Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Inspire to achieve; persevere to succeed

The policy covers many of the articles from the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Some key articles, are highlighted below:

Article	
2	The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background.
3	The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
19	Governments must do all they can to ensure that children are protected from all forms of violence, abuse, neglect and bad treatment by their parents or anyone else who looks after them.
23	A child with a disability has the right to live a full and decent life with dignity and, as far as possible, independence and to play an active part in the community. Governments must do all they can to support disabled children and their families.
28	Children have the right to an education, and primary schooling should be free with secondary and higher education made accessible to all. Schools must ensure discipline respects children's rights and must never use violence
29	Education should help children develop their personality, talents, and abilities to the fullest. It should also teach them to understand their rights, respect others, live peacefully, and care for the environment.

Approved by:	Full Governing Body	**Date:**	23/3/2026
Signature (Chair of Committee):	Sam O'Hara	**Signatures (Co-Headteachers):**	Anre Buchner
Last review date:		**Next review date:**	March 2027

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1. 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

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending school.

2. Definitions

2.1 Persistent Absence (PA)

Definition: Persistent Absence is a term used to describe a level of pupil absence from school that is considered to be a safeguarding concern and recorded as such.
Threshold: In England, a pupil is considered to be persistently absent when they have an attendance rate of 90% or below. This means they have missed 10% or more of their school sessions.

2.2 Risk of Persistent Absence

Definition: The term "Risk of Persistent Absence" refers to a situation in which a pupil's attendance is at a level that suggests they are at risk of becoming persistently absent.
Threshold: While there is no specific threshold for "Risk of Persistent Absence," it is typically used to describe pupils whose attendance is consistently low and becoming a concern, as the school communicates to parents in days, we identify 10 days or more as Risk of PA and we will follow internal school procedures.

2.3 Severe Absence (or Severe Persistent Absence)

Definition: The term "Severe Absence" or "Severe Persistent Absence" is used to describe the most serious cases of non-attendance.
Threshold: Particular focus and support will be provided to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of external agency partners.

2.4 Absence Definitions

Your child is marked as absent if…

- They arrive at school after the register has closed
- They do not attend school for any reason.

Examples when absence is **authorised**

- Sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Emergency medical or orthodontal appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious observance, where the observance cannot take place outside term time.
- Significant family events for which the school has granted leave.
- Sudden family emergency

- Suspension from school

Examples when absence is **unauthorised**

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time (this includes marriages abroad where a holiday is also taken)
- Routine dental and optician appointments.
- Where a DfE code does not exist for the purpose of the absence

2. Legislation 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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment

It also refers to:

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

3. The Importance of School Attendance

School attendance is not simply a statutory requirement; it is a fundamental pillar of education. Articles 28 and 29 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child affirm education as a fundamental human right and emphasise the importance of regular participation in learning. Consistent school attendance plays a crucial role in supporting academic achievement, personal

development, and positive future outcomes, making it an essential component of an effective and inclusive education system.

Regular attendance to school can have a significant impact on:

- **Academic Achievement:** Regular attendance directly correlates with academic success. Children who attend school consistently are more likely to keep up with the curriculum, perform better in exams, and improve their life outcomes.
- **Knowledge Acquisition:** School is where children acquire knowledge and skills that are crucial for their personal and professional growth. Missing days means missing out on valuable learning opportunities.
- **Social Development:** School provides a vital social environment for children and adolescents to interact with peers, develop friendships, and learn essential social skills. Consistent attendance ensures children remain connected to their peer group.
- **Building Routine:** School attendance establishes a structured routine in children's lives, teaching them time management and responsibility, which are valuable life skills.
- **Teacher Interaction:** Regular attendance allows for meaningful teacher-child interactions. Teachers can provide personalised support, address questions, and assess individual progress more effectively when children attend regularly.
- **Preventing Knowledge Gaps:** Frequent absences can lead to significant knowledge gaps, making it challenging for children to catch up with missed lessons, potentially resulting in long-term academic struggles.
- **School Engagement:** Children who attend school regularly are more likely to engage in extracurricular activities, sports, and other enriching experiences that contribute to their overall development.

Parents or guardians are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular school attendance. Failing to do so can lead to safeguarding concerns being raised due to educational neglect and legal consequences.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governors

- The governing board is responsible for:
- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/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
- **The attendance governor will** provide oversight and challenge to ensure the school is effectively promoting good attendance. In brief, their responsibilities include:

    - ✓ **Monitoring attendance data**: Reviewing patterns, trends, and persistent absence rates.
    - ✓ **Supporting policy implementation**: Ensuring the school has a clear attendance policy that aligns with statutory requirements.
    - ✓ **Holding leaders to account**: Asking questions about strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence.
    - ✓ **Championing attendance**: Promoting its importance across the school community and ensuring it is a priority in governance discussions.

4.2 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance Lead to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/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
- 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 parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
    - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
    - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

4.3 Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader (also known as the 'senior attendance champion') 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
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building productive relationships with parents/carers to tackle attendance issues.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Advisor on issuing penalty notices.
- Report to HTs and Governors

4.4 Attendance Champions (SLT and Year Group Leaders)

- SLT member attached to specific year groups.
- Acting as Year Group Attendance Lead
- Monitoring and Analysing attendance data for their year group.

- Building productive relationships with parents/carers to tackle attendance issues.
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and parents/carers.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Holding teachers accountable for early interventions.
- Leading parent meetings for pupils with persistent absence and severe absence.
- Agreeing and monitoring Attendance Support Plans.
- Ensuring Attendance Contracts are completed and reviewed.
- Escalating severe cases to DSLA
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Liaise with pastoral teams.

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 in a timely manner, on the same day. They alongside attendance champions, inclusion/ pastoral team are also responsible for working closely with parent/ to improve attendance and punctuality of targeted children.

4.6 Attendance Officers

Attendance admin officers will:

Monitor Attendance

- Track daily attendance and punctuality of pupils.
- Identify patterns of absence or lateness.

Maintain Records

- Update and manage attendance data in the school's Arbor (Management Information System).
- Ensure registers are accurate and complete for legal compliance.

Follow Up on Absences

- Contact parents/carers regarding unexplained absences.
- Record reasons for absence and update systems accordingly.

Reporting

- Prepare attendance reports for class teachers, attendance champions, senior leadership, governors, and local authorities.
- Highlight pupils at risk of persistent absence.

Compliance

- Ensure the school meets statutory requirements for attendance monitoring.
- Assist with safeguarding by flagging concerns linked to attendance.

Support Interventions

- Work with pastoral teams, attendance champions and external agencies to improve attendance.
- Arrange meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

Communication

- Respond to queries from parents and staff about attendance policies.
- Send letters or notifications regarding attendance and punctuality concerns.

4.7 Parents

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

- All natural parents,
- 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)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9:00am 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 (routine dental and optician appointments will not be authorised)
- Keep to any attendance support plan, attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance, Attendance Champion for their year group, Inclusion Managers or Family Liaison Practitioners, who can be contacted via 0208 2704291.

4.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day, on time.
- Celebrate their attendance and punctuality achievements.

4.9 Inclusion Champions (Learning mentors, 1-2-1)

Early Identification of Barriers

- Spot emotional, social, or practical issues affecting attendance.
- Share insights with DSL and AHTs for targeted interventions.

1:1 Support for Pupils

- Provide daily check-ins for pupils on Attendance Support Plans.
- Help pupils manage anxiety or transitions (e.g., morning routines, classroom entry).

Reintegration Support

- Work with pupils returning after long absences to rebuild confidence.
- Create personalised timetables or safe spaces for gradual reintegration.

Family Engagement

- Act as a trusted link between school and home for hard-to-reach families.
- Support parents with routines and strategies to improve punctuality and attendance.

Motivation & Positive Reinforcement

- Celebrate small wins (e.g., arriving on time, attending full week).
- Use rewards and encouragement tailored to the pupil's interests.

Multi-Agency Coordination

- Attend meetings with Attendance Champions, DSLA, and external professionals.
- Share observations that inform Education Welfare Officer or social care involvement.

4.10 Family Liaison Practitioners (FLP)

- Liaise with school attendance officers, attendance champions, class teachers and external agencies in monitoring the children's attendance to identify patterns of poor attendance and work with families to address the underlying issues.
- Conduct Home visits and accompanying children to and from school when needed.

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 Times

	Register opens morning	**Lesson Start Time**	**Gates open afternoon**	**Lesson Finish Time**
Nursery Morning Nursery Afternoon	8:30 am 12:30 pm	8:30 am 12:30 pm	11:30 am 3:30 pm	11:30 am 3:30 pm
Shaftesbury Site	8:40 am	8:50 am	3:15 pm	3:20 pm
Gascoigne Road Site	8:50 am	9:00 am	3:25 PM	3:30 pm

Pupils must arrive in school and be in their classroom before their lesson start time on each school day. Children need to arrive on time as activities start straight away. Late arrivals are very disruptive for both the office staff and the other children who are already settled into their morning tasks.

First Session Register Mark - Present / Late / Absent

	Register Mark **Present** /	Register Mark **Late** **L**	Register Mark **Arrived after register closed** **U (Absent)**
Nursery Morning Nursery Afternoon	8:30 – 8:40 am 12:30 – 12:40 pm	8:41 – 9:00 am 12:31– 1:00 pm	9:01 am onward 1:01 pm onward
Shaftesbury Site	8:40 – 8:50 am	8:51 – 9:10 am	9:11 am onward
Gascoigne Road Site	8:50 – 9:00 am	9:01 – 9:20 am	9:21 am onward

Second Session Register Mark - Present / Late / Absent -U

	Register Mark **Present** /	Register Mark **Late** **L**	Register Mark **Arrived after register closed** **U (Absent)**
Shaftesbury Site Y6	12:40 – 12:50 pm	12:51 – 1:10 pm	1:11 am onward
Shaftesbury Site Y5	1:15-1:25 pm	1:26 – 1:45 pm	1:46 pm onward
Gascoigne Site	1:00 – 1:10 pm	1:11 – 1:30 am	1:31 am onward

5.3 Unplanned Absence & Follow-up

The Parent / Carer's role

Parents or carers must contact the school on 0208 2704291, by 9:00am, on the first day of their child's absence to provide the reason for the absence.

The parent / carer can leave a telephone message stating the:

- name of the child
- the child's class
- reason for absence

If you haven't let us know why your child is absent from school your child will be marked as unauthorised absence.

The school's role

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

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of Day 1 of the 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 on Day 3 or contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Where the absence is longer than 2 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical documentation, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.
- 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 on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents 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 the school will issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention, as appropriate.

5.4 Planned Absence

Medical/ Dental Appointments
We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Documentation of appointments should be provided to the school office in advance. The school will not authorise routine dental and optician appointments during term-time.

Term-time absence (Requesting Leave of Absence due to Exceptional Circumstances or Holiday see section 6)

5.5 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

At Gascoigne Primary School, ongoing punctuality issues are identified through daily monitoring of the attendance and late registers, with patterns of persistent or repeated lateness reviewed regularly by senior leaders and pastoral staff. Where concerns are identified, the school responds promptly by working in partnership with parents/carers to understand the reasons for lateness and to provide early, supportive intervention. Strategies may include meetings with families, clear communication of expectations, practical support to improve morning routines, and short-term punctuality targets. Where punctuality does not improve, concerns may be escalated through attendance support plans and, where appropriate, involvement of external agencies. Throughout this process, the school remains focused on removing barriers, safeguarding pupils' welfare, and ensuring that all children are able to access learning from the start of the school day.

6. Authorised Absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

Parents or carers must request leave of absence for their child in writing at least 10 school days in advance. Leave of absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances. The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Parents should be aware that school does not authorise holidays in term time, as a family holiday is not considered 'exceptional'.

A leave of absence request form (see appendix 4) can be obtained from the school office either in person or via email office@gascoigne.co.uk

If leave has not been sought, and the absence extends to 5 or more days, school has to report this absence to the local authority. School will also act if it 'suspects' that a holiday has been taken and no leave of absence from was completed.

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:

- Exceptional circumstances
- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable

A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

Exceptional circumstances are events or situations that are rare, unavoidable, and outside the control of the pupil and their family, where attendance at school is not reasonably possible despite the school's and family's best efforts. Exceptional circumstances are not circumstances that could be planned for, avoided, or mitigated through alternative arrangements.

The school considers each application for leave of absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

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

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and urgent medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- The school recognises the importance of religious observance for families and will authorise absence for **1 day** that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the family belongs, in line with national guidance. Schools are required to authorise such absences where the day is formally designated for religious observance. Any additional days requested beyond the designated religious observance day will be considered as a request for exceptional leave, which may or may not be authorised at the discretion of the headteacher in accordance with this policy."

- Parent(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 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.

Penalty notices
The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents 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 penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, 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, a notice to improve 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

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice.

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, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

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

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent 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.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents 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 parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process. In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents 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 parents 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 2 and 4 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

The school promotes high attendance through a support-first, inclusive and relational approach, recognising that regular attendance is central to pupils' learning, wellbeing and safeguarding. Our strategies are informed by the Department for Education's Attendance Toolkit for Schools and Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance .

7.1 Rewarding and Celebrating Attendance

The school actively celebrates good and improving attendance, recognising that progress over time is as important as high attendance. Strategies may include:

- Regular recognition in assemblies**,** such as class attendance awards or individual certificates.
- Attendance displays celebrating:
    - Classes with strong attendance
    - Pupils who have shown sustained improvement
    - Whole-school attendance milestones
- Certificates, stickers, badges or postcards home recognising:
    - Improved attendance
    - Consistent attendance
    - Improved punctuality

Class or group rewards, such as enrichment activities or additional play opportunities.

Rewards are designed to be motivating, fair and inclusive, ensuring pupils with additional needs, medical conditions or complex circumstances are not disadvantaged. The school prioritises celebrating attendance improvement, particularly for pupils who have previously struggled to attend regularly.

7.2 Attendance Banding and Making Progress Visible

To support understanding and motivation, the school may use an attendance banding approach to help pupils and parents/carers clearly see attendance patterns and improvement over time. This approach supports:

- Early identification of emerging concerns
- Clear communication with families
- Recognition of positive movement between attendance bands

Attendance information is shared in a way that is accessible and meaningful, focusing on days and learning missed, as well as progress made.

7.3 Creating a Culture of Belonging and High Expectations

The school works to create a warm, welcoming and inclusive environment where pupils feel safe, valued and want to attend. This includes:

- Clear, consistent messaging that every day matters
- Positive role-modelling by staff
- A visible pastoral presence at key points in the school day
- A *"curious, not furious"* approach to absence, encouraging open conversations about barriers to attendance

Pupils returning after absence are welcomed positively and without stigma**,** with staff focusing on reintegration, reassurance and rebuilding routines.

7.4 Early Support and Graduated Intervention

Where attendance begins to decline, the school follows a graduated response, which may include:

- First-day response and regular communication with parents/carers
- Meetings to understand barriers to attendance
- Targeted support for pupils with SEND, medical needs, mental health needs or safeguarding concerns
- Reasonable adjustments and flexible support where appropriate

Support is regularly reviewed to ensure it remains proportionate and effective.

7.5 Attendance Contracts

Where attendance concerns persist despite early intervention, the school and/or Local Authority may offer an Attendance Contract (also known as an Attendance Support Plan or Parenting Contract).

Attendance contracts are voluntary, supportive agreements co-produced with parents/carers and pupils (where appropriate). They typically:

- Clearly set out attendance expectations
- Identify specific barriers to attendance
- Agree actions and support to be provided by the school and other agencies
- Include clear review dates and success criteria

Attendance contracts form part of a support-first, graduated approach**.** Where there is limited improvement or engagement, concerns may be escalated in line with Local Authority procedures, including referral to the Education Welfare Service.

8. Approaches of Attendance Intervention

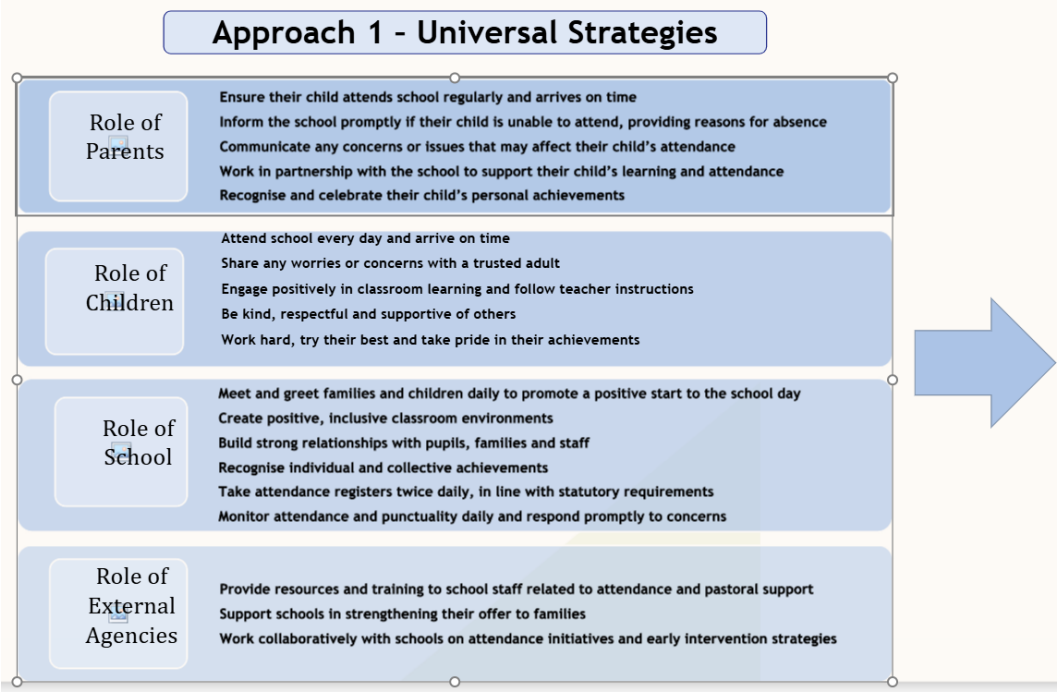
To ensure a consistent and robust approach to improving attendance, **Gascoigne Primary School** implements a **Multi- Staged System of Support (MSSS)**. This framework provides three levels of intervention, involving collaboration between teachers, school leaders, pupils, parents, and external agencies – including the Local Authority.

Our MSSS model is:

- **Data-driven** – decisions are informed by accurate attendance data and patterns.
- **Collaborative** – roles and responsibilities are clearly defined across all stakeholders.
- **Proactive** – interventions are timely and escalate appropriately based on need.
- **Aligned with statutory guidance** – specifically the Department for Education's *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (2024).

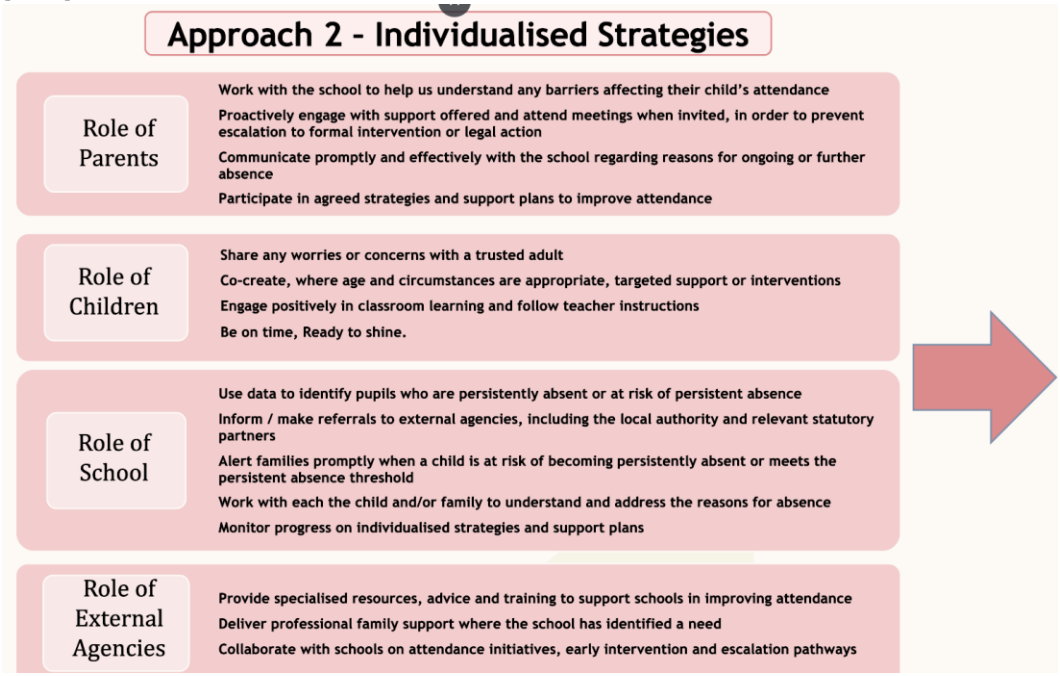
8.1 Approach1 Universal Strategies

Universal Approach: Establishing a baseline universal attendance approach that benefits all children.



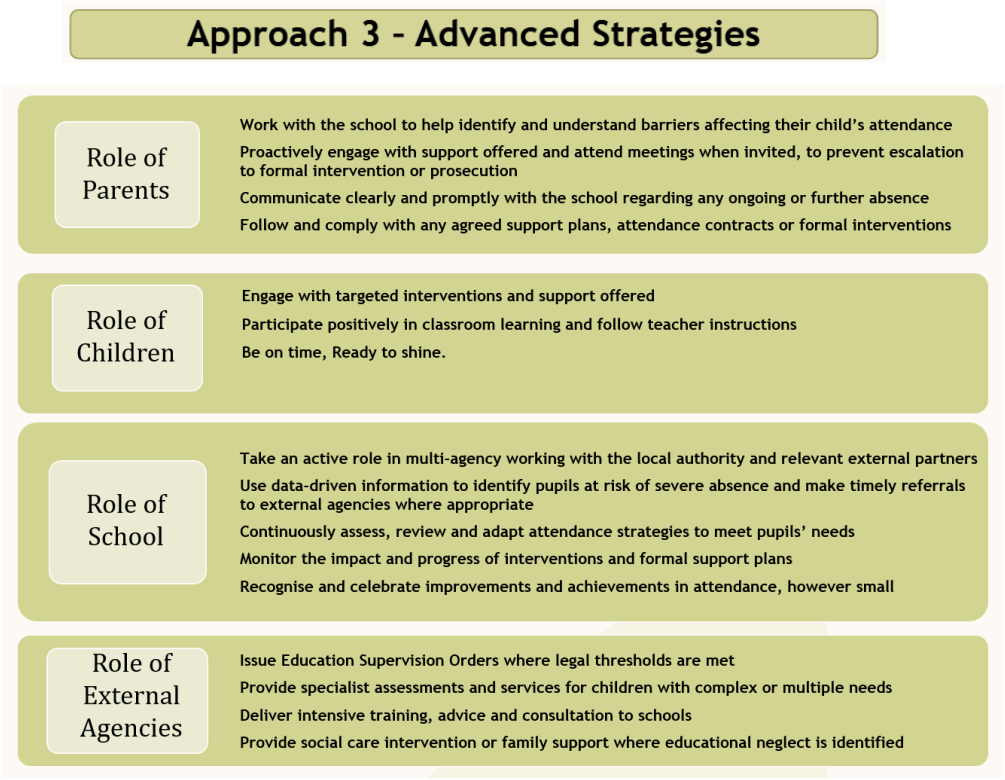
8.2 Stage 2 Individualised Strategies

Internal individualised Strategies and Early Help Support: Tailoring strategies to individual needs and providing early help support for persistent attendance challenges



8.3 Approach 3 Advanced Strategies

Advanced Strategies Support: Furnishing specialised support for children, young people, and families with complex attendance requirements, including attendance contracts and access to external agency support when necessary.



9. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

9.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Some pupils experience complex and overlapping barriers to attendance, including safeguarding concerns, family circumstances, housing instability, domestic abuse, parental ill-health, or emotional and social difficulties. Where attendance concerns are identified, the school will take an early, supportive and solution-focused approach, working in close partnership with families to understand the underlying causes. Strategies may include pastoral support, adjustments to routines, access to mentoring or wellbeing provision, flexible start arrangements, and coordinated multi-agency support. Attendance concerns of this nature are monitored closely through safeguarding and pastoral systems, and cases may be escalated through attendance support plans, Early Help processes, or referrals to external agencies where appropriate.

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

Gascoigne Primary School is committed to ensuring that pupils with mental or physical ill health, disabilities, or special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are supported to attend school regularly wherever possible. We work closely with families, health professionals, and other agencies to understand the impact of a pupil's needs on attendance and to put appropriate support in place. This may include reasonable adjustments such as modified timetables, phased returns, additional adult support, quiet or safe spaces, sensory adjustments, or alternative approaches to learning where appropriate.

Where a pupil has an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan and attendance declines, or where the school becomes aware that barriers to attendance are linked to the pupil's identified needs, the school will inform the Local Authority and work collaboratively to review provision and support. Attendance is considered alongside SEND planning, safeguarding responsibilities, and the pupil's overall wellbeing, with the aim of removing barriers and supporting sustained engagement in school.

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

The school takes a supportive and carefully planned approach to reintegrating pupils who return after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, such as illness, hospitalisation, bereavement, family crisis, or other exceptional circumstances. The school will work with the pupil and their family to agree a reintegration plan, which may include a phased return, pastoral check-ins, catch-up support, and reasonable adjustments to help the pupil settle back into school successfully. Communication between staff, families, and external professionals is prioritised to ensure continuity of care and learning. The pupil's attendance and wellbeing are closely monitored during this period, and plans are reviewed regularly to ensure the reintegration is successful and sustainable.

10. Safeguarding and Attendance

Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE) guidance places a strong emphasis on school attendance as a key component of safeguarding. It highlights that consistent school attendance is crucial for identifying and responding to potential safeguarding concerns early on. Persistent absenteeism is identified as a serious safeguarding issue, particularly since research has shown links between low attendance and risks of exploitation, crime, and mental health challenges.

In the context of school attendance and education in the UK, the terms "Persistent Absence," "Risk of Persistent Absence," and "Severe Absence" are used to describe different levels of irregular attendance by pupils. These terms are important for tracking and addressing attendance issues.

11. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the designated Senior Leader Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

12. Links with Other Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Parent Code of Conduct

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 travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
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

Appendix 2: Attendance escalation process

Attendance Escalation Process

Historic Concern Autumn Term

- **Finished last academic year on < 90% (20 days absent) and/or attendance was of concern**
- New academic year **Polite Notice** (PNa) sent by Admin office in week 2 Autumn term
- Logged on CPOMS and Letter uploaded.

Historic Concern Autumn Term

- **5 days (10 sessions) missed. Attendance of previous academic year taken into account during Autumn Term.**
- Penalty notice issued if absence is due to unauthorised absence (e.g. holiday)
- Attendance will continue to be monitored by Attendance Champion and Attendance team.
- Logged on CPOMS and Letter uploaded.

STAGE 1

- **Universal Strategies**
- Parents ensure children attend school regularly and work in partnership with the school to support their child's learning and attendance. Typically attendance is 95% and above.
- Children attend school everyday and are on time.
- The school builds strong relationships with parents, children and staff to support to recognise good attendance and Punctuality

STAGE 2

Individualised Strategies - Attendance Support Plan to at risk of PA / PA / SA

Supportive, early-intervention tool designed to identify barriers to attendance and put in place strategies to help a pupil improve.

Letter ASP sent to parents by Admin Office requesting meeting with Attendance Champion

Possible referral to external support services, medical evidence.

STAGE 3

- **Attendance Contract - Safeguarding Concern - Educational Neglect**
- A more formal, time-bound document used when Attendance Support Plan has not resulted in improvement. It sets explicit expectations and consequences.
- Meeting with Attendance Champion to discuss attendance contract.

STAGE 3/4

- **External Agency - Welfare services and/or Education Supervision Order (ESO) Legal Proceedings commence.**
- 1st and Final Notice of Intent to Prosecute.
- Continued school interventions

Appendix 3: Attendance Support Plan

Attendance Support Plan

Purpose: A structured plan developed with parents/carers to improve a pupil's attendance and punctuality through targeted support, clear actions, and regular review.

Use when: Attendance falls below your school threshold (e.g., < 95% or < 90% for persistent absence), punctuality concerns, or emerging patterns (e.g., regular Mondays/Fridays off, anxiety).

A. Pupil & Meeting Details

- **Pupil name:**
- **DOB / Year group:**
- **Form/Class teacher:**
- **Unique pupil number (optional):**
- **Parent/carer(s) present & relationship:**
- **Attendance Champion / DSL present:**
- **Meeting date:**
- **Review date:** *(2–4 weeks recommended)*

B. Current Attendance Summary

- **Attendance this academic year (%):**
- **Number of sessions missed:**
- **Previous year attendance (%):** *(if relevant)*
- **Pattern of absence:**
  - ☐ Illness
  - ☐ Unauthorised absence
  - ☐ Lateness after register closes (U codes)
  - ☐ Frequent short absences
  - ☐ Other (specify): _____
- **Punctuality concerns?**
  - ☐ Yes
  - ☐ No
  - Notes: _____
- **Referrals / previous interventions:**

C. Strengths & Protective Factors

- **What's going well (pupil strengths, interests, trusted adults, supportive routines):**
- **Positive engagement (clubs, friendships, successes):**

D. Barriers to Attendance (be curious not furious)

School-Related

- ☐ Friendship issues

- ☐ Bullying or peer concerns
- ☐ Worries about lessons / learning gaps
- ☐ SEND needs not yet fully supported
- ☐ Anxiety about school
- ☐ Transitions (morning routine, separation from parent)

Family / Practical

- ☐ Morning routine difficulties
- ☐ Child not waking/sleeping well
- ☐ Travel / transport difficulties
- ☐ Parent/carer health challenges
- ☐ Housing/temporary accommodation issues
- ☐ Siblings' routines affecting punctuality

Medical / Health

- ☐ Physical health concerns
- ☐ Ongoing medical condition
- ☐ Mental health difficulties
- ☐ Frequent medical appointments

Other

- ☐ Safeguarding concerns
- ☐ Change in family circumstances
- ☐ Other: _____

Notes from discussion:

_____
_____
_____

E. Risk, Safeguarding & Inclusion Considerations

- **Safeguarding known/raised:** ☐ No ☐ Yes (record in safeguarding system and notify DSL)
- **SEND / EHCP / reasonable adjustments required:**
- **Multi-agency involvement (GP, Early Help, CAMHS, Social Care):**

F. Agreed SMART Targets (2–3 maximum)

Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound

- **Target 1:**
  - *Measure:*
  - *By when:*
- **Target 2:**
  - *Measure:*
  - *By when:*

- **Target 3 (optional):**
  - *Measure:*
  - *By when:*

G. Agreed School Support & Actions (Who / What / When)

Action/Support	Who is responsible	Start date	Check-in frequency	Success measure
Pastoral / Emotional Support				
☐ Daily check-ins with Inclusion Champion				
☐ Morning meet-and-greet at gate/classroom				
☐ Safe space for start of day				
☐ 1:1 mentoring support				
☐ Friendship or wellbeing support (ELSA)				
Learning Support				
☐ Catch-up sessions for missed learning				
☐ Reduced/adjusted timetable (temporary)				
☐ SEND review or referral to SENDCO				
☐ Sensory or social-emotional adjustments				
Practical Support				
☐ Attendance monitoring and Rewards (certificates/ stickers / points)				
☐ Support with morning routines				
☐ Attendance tracker given to child				
☐ Punctuality reward programme				
☐ Transport plan (walk-to-school buddy, route review)				
☐ FLP support				
☐ Attendance text reminders / daily call-ins				
☐ Attendance Heroes Club (Before School)				
Multi-agency (if needed)				
☐ Early Help referral				
☐ EWO involvement				
☐ CAMHS/GP information request				

Note: Any reduced timetable must be time-limited, reviewed weekly, with a re-integration plan and consent recorded.

H. Parent/Carer Commitments

Parents/carers agree to:

- ☐ Ensure child attends school every day unless genuinely ill
- ☐ Call the school before 9:00am each day of absence
- ☐ Provide evidence for medical appointments
- ☐ Support morning routine / bedtime routine
- ☐ Bring child to school on time every day
- ☐ Avoid term-time holidays
- ☐ Engage with support offered (meetings, Early Help, etc.)

Parent/carer actions agreed:

_____

_____

_____

Contact preferences (phone/email) and best times:

I. Pupil Voice (record in pupil's words where possible)

- **How I feel about school:**
- **What would help me attend:**
- **Trusted adult in school:**

J. Monitoring & Review

- **Daily attendance monitoring by:**
- **Weekly review by:**
- **First review date:**
- **Data to bring to review (attendance %, lates, notes, impact of actions):**

K. Agreement & Consent

I/we have participated in creating this plan and agree to the targets and actions above.

Parent/carer name & signature: _____ Date: //__

Attendance Champion name & signature: _____ Date: //__

DSL/SENCo (if applicable): _____ Date: //__

Pupil (where appropriate): _____ Date: //__

Privacy notice: Information will be used to support education, safeguarding, and statutory attendance duties in line with school policies.

Attendance Contract

Purpose:
A formal time-bound document used when the Attendance Support Plan has not resulted in improvement. It sets explicit expectations and consequences.

School Name: _____

Pupil Name: _____

Year Group: _____

DOB: _____

Parent/Carer Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Contract Start Date: _____

Review Date(s): _____

1. Purpose of this Attendance Contract

This Attendance Contract has been created because **[pupil name]'s attendance has fallen to ___%**, which is below the national expectation of **at least 96%** and within the threshold for **Persistent Absence (below 90%)** or **Severely Absent (below 50%)**

Previous support has been offered through:
☐ Attendance Support Plan
☐ Meetings with school
☐ Early Help referral
☐ Pastoral/mentoring support
☐ Other: _____

Despite this, attendance has not sufficiently improved. This contract sets out **clear expectations, responsibilities and time-bound targets** to improve attendance.

2. Attendance Expectations

- [Pupil name] is expected to attend school **every day**.
- Parents/carers must contact school **before 9:00am** on the first day of any absence.
- Medical evidence required for absences during this period.
- Term-time holidays will **not** be authorised.
- The school will monitor attendance **weekly** and contact parents where concerns arise.

3. Attendance Target

- The agreed target attendance for the contract period is: ____ **%**
- This contract will be reviewed on: _____

- Failure to meet attendance targets may result in escalation in line with the school's and Local Authority's procedures.

4. Identified Barriers and Agreed Actions

Barriers Identified:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Actions for the School:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Actions for Parent/Carer:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Actions for Pupil (if age appropriate):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

5. Monitoring and Review

- Attendance will be monitored:
  ☐ Daily
  ☐ Weekly
  ☐ Fortnightly
  ☐ Other: _____

- Review meetings will be held with:
  ☐ Parent/Carer
  ☐ Pupil
  ☐ Attendance Lead
  ☐ DSL / Pastoral Lead
  ☐ Local Authority officer (if applicable)

6. Consequences of Not Meeting the Contract

If attendance does not improve or parents/carers fail to engage with the contract:

- A referral may be made to the **Local Authority Education Welfare Service**
- A **School Attendance Panel** may be convened
- A **Penalty Notice** may be issued
- Further legal action may be taken in line with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996

The school will always prioritise support, but accountability is required where concerns remain.

7. Agreement and Signatures

We agree to the terms of this Attendance Contract and will work together to improve attendance.

Parent/Carer Signature: _____ Date: _____

Pupil Signature (if appropriate): _____ Date: _____

School Staff Name/Role: _____

School Staff Signature: _____ Date: _____

Holiday Details Form

Personal Information	
Child's name	
Child's class	

If the child named above has any sibling's that attend Gascoigne Primary School, please complete the information below

Sibling's 1 name	
Sibling's 1 class	
Sibling's 2 name	
Sibling's 2 class	
Holiday information	
Country/place you are travelling to	
First day of leave	
Last day of leave	
Relationship to child	
Signature	
Date	

For office use only	
Holiday added to Arbor	
Holiday added to spreadsheet updated	
Additional notes	
Signed	
Date	

Appendix 6: Request for Leave Due to Exceptional Circumstances

Request for Leave
Due to Exceptional Circumstances
(For completion by parents/carers)

In line with the Department for Education guidance, the school may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers should provide sufficient detail to allow the Headteacher to make an informed decision.

Personal Information	
Child's name	
Child's class	

If the child named above has any siblings that attend Gascoigne Primary School, please complete the information below

Sibling 1 name	
Sibling 1 class	
Sibling 2 name	
Sibling 2 class	

Request information			
Please state your reason for requesting leave?			
Country/place travelling to:		First day of leave:	
Relationship to child:		Last day of leave:	
Parent / Carer Signature:		Date	

For office use only			
HT Decision	☐ Approved	■ Declined	
Leave request added to Arbor	Y / N	Exceptional Leave spreadsheet updated	Y / N
Additional Notes:			
Signed: (Headteacher)		Date:	