Attendance Policy

Approved by:	Tina Newstead	**Date:** May, 2024
Last reviewed on:	May 2024	
Next review due by:	September 2024	

Contents

1. Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure the regular attendance of all Glyne Gap pupils to ensure that they benefit from full-time education and their school experience. This is aligned to our moral purpose of ensuring happy and fulfilled lives for pupils both now and in their future, of which learning and school are critical components. These benefits include progress within learning (attainment), well-being, social development and opportunities, wider life chances and opportunities for their needs to be identified and support provided. This sits alongside pupils' legal entitlement to education.

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

› Offering pupils a school environment that explicitly and implicitly values them and their place in our community

› Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

› Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled

› Acting early to address barriers to attendance and perceived patterns of absence

› Reducing 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)

› The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

› School census guidance

› Keeping Children Safe in Education

› Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

› The school has considered its consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

› Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos

› Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties

› Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data

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

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis including benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Ensuring the creation of attendance support plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jayne Gosling and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher

The attendance officer is Toni Muceku and she can be contacted via the school office.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for submitting attendance on a daily basis to the school office.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- Completing electronic registers on a daily basis including using the correct codes

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow up any instances of absence as detailed in this policy

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

> Understand the importance of good attendance and promote this with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year

> Provide up-to-date contact numbers and changes of address

> Provide details of at least two contacts for emergency use

> Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

> Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance and by following the procedures set out in this policy

> Let the school know if their child is going to be late, e.g. if a car breaks down or if an urgent appointment has been made.

> Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason, on the first day of the absence. This is done by calling the school office prior to 9.30am. If calls are made earlier than 8am, messages can be left.

> Telephone the school after the first day of absence to advise the school if the absence is continuing

> Keep the school well informed in cases of lengthy absence

Parents/carers will be encouraged to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Headteacher.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils, at all levels, are supported to feel positive and confident in attending school. When possible, pupils are supported and encouraged to share any barriers to attending school (this will be more relevant to our post 16 pupils).

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and once after lunch. It will mark 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 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 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 9am and pupils must arrive in school by 9.30am on each school day. This acknowledges that transport into school arrangements (including that organised by Transport Services) can vary for our pupils.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office. The school cannot accept messages passed through drivers/escorts on school transport.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, the school may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

We encourage parents/carers to make medical/dental/therapy appointments out of school hours where possible. The school works with health colleagues so that a number of clinics are held on school premises. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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

This should be done via the school office or written in a pupil's home/school book. School may request evidence of this appointment (such as GP letter/text).

Parents/carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives between 9 and 9.30am will be marked as attending and on time. This recognises how most pupils arrive at school. Pupils arriving after 9.30am will be marked as absent with the appropriate code. If this pupils later arrives in school, the register will be amended to show late arrival, using the appropriate code.

Glyne Gap School will follow up ongoing punctuality issues as this could highlight a pressure in home/school transport routes or an unmet family need.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

> Check with class based staff to see if notification of the absence has previously been provided in the child's home/school book

> Call the pupil's parent/carer from 9.30am of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason for absence (if no call is received in to school). School will attempt to use any/all of the provided contact numbers. School will also text/email.

> Add the child to the day's absence list which is circulated to the Senior Leadership Team (including those with roles within safeguarding). This list is updated as information arises.

> If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may visit the child's home address to fulfill its safeguarding requirements or inform other services/professionals.

> Inform social workers if they have active involvement/interest.

> 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 consider involving other services.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels. This will be in the form of a coloured letter sent centrally from the school office. Whilst all letters will state a pupil's attendance/absence level, green letters will confirm that a pupil's attendance is supporting their learning and wellbeing. Amber letters will be sent when there are concerns that attendance is impacting on a pupil's learning and wellbeing and parents/carers will be contacted to discuss further. Red letters will be used when these concerns are significant and a formal attendance support meeting will be convened.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

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.

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. This can be done by submitting a 'Absence Request' form (available from the school office). The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

> Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments

> Where an agreed period of rest within the week is taken by a pupil with exceptional health needs so as to support health and attendance at all other times

> Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> Traveller pupils 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.

> Exceptional circumstances: in exceptional situations, such as family emergencies or unforeseen events, please contact the school immediately to discuss the absence

> The opportunity to be involved with a community event (e.g. Fun Day at local hospice), community learning (e.g. family farm visit at a quieter time) or the event of another school (e.g. siblings sports day/prize giving). Such opportunities provide opportunities to generalise learning for our pupils and would be authorised because of this.

The headteacher may grant term time holiday (under 'exceptional circumstances') if the family context requires this (e.g. parents are serving police officers and unable to take leave at certain times of the year), or if the child's needs dictate that the holiday is going to be untenable during school holiday times. Such agreements would be on a case by case basis and would unlikely be agreed more than once in a school year and not at all in cases where attendance is of concern.

Requests for absence forms submitted to the school office will be considered by the Headteacher and the relevant portion showing whether authorised or unauthorised returned to parents/carers within 3 working days.

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

> The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year

> One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

> The school prides itself on being a welcoming community for all pupils and their families. If parents/carers have any concerns about their child attending school, we encourage them to talk to us with their child's class teacher being the best person to talk to initially.

> School staff are trained and confident in meeting the health needs of the pupils in their care. Children do not need to be at home to ensure health needs are met. Similarly, school staff are trained and confident in meeting the needs of pupils who have anxiety about attending school/when they are in school. In most cases, pupils do not need to be at home to reduce anxiety/manage sensory strategies.

> The school works closely with the designated home/school transport provider to ensure that pupils have a safe and consistent start to the day and parents/carers feel confident in their child travelling to school.

> Glyne Gap School works with colleagues in health services to run regular therapy and community paediatric clinics from school. In addition, the Sensory Needs Service will visit children in school. This ensures that pupils are in school as much as they can be, as well as providing a known, comfortable environment to support the health appointment. Parents/carers are welcome to ask other professionals who need to meet with them and their child to do so in school. We can provide a space for this to happen.

> Pupils who are absent due to poor health/planned surgeries will be offered a 'back to school' meeting chaired by our senior teacher with responsibility for pupil health and care needs. This meeting will address how to get pupils back to school safely and promptly and may consider phased returns.

> In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. If a part time timetable is agreed, there should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents (in agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorize).

7. Attendance monitoring

Glyne Gap School monitors attendance daily and over time. This is to ensure we meet our moral and legal duties in safeguarding our pupils. We recognise that a number of our pupils have health conditions that will impact on their ability to achieve 100% attendance and all monitoring of attendance at pupil level is undertaken with consideration for the individual context of that pupil. If it is necessary, we will liaise with health professionals to advise us further.

7.1 Monitoring attendance over time

The school will:

> Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. We will identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. This will include the review of pupils who have attendance below 90% (school average) and those with a sudden negative change in attendance.

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 on a (seasonal) termly basis.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

> 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. This is always done acknowledging the unique contexts of our pupils and their families.

> Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

> Use regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families

> Use whole school data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

The DfE defines 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. Glyne Gap School acknowledges that a number of its pupils have health conditions that impact on attendance and does not necessarily use the term 'persistently absent' for pupils with more than 10% absence. We will however, review the attendance/absence for all pupils falling below 90% on a termly basis.

The school will:

> Apply its attendance policy with clarity and fairness

> Use attendance data to consider patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

> Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers 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. These will always be focused on constructive ways to strengthen home/school working and improve attendance.

> Signpost to wider support services to help remove any barriers to attendance

> Consider referral to other Children's Services colleagues in supporting attendance and reducing absence

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Senior Leadership Team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes (to be updated August 2024)

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
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's

Code	Definition	Scenario
		absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Glyne Gap School
School Place, Hastings Road
Bexhill on sea, East Sussex TN40 2PU

Headteacher: Kirsty Prawanna

Dear Parents and Carers,

Our moral purpose at Glyne Gap is to ensure a happy and fulfilled life for all pupils both now and in their future. Regular attendance at school is critical in achieving this.

We hope that this letter helps you to keep in mind the key aspects of our attendance policy. The full policy is available from the school office on request.

Why regular attendance matters

Consistent school attendance allows your child to:

> Fully engage in learning and make progress

> Develop friendships and relationships with their peers and teachers

> Grow in confidence in a supportive and nurturing school environment

> Build a sense of routine and responsibility which supports life outside of school

In addition, working in partnership with school supports individual needs to be identified and supported.

Attendance support

We understand that some of our pupils face challenges that impact their attendance. We are here to provide support and guidance to pupils and families in such situations. If you encounter any difficulties related to attendance, please do reach out to your child's class teacher or a senior leader (via the school office).

Acceptable reasons for absence

We recognise that there are circumstances where a pupil's absence from school cannot be avoided.

Acceptable reasons for being absent from school include:

Unplanned absences:

> **Illness** (including mental illness)

> **Exceptional circumstances**: such as family emergencies or unforeseen events

Planned absences:

> **Medical/dental appointments** that cannot take place outside of school hours

> Where an **agreed period of rest within the week is taken by a pupil with exceptional health need**s so as to support health and attendance at all other times.

> **Religious observance** – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong.

> **The opportunity to be involved with a community event** (e.g. Fun Day at local hospice), community learning (e.g. family farm visit at a quieter time) or the event of another school (e.g. siblings sports day/prize giving). Such opportunities provide opportunities to generalise learning for our pupils and would be authorised because of this.

How to report unplanned absences

In the event of an unplanned absence, we request you follow these steps:

1. **Contact the school:** on the day of the absence, please call the school office before 9.30am to inform us about your child's absence. If you call prior to 8am, a message can be left.

2. **Provide a reason for absence:** please provide a brief explanation for the absence, such as illness or family emergency, to help us maintain accurate records

3. **Update daily:** please call each day (by 9.30am) if your child is going to continue to be absent

Please note that school staff will attempt to contact you (and any other contacts previously given) if you do not let us know that your child is not attending school and why. We cannot accept messages from drivers/escorts.

How to request a planned absence from school

1. Contact the school office for an 'Absence Request' form. Please submit this as soon as possible and at least 2 weeks before the day of the absence. This will be considered by the headteacher and the relevant part of the form returned to you detailing whether or not the absence is authorised.

Term-time holidays

Term-time holidays are generally not permitted during the school year. Absences due to term-time holidays are disruptive to learning and lead to missed opportunities in the classroom.

However, we recognise that there may be exceptional circumstances that require a term-time holiday. This may be if the family context requires this (e.g. parents are serving police officers and unable to take leave at certain times of the year), or if the child's needs dictate that the holiday is going to be untenable during school holiday times. Such agreements would be on a case by case basis and would unlikely be authorised more than once in a school year and not at all in cases where there are concerns regarding absence.

In such cases, please submit a formal request to the headteacher well in advance by requesting an 'Absence Request' form. The headteacher will carefully consider each request and, if deemed appropriate and in the best interest of the child, may grant authorised absence for the term-time holiday.

Fines for unauthorised absence

The school reserves the right to issue a fine to parents/carers for unauthorised absence if they think it is necessary and will be supportive of improving attendance.
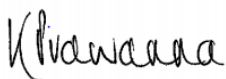
Reporting attendance to parents/carers

We will write to you termly to confirm your child's attendance and any concerns we may have about absence.

My question hasn't been answered here

Please get in touch with me (via Veronique in the school office) or Jayne Gosling (Jayne.Gosling@glynegap.org) with any further questions and we'll be happy to discuss them with you.

Best wishes,

Kirsty Prawanna