



Attendance Policy

Policy reviewed: May 2026

Approved by Governors: May 2026

To be read in conjunction with:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Supporting Children with Medical Needs Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy

ATTENDANCE POLICY

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Our Attendance Policy is designed to promote outstanding attendance for all pupils across the partnership. It is important for pupils to attend school regularly and punctually in order to take part fully in the life of the school and to take advantage of the learning opportunities offered. This policy seeks to ensure that parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting regular school attendance and punctuality for all. Regular attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life.

Research indicates a critical link between attendance and academic and social outcomes for pupils. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. Regular attenders make better progress and find school work more satisfying, friendships easier to cope with and are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.

Our aim is that this policy supports the development of our pupils into academically successful young people of good character with a thirst for knowledge and a love of learning.

Our Attendance Policy takes account of the guidance set out by the DfE which can be found using the following link: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

THE LAW

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient full time education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- A parent is defined in Education Law as: All natural parents, whether married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person; any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person.
- The table below indicates the DfE criteria for absence.

REGULAR ATTENDANCE	PERSISTENT ABSENCE	SEVERE ABSENCE
100% attendance	90% attendance or below	50% attendance or below

- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA) and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on their child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
 - ❖ Authorised Absence: when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
 - ❖ Unauthorised Absence: when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised.
- We realise that a child may be absent from school because of genuine illness. In such cases absence will be authorised. However, patterns of frequent or repeated sporadic absence will be followed up by the school with the LA becoming involved, if necessary.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

AIMS

- To promote regular attendance, thereby offering all pupils equal access to learning.
- To create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers and staff.
- To keep parents/carers and staff informed of their responsibilities for attendance and punctuality
- To encourage every pupil to develop positive attitudes towards attendance and punctuality and to set good attendance patterns
- To help all adults concerned to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.
- To fulfil Safeguarding responsibilities.

RESPONSIBILITIES

We believe that the responsibility for the attendance of all pupils is shared between the parents and school.

SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES	PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES
• Provide a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and their presence is valued. • Regularly reinforce the importance of punctuality and good attendance and develop a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. • Mark attendance registers accurately and follow up on any absences on a daily basis. • Review weekly and termly attendance data and follow up on attendance concerns. • Monitor absence patterns of any children achieving less than 96% attendance and support pupils as necessary. • Ensure that the school follows the DfE guidelines and provide regular reports to the governing body. The Governors will: • review attendance on a regular basis • hold senior leaders to account for the level of attendance in school and have an overview of the policy and procedures in dealing with attendance.	• Make all reasonable efforts to ensure that their child attends school every session of every day that the school is open to them. • To have children in class and ready to start their learning by the start of the day (8.40a.m. Juniors and 8.50a.m. Infants). • To inform school of any absence, with a reason, on the first and any following days of absence. • Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of addresses. • To request leave as far in advance as possible. • To make applications for leave in writing on the schools' 'Absence Request Form' at least 5 days in advance of the absence. • To work with the school to improve lateness and attendance. • To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.

DAILY ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND LATENESS

Registers are taken twice a day. Registers show whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised using the codes provided in SIMS (Schools Information Management System).

A child arriving late or leaving early may seriously disrupt not only his/her learning but also that of other children. Children arriving late should come in the main entrance and inform the school office of arrival /lunch requirements. A record is kept for both late arrivals and early departures in case of an emergency. This will include the time of arrival/departure, the reason for being late/leaving early.

- School starts at 8.40a.m. at the Junior School and 8.50a.m. at the Infant School. Teachers are expected to have completed their registers within the first 5 minutes of registration. The afternoon session at both schools starts at 12.50p.m. If a child arrives after this point but within the registration period then they will be registered as late but present, using the code L.
- If a child misses morning or afternoon registration but no acceptable explanation is provided, they will be marked as late but counted as an unauthorised absence for that session using the code U. This will be followed up by the school.

