent/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parent/carers/carers

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Emma Jackson, head teacher, and can be contacted via 01928 712100 or head.gorsewood@haltonlearning.net

4.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Day to day attendance monitoring and making contact with parents/carers to follow up absences and discuss attendance concerns. This could be by telephone or home visits.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Delivering targeted intervention and support for families
- 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 education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when it might be appropriate to consider legal intervention and refer to the local authority Education Welfare Service.

The attendance officer is Joann Neilson and can be contacted via 01928 712100 or fsw.gorsewood@haltonlearning.net

4.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the school office daily.

Promote good attendance within their class.

4.6 The Local Authority

All local authorities are expected to:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):
 - o Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
 - o Targeting Support Meetings: hold regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
 - o Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
 - o Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School

4.7 School office manager

School office manager will:

- Take calls from parent/carers/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Support the head teacher and attendance officer with data analysis and tracking of attendance
- Support the attendance officer with parent letters and other communication.

4.8 Parent/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent/carers, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parent/carers, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parent/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45am 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 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Joann Neilson, who can be contacted via 01928 712100.

4.9 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time

5 Recording attendance

5.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

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

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

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where 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.

5.2 School timings

The school day starts at 8.45am and ends at 3.15 pm.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 8.55am.

The register for the second session will be taken after lunch and kept open for 10 minutes. Classes have a staggered lunches the register will be taken at the start of the afternoon session for each class. All lunch registers will close at 1.15pm.

5.3 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office staff, who can be contacted via 01928 712100. There is an answerphone option to leave a message regarding absences.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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 or the reason for the absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carers will be notified of this. The list below shows examples when an absence would **not be authorised**:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Having their hair cut.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- "Couldn't get up".
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease. (e.g. head lice – children can attend once treatment has started, minor cold symptoms).
- Protest activity during school hours

5.4 Planned absence

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

However, we encourage parent/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 pupil's parent/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 6 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.5 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code . This is after 8.55am.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code. This is after 9.30am. If a child arrives late after registration for more than ten sessions in each half term the consideration will be given to the issue of a Penalty Notice Warning Letter. This will be issued by the Local Authority.

5.6 Following up absences

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

- Call/text the pupil's parent/carers 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 or EWO may make a home visit.
- 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(s) for which the pupil was absent
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, and make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues with no contact, the school will

consider carrying out a home visit, involving an education welfare officer or requesting a welfare visit from the police.

- If you have informed school why your child is absent, but your child has not returned after 3 days, we will make contact again on the 4th day to check on how they are. This could be a home visit or telephone call.
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parent/carers to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 6.4 below), as appropriate

5.6 Reporting to parent/carers

The school will regularly inform parent/carers (see definition of 'parent/carers', as used in this policy, in section 4.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels at parents' evenings and in the end of year annual report. There will also be a termly attendance letter sent to parents.

6 Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The headteacher will only grant a **leave of absence** to a pupil during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- 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.

Only in 'Exceptional circumstances' will other absences be agreed by the Headteacher. In such cases, consideration will be given to the cultural needs and the family circumstances. In these cases, granting leave for longer periods than normal may be considered justified. In all cases though, parents will be required to justify why the leave needs to be taken during term time

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. Pupils with attendance below 95% (over 38 week period) may not have leave of absences authorised, even in exceptional circumstances.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent/carers(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a pupil to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

6.2 Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. In some circumstances their education may be provided partially at school and partially at another educational setting or through education otherwise than at a school in line with section 19 of the Education Act 1996 or section 42 or 61 of the Children and Families Act 2014. Time away from school to receive education in other ways must be recorded in the attendance register using the appropriate codes.

In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a school to provide a pupil of compulsory school age with less than full-time education through a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending school or another setting full-time and a part-time timetable is used to help the pupil access as much education as possible. **A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.**

A part-time timetable should:

- Have the agreement of both the school and the parent/carers the pupil normally lives with.
- Have a clear ambition and be part of the pupil's wider support, health care or reintegration plan.
- Have regular review dates which include the pupil and their parent/carers to ensure it is only in place for the shortest time necessary.
- Have a proposed end date that takes into account the circumstances of the pupil, after which the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. It can, however, be extended as part of the regular review process. In some limited cases, a pupil with a long-term health condition may require a part time timetable for a prolonged period.

- Where the pupil has a social worker, the school is expected to keep them informed and involved in the process.
- If the pupil has an education health and care plan, the school should discuss the part-time timetable with the local authority so that any support package that is in place can be reviewed as swiftly as possible.
- In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record the absence accordingly (normally using code X or C2).

6.3 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

6.4 Penalty Notices

The local authority can fine parent/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a Penalty Notice.

If the school issues a Notice to Improve, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send a copy to them so they can issue the Penalty Notice as appropriate.

Before issuing a Notice to Improve, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a Penalty Notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a Penalty Notice inappropriate

A Penalty Notice may also be issued where parent/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parent/carers that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day).

Each parent/carers who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/carers/parent/carers who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** Penalty Notice, the parent/carers must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same pupil, the parent/carers must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carers in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first Penalty Notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

6.5 Notices to improve

If the national threshold for a Penalty Notice has been met and support is appropriate, but parent/carers do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parent/carers a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parent/carers under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a Penalty Notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

7 Strategies for promoting attendance

At Gorsewood primary School, we use a traffic light system to monitor and celebrate attendance.

We aim for all children to be in the Gold or Green band. Children in the red band are classed as persistently absent. Children in the orange band could be at risk of becoming persistently absent.

Attendance letters will share what colour band your child is in. Band colour can change during the year.

<i>Colour Band</i>	<i>Attendance</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>GOLD</i>	<i>100% attendance</i>	This level of attendance will ensure that your child has the greatest opportunity to fulfil their potential.
<i>Green</i>	<i>95-99.9% attendance</i>	Equivalent of up to 9 days/less than 2 weeks' absence. This level of attendance will ensure that your child has the greatest opportunity to fulfil their potential.
<i>Orange</i>	<i>90-94.9% attendance</i>	Equivalent of up to 18 days/nearly 4 weeks' absence over the year Over the course of a full academic year, this level of attendance will begin to impact negatively on your child's progress and attainment.
<i>Red</i>	<i>Below 89.9% attendance</i>	Over 19 days absent over a full academic year, this is a high level of absence and your child's progress and attainment and potential is being held back.

At Gorsewood Primary School, we are committed to ensuring that every child has the very best start in life and to grow up with opportunities to reach their full potential – good school attendance is one of the ways to make this happen. We work closely with parents, pupils and other agencies to monitor and promote good attendance through the following strategies:

Early Intervention:

- Identifying and addressing attendance concerns at an early stage.
- Offering support and guidance to families.
- Providing targeted interventions for pupils at risk of persistent absence.

Attendance Monitoring:

- Regularly monitoring attendance data to identify patterns and trends.
- Contacting parents/carers on the first day of unexplained absence.
- Conducting home visits where necessary.
- Sharing attendance data with parents/carers
- Setting attendance targets and working with other agencies including Early Help and Education Welfare.

Pastoral Support:

- Providing individual support and mentoring for pupils.
- Addressing any underlying issues affecting attendance or engagement.
- Liaising with external agencies to provide specialist support.

Family Support:

- Offering parenting support and guidance.
- Signposting families to relevant services and resources.
- Providing practical assistance where possible (e.g., help with uniform, transport).

At Gorsewood Primary School, we feel it is important to reward children who have achieved good or improved attendance. We notify parents of our whole school attendance percentage in our monthly newsletter and advise you when we have school attendance and punctuality campaign weeks.

The weekly Jigsaw Attendance challenge allows classes to celebrate their collective attendance successes. When a class achieves over 95% they receive a jigsaw piece and when achieve 100% attendance they receive 2 jigsaw pieces. When a class has completed their jigsaw, they choose a class prize. We also celebrate individual attendance and improvements throughout the year with certificates.

Gorsewood Primary School will always challenge falling attendance and reward improvements. We are committed to the future of all children that attend Gorsewood, and by working in partnership with the school community we believe that together we ensure our pupils achieve their potential. If you have any concerns or anything that prevents your child from attending school, please contact Mrs Neilson on 01928 712100 or via email fsw.gorsewood@haltonlearning.net.

Where we have concerns about your child's attendance (usually below 95%) or you have requested support, we will invite you in for meetings, set monitoring periods and set attendance targets (usually over 6 weeks). We will also work with children in school to identify barriers to attendance and work to reduce these. If there is no improvement, we will then work with other agencies including the Local Authority Education Welfare Team to further support you and your child.

8 Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Gorsewood primary School recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform

the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority and safeguarding concerns will always be reported to the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We will always follow the current version of Keeping |Children Safe in Education and our Child protection Policy.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Some children may require additional support to gain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or an EHC plan. These children will be monitored and supported in line with need.

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

8.3 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

During any long term unavoidable period of absence and on return we will:

- Maintain contact with the child and parent/carer.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school ensuring they feel secure and safe and benefit from an ethos of welcome and belonging.
- If need is identified a member of staff from our pastoral team will work closely with and support the child.
- The class teacher and classroom assistant will always support a child when returning to school to ensure that they receive any academic, physical or emotional support.

9 Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance and punctuality

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group, pupil group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request. It is a legal requirement that all schools grant the DfE access to its management information system so the attendance data can be accessed regularly and securely.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

9.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and pupil premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

9.4 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. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parent/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 6.3, above)

If your child's attendance falls below 90%, parent/carers will receive a school target letter in the first instance requiring the child to achieve 95% attendance across a given time period. Any absence during this period will be unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided. If the target is not achieved and there is no improvement, we will refer to the Education Welfare Service and legal proceedings may be considered.

9.5 Targeting Support Meetings

As patterns of attendance are habitual, early identification and support is essential for individual pupils in need of help. Where barriers go beyond the classroom, this requires schools, local authorities, and other partners to work together to put joint support in place as quickly as possible. To enable this to happen, all local authorities are expected to organise regularly Targeting Support Meetings with each school in their area so the school's attendance leads and their point of contact in the local authority's Education Welfare Service can:

- Build strong relationships and work collaboratively.
- Identify, discuss, and agree action plans and joint approaches for severely absent pupils (where they do not already have a plan in place).
- Discuss and agree approaches for persistently absent pupils where they have barriers to attendance that require a multi-agency response to overcome.
- Agree which agency will act as lead practitioner, which will be the school in most cases, but can be a local authority or partner team where there are multiple needs are the most appropriate service.
- Where schools seek it, conduct data analysis, including comparisons to other schools in the geographical area or identify areas to focus attendance efforts on.

The meeting is not an exhaustive discussion of attendance of all pupils on roll or an audit of the attendance register. Meetings should be short virtual or in person conversations and are likely to be different lengths of time for different schools depending on the levels of need and number of pupils or pupil cohorts to be discussed. They should be focussed, with the allocated time prioritised in a way that benefits both the school and local authority. Meetings should not usually cover cases where joint action is not needed because support is already in place. The time together should be prioritised to discuss:

- Cases where there are out of school barriers to attendance, no existing plan in place and joint action from school, local authority and partners is needed.
- (Where time allows and the school would value the local authority's advice), cases where there are not out of school barriers and schools are expected to put an action plan in place.
- (By exception), cases that are already being discussed at other multi-agency meetings but where additional action is deemed necessary.

Halton has agreed a Targeted Support Meeting structure with headteachers and these will be attended by the Education Welfare Service, Headteachers and attendance leads. The Targeted Support Meetings will be chaired by the Council's School Improvement Team.

10 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Head teacher for approval by the Full Governing Body.

11 Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy;
- Behaviour policy.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent/carers travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent/carers(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays