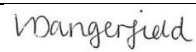




Sheepscombe Primary School

Attendance and Absence Policy Including Children Missing Education

This policy was adopted at a meeting of:	FGB
Held on:	17 th September 2024
Date to be reviewed	September 2025
Signed on behalf of the Governors:	
Name of signatory:	Debby Thacker
Signed by Head teacher	
Name of Head Teacher	Mrs Vicky Dangerfield



Sheepscombe Primary School and Little Lambs Nursery fully recognises its responsibility for safeguarding children and the importance of raising awareness of child protection issues. We discharge our responsibility with the attitude that 'it could happen here' where safeguarding is concerned. Any actions we take will be in the best interests of the child and compliant with the relevant statutory guidance.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) - Vicky Dangerfield (Headteacher)

Deputy DSL's - James Dangerfield, Richard Crocker, Rob Gardner

Safeguarding Governor - Tessa Lentel

Governor for Attendance - Tessa Lentel

Senior Attendance Champion - Vicky Dangerfield

Attendance Champion and Attendance Officer - James Dangerfield

Gloucestershire children's safeguarding partnership link here:

[Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership \(GSCP\) - Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership](#)

Gloucestershire Local Authority attendance guidance pages for parents here:

[Attendance - Schoolsnet \(gloucestershire.gov.uk\)](#)

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy found here:

[Sheepscombe Primary School - Safeguarding \(sheepscombeschool.co.uk\)](#)

Working together to improve attendance here:

[Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

KCSiE 2024 link here:

[Keeping children safe in education - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Children missing Education link here:

Children Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities (publishing.service.gov.uk)



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1. Aims, objectives and definition of regular attendance

At Sheepscombe Primary School and Little Lambs Nursery 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 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.

2. 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.



3. Roles and responsibilities

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.15 a.m 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 every day on time

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
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools that the school works closely with.
- The school governor with designated responsibility for attendance is Tessa Lentel. She can be reached at tlentel@sheepscombe.gloucs.sch.uk

The Headteacher Mrs Vicky Dangerfield 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 pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Requesting the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Headteacher Mrs Vicky Dangerfield, is also the Senior Attendance Champion. She can be contacted at head@sheepscombe.gloucs.sch.uk 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 and Attendance Champion is the School Business Manager Mr James Dangerfield He is contactable at admin@sheepscombe.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 the Headteacher
- Working with school staff e.g., pastoral lead/family liaison officer/SENDCo to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Class teachers are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office before 9.00 a.m or as soon as possible after 8.45 a.m when registration takes place.

School administration/office staff are responsible for:

- Taking calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and recording it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the appropriate member of staff to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- Keeping accurate and up to date records of calls and communication with parents

4. School processes for recording attendance and absence

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of the school day and once during each 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 - See Appendix A of this document.
- 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 must arrive in school by 8.45 a.m on each school day. Children may arrive from 8.30 a.m onwards and go straight into classrooms. The register for the morning session will be taken at 8.45 a.m and will be kept open until 9.15 a.m. The register for the afternoon session will be taken at 12.00 p.m.

5. Absence due to illness

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for an unplanned absence on the first day by 9.15 a.m or as soon as practically possible by calling the school On 01452 813952 and leaving a message on the answerphone if no-one is available to take the call.

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/carers 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 in advance.

A pupil who arrives late after class registration:

- Before the register has closed at 9.15 a.m will be marked as late (Code L)
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent (Code U)

Failure to arrive punctually over a period of time or ongoing punctuality issues may result in a Notice to Improve and/or a request to issue Penalty Notice under the GCC/National Penalty Notice Code of Conduct.

6. Planned absence

i. Medical and Dental appointments

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 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. School should be told the approximate time of return. When returning to school after an appointment parents/carers must accompany the pupil into school to inform school that they have returned and to sign them in.

If a pupil needs to leave early for an appointment parent/carer will need to collect them from school, as no pupil will be able to leave the premises without being accompanied by an adult. The pupil must be signed out.

ii. **Exceptional Circumstances**

All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at the Headteacher's discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities,

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.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a term time holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

The school defines 'exceptional circumstances' as one-off events which are unavoidable, examples may include the death of a close relative, attendance at a funeral, respite care of a looked after child, a housing crisis which prevents attendance. 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 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the school's leave of absence request form accessible via the school office. It must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. 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 definition 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)

A full list of codes is in Appendix A

7. Procedures following unexplained absence

- 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 may carry out a home visit if we have two staff available or alternatively will need to inform the authorities. This is for everyone's safety.
- When contact is made with the parent/carer school will 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 contact the authorities and the Gloucestershire Children's Safeguarding Partnership (GCSP)

8. Strategies for promoting attendance

Sheepscombe Primary School encourages and promotes regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns
- By keeping families informed of their child's attendance levels, including at parents' evenings
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics in the school newsletter;
- By implementing strategies to try to remove any barriers to regular attendance, and provide evidence of impact.

9. Attendance data monitoring, reporting and analysis

The school will:

- Regularly inform parents of their child's attendance levels sending home RAG rated copies of their attendance record from SIMS
- Monitor attendance and absence data daily at a pupil level. The School Attendance champions will meet weekly and discuss with the Governor for attendance termly. The Headteacher will report to Governors regarding attendance trends across the school at every Full Governing Body meeting.
- 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 school staff including the SENDCo and ELSA), 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

10. 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
- Use the graduated pathway where required to identify targets and support, including adding attendance into My Plan or My Plan Plus targets.
- Offer support and guidance to families
- 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

11. Legal sanctions

The school must consider requesting Gloucestershire County Council issue a fine to parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age and the national threshold has been met.

Fixed penalty notices are issued in accordance with the 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.

12. Definitions

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

13. Home Visits

Home visits may be made by members of staff where attendance or a child's whereabouts is a cause for concern. This is at the discretion of the school, and may be for attendance or child welfare reasons. If home visits are carried out, they will first be risk assessed by the Head teacher and Safeguarding leaders.

14. Children Absent from or Missing in Education

Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines. It is important the school or college's response to persistently absent pupils and children missing education supports identifying such abuse, and in the case of absent pupils, helps prevent the risk of them becoming a child missing education in the future.

This includes when problems are first emerging but also where children are already known to local authority children's social care and need a social worker (such as a child who is a child in need or who has a child protection plan, or is a looked after child), where being absent from education may increase known safeguarding risks within the family or in the community.

Further information and support, includes:

Guidance on school attendance [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance) including information on how schools should work with local authority children's services where school absence indicates safeguarding concerns.

Information regarding schools' duties regarding children missing education, including information schools must provide to the local authority when removing a child from the school roll at standard and non-standard transition points, can be found in the department's statutory guidance: Children Missing Education.



Full guidance can be accessed here: [Children Missing Education - Guidance for Local authorities \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education.

15. Safeguarding:

There are significant risks for children who regularly go missing from education or who are not in education. All children, regardless of circumstance, are entitled to full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any SEN they may have.

Procedures are in place to identify and respond to this, particularly those who are repeatedly missing or where there is an emerging pattern (see above).

With due regard for Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2024), Sheepscombe Primary School acknowledges the importance of information sharing between schools and appropriate Local Authorities to help identify children missing education and help protect children from potential harm.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect (including CSE, FGM, travelling to conflict zones and forced marriage) and staff must be alert to any possible signs or indicators. We will review information from the government's 'missing children and adults strategy' and 'children missing education' guidance when appropriate and applicable.

See the Safeguarding and other relevant policies for further information.

16. Links to other policies and monitoring arrangements

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy available on the school's website or via the school office.

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



Appendix A

School Attendance Codes 2024

Present Codes	
/ \	present during registration
B	educated off site and for taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes
K	attending provision arranged by the local authority under Section 19 of the EA 1996
L	arrived after the register has started but before it has closed
P	participation in a sporting activity with prior agreement from school
V	educational visit or trip supervised by a member of the school staff
W	attending work experience under arrangements by the school or local authority
Absent Codes	
Authorised Absences	
C	absence due to exceptional circumstances, agreed by the headteacher
C1	in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad
C2	absent due to part-time timetable, agreed by the headteacher and parent(s)/carer(s)
D	dual registered
E	suspended or permanently excluded, and no alternative provision made
I	illness (both physical and mental health related; not medical or dental appointments)
J1	job/school/college interview
M	medical or dental appointment
Q	unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements
R	religious observance (only 1 day allowed; any more coded as C if agreed)
S	study leave
T	parent travelling for occupational purposes
X	non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
Y1	unable to attend due to transport provided not being available
Y2	unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption
Y3	unable to attend due to part of the school premises being unexpectedly closed
Y4	unable to attend due to unexpected whole school closure
Y5	unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
Y6	unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
Y7	unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent)
Unauthorised Absences	
G	holiday or absence for leisure-related purposes (not agreed by the headteacher)
N	reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)
O	absent in other or unknown circumstances
U	late after register has closed
Administrative Codes	
Z	prospective pupil not yet on register
#	planned whole school closure (e.g., holidays, Insets and polling station days)