	JUNIOR SCHOOL	INFANT SCHOOL
Morning Registration Period	8.40 - 9.00a.m.	8.50 - 9.10a.m.
Code L: Present but late	8.45 – 9.00a.m.	8.55 – 9.10a.m.
Code U: Unauthorised late	After 9.00a.m.	After 9.10a.m.
Afternoon Registration Period	12.50 – 1.10p.m.	12.50 – 1.10p.m.
Code L: Present but late	12.55 – 1.10p.m.	12.55 – 1.10p.m.
Code U: Unauthorised late	After 1.10p.m.	After 1.10p.m.

As soon as registers have closed, the administration staff will follow up any missing marks in the electronic register using our Absence Procedure (Appendix 2). If we are not able to make contact with parents by 10a.m., the Safeguarding Team will decide if a home visit is necessary and, if no contact is made and there are still welfare concerns, then school will contact Gloucestershire Police on 101 and request a welfare check to take place.

REPORTING YOUR CHILD AS ABSENT/LATE	SUPPORT WITH ABSENCE
Please contact the relevant school office: Innsworth Infant School: 01452 730780 admin@innsworth.gloucs.sch.uk Innsworth Junior School: 01452 730377 office@innsworth-jun.gloucs.sch.uk	If you need any help supporting your child with attendance or lateness, please contact our Attendance Leads: Miss K. Schofield, through the Junior School office: 01452 730377 office@innsworth-jun.gloucs.sch.uk or Mrs L. Monk, through the Infant School office: 01452 730780 admin@innsworth.gloucs.sch.uk

REQUEST FOR ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Parents should remember we are aiming for children to attend every session of every day the school is open to them, wherever possible. We must have notice for requests for absence at least five days in advance explaining why this is requested. A form (Appendix 1) is available from the school office and the headteacher will respond with a reply slip showing the number of authorised and unauthorised absences the child has had.

A leave of absence will only be granted where the Head Teacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parents will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE	UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE
An authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence (adhering to DfE Guidelines). This includes children being educated off site. All other absences will be treated as unauthorised.	For example, shopping trips, holidays, where the school feels a child is being kept home without good reason or where a child is late and the parent/carer fails to provide an acceptable explanation. This will be recorded and monitored, by the Headteacher and Attendance Lead, and where a pattern emerges or concern arises, parents/carers and other agencies, where relevant, will be informed by the Headteacher.

In doing so the headteacher will consider the following before authorising the leave:

- The child's attendance history – if it is at or below 90% (persistently absent) then no authorised leave will be granted.
- The time of year – permission for time off during Term 5 will not be granted for Y6 children and no authorisation will be given during the first two weeks of Term 1.

- Whether the parents/carers are restricted in terms of leave from their employer. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer (e.g. Line Manager/Commanding Officer) as to why the family can only take leave during term time)
- Whether the child's parents/carers are in the armed forces. (Deleted the sentence about 10 days authorised.)
- Whether a parent/carer or sibling who has a life limiting/changing illness. This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members, e.g. grandparents, aunt/uncle etc.

Where the parents/carers keep a child away for longer than agreed then the extra time will also be marked as unauthorised.

It follows that leave of absence for more than one week must be seen as exceptional. The Headteacher will carefully explore with parents/carers why such leave of absence is necessary. Absences can only be approved in advance and can be requested using the Absence Request Form (Appendix 1).

Any parent taking a child on holiday that has not been deemed an exceptional circumstance may be expected to be referred to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice. For the first offence within a rolling three-year period, the Penalty Notice allows you 21 days to pay an £80 fine. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £160. If the fine remains unpaid at this stage, the LA will usually initiate legal proceedings against you.

For a second offence within a rolling three-year period, there is no opportunity to pay the fine at the lower amount. Instead, the fine will be at £180. If there is a request for a third penalty notice, prosecution will be considered if two penalty notices have been served in any rolling three-year period (See Appendix 4 for further details).

*If we think you have taken a holiday without obtaining prior authorisation a warning letter to the parent/s carer/s that have day-to-day care and responsibility will be issued to inform them that: **Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.***

RELIGIOUS OBSERVANCE

Absence for Religious Observance will be authorised when it falls on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the parents' religious body. We are aware of the different religious communities within school and authorise absence. Please notify the school at least 5 days in advance by submitting an Absence Request Form.

MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

While we appreciate that some appointments have to be taken when they are on offer, parents/carers are encouraged to make them out of school hours and, if not possible, towards the end of either a morning or afternoon session, as this avoids the child being marked as an authorised absence. If a pupil misses school frequently for appointments, the school will discuss these absences with the parent/carer.

SUPPORT WITH ATTENDANCE

Parents will be informed about their children's attendance each term and support will be offered for children whose punctuality and/or attendance is causing concern. The schools' pastoral team or Attendance Lead may be able to help with in school provisions or referrals to other professionals (such as the school nurse, Early Help etc.), as appropriate. If attendance remains a concern then we will consider whether more formal support is necessary (See Appendix 3).

NOTICES TO IMPROVE

You may receive a Notice to Improve notification in your email from the Local Authority (LA) when your child's absence has been marked as unauthorised for 10 sessions within 10 weeks. One session is either a morning or an afternoon so 2 sessions is equivalent to 1 school day. This can be from a combination of G codes (unagreed holiday), O codes (unauthorised absence) and U codes (late after registers closed). The sessions do not need to be consecutive and the weeks may be in different terms.

The Notice to Improve will set out the school's expectations with regards to your child's attendance during the notification period. Should there be no improvement in attendance during the notification period then a penalty notice may be issued.

PENALTY NOTICES

A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine which may be issued as an alternative to prosecution. If it is paid, it does not require a court appearance and does not result in a criminal record. Payment of a Penalty Notice means you avoid the potential danger of prosecution and subsequent conviction.

Penalty notices are fines that can be issued by the Local Authority to parents for their child's irregular school attendance or the whereabouts of their excluded child. The notice will state the fine payable and the timescales for doing so.

For the first offence within a rolling three-year period, the Penalty Notice allows you 21 days to pay an £80 fine. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £160. If the fine remains unpaid at this stage, the LA will usually initiate legal proceedings against you.

For a second offence within a rolling three-year period, there is no opportunity to pay the fine at the lower amount. Instead, the fine will be at £180. If there is a request for a third penalty notice, prosecution will be considered under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996 if two penalty notices have been served in any rolling three-year period.

If your child, following an exclusion, is found in a public place, without a justifiable reason for being there, during school hours on a school day during the first five days of a fixed term exclusion or a permanent exclusion, the Local Authority will also issue a Penalty Notice. The school will have sent you a letter at the time of the exclusion detailing your responsibilities during this period. For this penalty notice, the cost will be £60 for the 21 days after it is issued. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £120 and is not subject to the rolling three-year period.

All payments are made to the Local Authority. Parents of a registered pupil whose child fails to attend school regularly are committing an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996. A penalty notice for irregular attendance can be issued where the parent is capable of but unwilling to secure an improvement in their child's school attendance. Further details about Penalty Notices can be found in Appendix 4.

CONCLUSION

The class teachers, pastoral team, Attendance Lead and the Headteacher are available to discuss any concerns you may have in relation to school attendance and punctuality. This policy should be read in conjunction with the following policies/guidelines:

- Each Schools' Vision and Aims
- Safeguarding
- Anti-bullying & hate
- Behaviour
- Equalities
- SEND
- PSHE
- Guidelines available on <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/article/107600/Attendance-and-absence-from-school> and the DFE website <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- Offer of Early Help
- This policy takes due regard to all the requirements of the Human Rights Act and all Equal Opportunities legislation.

This policy will be reviewed as part of the school's rolling programme of policy review and revised as necessary.

Absence Request Form



In line with our school attendance policy, please note:-

- Regular attendance at school is very important for all pupils, as this sets a good example and has a positive effect on pupil progress and attainment.
- Parents who make a request for absence in school time, are therefore asked to reflect upon the message they are sending to their child about how important school is.
- Absences for family holidays will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances..
- All absences count against attendance figures on school records even if authorised. These have to be reported to the Government, Local Education Authority and are reported nationally.
- **Absence during Term 5 will not be granted for Year 6 children.**
- **No authorisation will be given for absence during the first two weeks of Term 1.**
- **Absence will not be granted if attendance is at or below 90% (persistently absent).**

Consideration will be given to:

- whether parents/carers are restricted in terms of leave from their employer. (These requests will however need to be accompanied by a letter from the employer (e.g. Line Manager/Commanding Officer) as to why the family can only take leave during term time)
- whether the child's parents/carers are in the armed forces.
- whether a parent/carer or sibling who has a life limiting/changing illness. (This request will need to be accompanied by a letter from a medical professional working with the family, or the request will not be seen as exceptional. The request will not be deemed as exceptional if it is the illness of other extended family members, e.g. grandparents, aunt/uncle etc.)

Please return this completed form to the Headteacher at least 5 school days before the beginning of the requested absence. Authorisation will be returned to you in your child(ren)'s book bag or via email.

Name(s) of child/ren:				Class(es):	
Between the dates of:	1 st day of absence	And:	Last day of absence	Total School days:	
Reason for making this special request:				Are you a Service Family ☐ tick if yes (Please provide a supporting letter from your Commanding Officer)	
Name and address of parent(s)/carer(s) requesting absence					
Signed (parent/carer)				Date:	
FOR OFFICE USE:					
Number of sessions missed already due to Holiday:		Number of Sessions missed due to illness:		% attendance	Request: Authorised days Unauthoriseddays

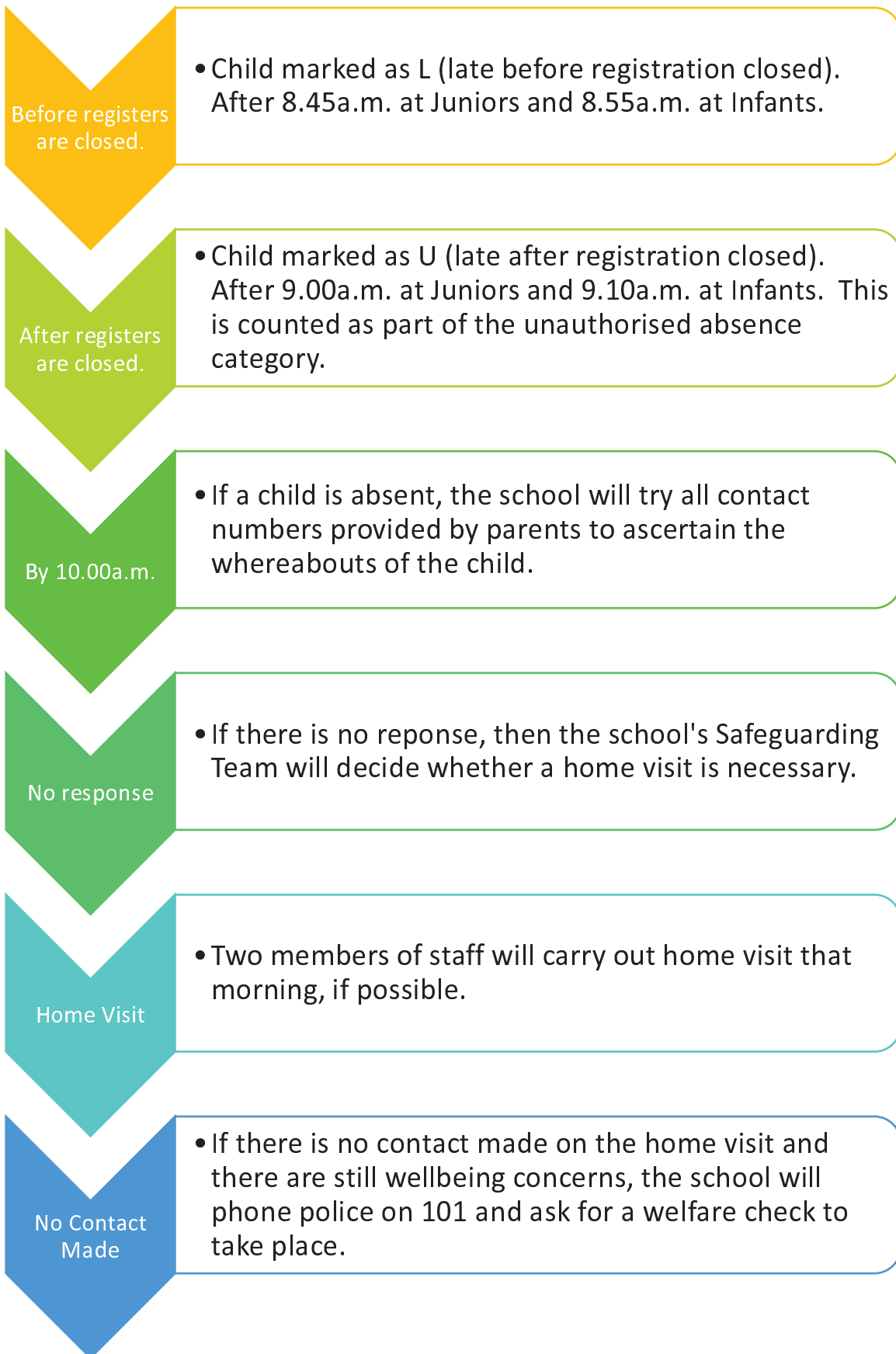
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Name(s) of child/ren:				Class(es):	
Between the dates of:	1 st day of absence	And:	Last day of absence	Total School days:	
Authorised ☐	Unauthorised ☐			Other: Authorised days Unauthoriseddays	
Signed (Headteacher)				Date:	
FOR OFFICE USE:					
Number of sessions missed already due to Holiday:		Number of Sessions missed due to illness:		% attendance	

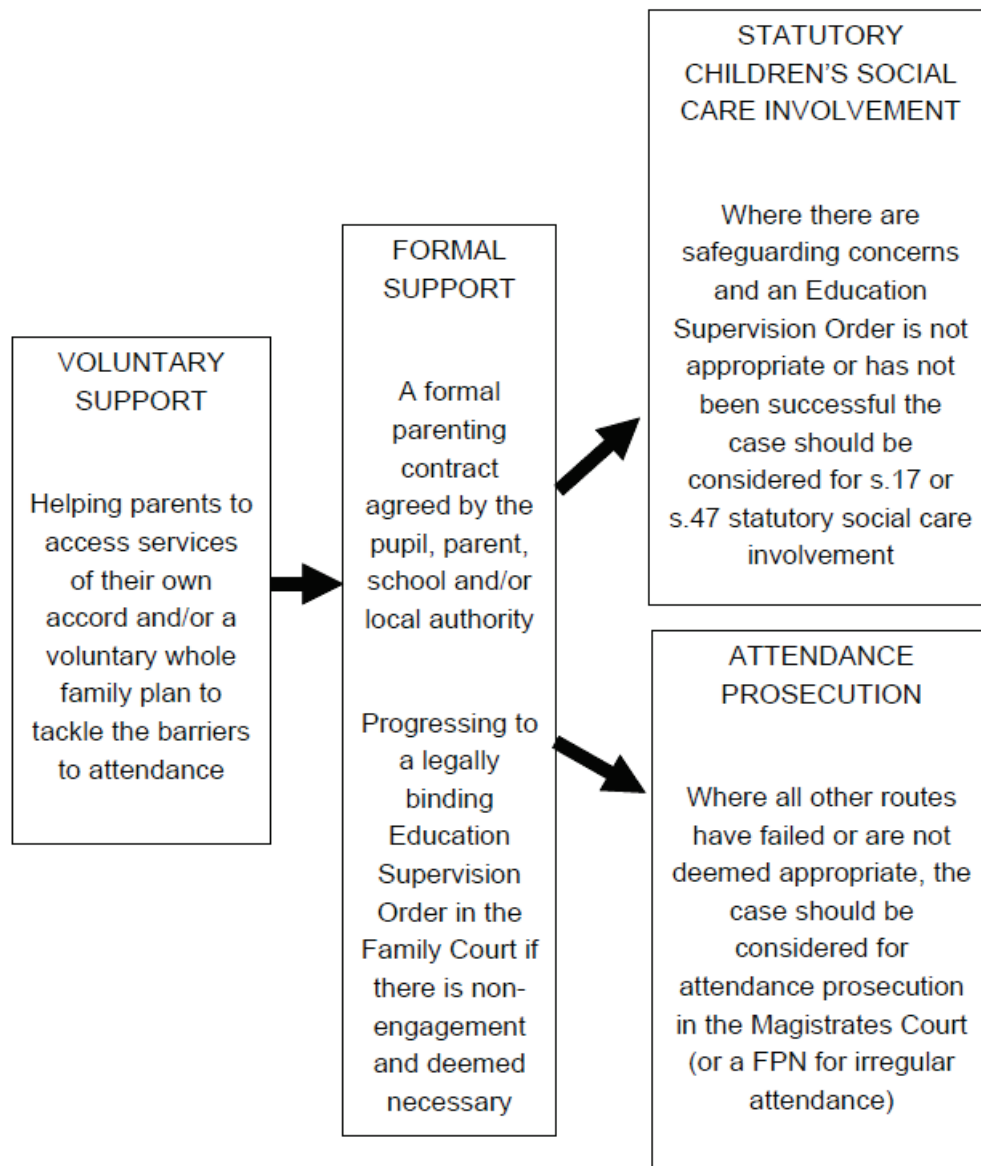
Ref: G/Attendance/Absence Request Form September 2026

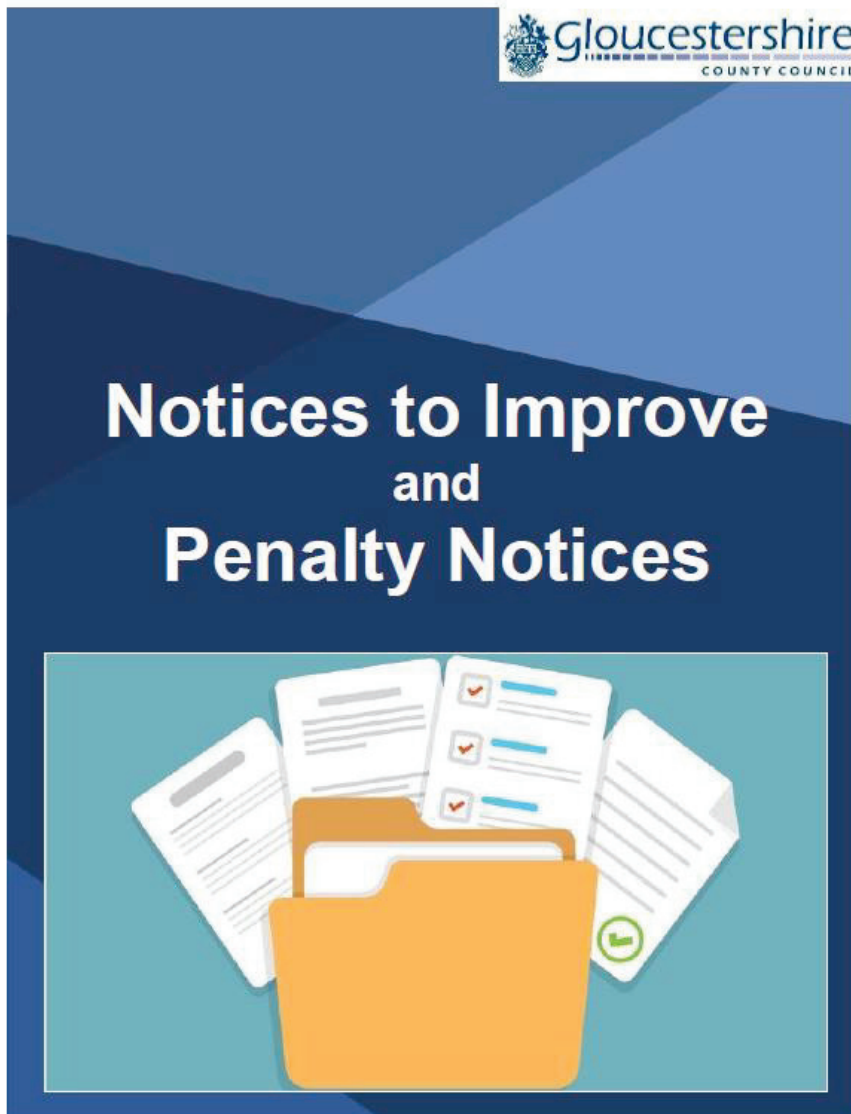
Procedure for Absent Children

Innsworth Junior School Registration Period: 8.40a.m. – 9.00a.m.
Innsworth Infant School Registration Period: 8.50a.m. – 9.10a.m.



Attendance Legal Intervention
(from 'Working together to improve school attendance' DfE)





Information for Parents and Carers

Updated August 2024

Penalty Notices and the Education Act 1996

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 gives the Local Authority (LA) to issue Penalty Notices when a parent has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school but has failed to secure their child's regular attendance at school punctuality.

Why are Penalty Notices used?

Missing school can impact on children's learning, disrupt school routines, and affect the continuity of their education. It can seriously affect a child's longer-term attainment and ability to reach their full potential.

If your child fails to attend school regularly and their absence is recorded as unauthorised, you are guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

What is a Penalty Notice?

A Penalty Notice is a fixed fine which may be issued without prosecution. If it is paid, it does not require a criminal record. Payment can avoid the potential danger of prosecution.

What is a Notice to Improve?

You may receive a Notice to Improve from your Local Authority (LA) when your child's attendance is unauthorised for 10 sessions within 10 weeks. The weeks may be consecutive.

The Notice to Improve will set out the steps you need to take to improve your child's attendance during the notice period.

When might a Penalty Notice be issued?

You may face a Penalty Notice for the following reasons:

- If your child is absent from school for 10 sessions within 10 weeks, the Headteacher, for the purposes of the Education Act 1996, may issue a Penalty Notice.

For a holiday taken in term time, there is no requirement for a school to issue a Notice to Improve notification or warning notice.

- If your child is persistently late for school, after the register has closed and does not have authorisation from the headteacher.
- If your child is absent from school and the school has been unable to find out the reason for the absence.
- If your child is absent from the school and there are no exceptional circumstances for the absence for the Headteacher to authorise the absence, in line with the school's policy.
- If your child, following an exclusion, is found in a public place, without a justifiable reason for being there, during school hours on a school day during the first five days of a fixed term exclusion or a permanent exclusion. The school will have sent you a letter at the time of the exclusion detailing your responsibilities during this period. **For this penalty notice, the cost will be £60 for the 21 days after it is issued. If you pay after the 21-day period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £120.**

How is a Penalty Notice issued?

Penalty Notices are issued by the LA at the request of the school. Fines are usually issued to **each parent** for **each child**.

A parent is defined in Education Law as:

- All natural parents, whether married or not
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person

The fact that you do not live with the child is not a defence against securing their attendance at school.

You will receive the Penalty Notice by post to your home address with instructions on how to pay.

What is the cost of the fine?

For the first offence within a rolling three-year period, the LA allows you 21 days to pay an £80 fine. If you do not pay the fine in this period, but within 28 days, the fine to pay is £120. If the fine is unpaid at this stage, the LA will usually issue a summons to court.

For a second offence within a rolling three-year period, the LA allows you 21 days to pay the fine at the lower rate of £180. If there is a request for a third penalty notice within a three-year period, it will be considered if two penalty notices have been issued within the three-year period.

What happens if I do not pay the fine?

You will have 28 days to pay the Penalty Notice. If you do not pay the fine in this timeframe, the LA will usually issue a summons to court against you for failing to secure regular attendance for your child registered at a school. If you are convicted, the court can impose several possible sentences, including a fine or a community order.

Is there an appeal process?

There is no right of appeal. Once a Penalty Notice is issued, it can only be withdrawn if it can be shown that it was issued in error.

What happens if the Penalty Notice is issued to the wrong school?

Parents/carers are not liable for prosecution if the child's attendance for the period in question on the Penalty Notice was not covered by the notice.

For more information, please contact the Education Inclusion Service:
Telephone: 01452 427274
Email: attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk