



GLASTONBURY THORN SCHOOL

'Every day getting better in every way'

ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Origin	GTS
Committee	Full Governing Body
Date policy approved	June 2021
Responsibility for Review	Headteacher
Date policy reviewed	September 2025
Date for next review	July 26

Revision History			
Version	Date	Author	Summary of Changes
1	October 2022	J Cursley	Reviewed
2	September 23	J Cursley	No changes
3	November 24	J Cursley	Rewording of FPN / New appendix 1
4	February 25	J Cursley	Request for medication/appointment evidence Information regarding IHCPs
5	July 25	J Cursley	Changes to 'rolling' term-time absences
6	September 2025	T Redman	Changes in EYFS guidance

This policy should be read in conjunction with:
Child Protection Policy

At Glastonbury Thorn School we recognise the importance of high school attendance and firmly believe that children can only learn effectively if they attend school regularly. It is also vitally important that children arrive and leave school on time. Please see Appendix 1 – Attendance & Punctuality Expectations.

Education provides a means of enhancement for all young people. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance seriously disrupts continuity of learning, undermines the educational process and leads to underachievement and low attainment.

High levels of attendance are the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

Aims:

- Glastonbury Thorn will ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- Glastonbury Thorn School aims to encourage and assist all children to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Glastonbury Thorn School sees regular school attendance as essential for all the children if they are to be successful and we aim to work in partnership with parents to ensure the highest possible levels.
- Glastonbury Thorn School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The Law:

By law, all children of compulsory school age must receive suitable education. Parents are responsible for making sure this happens, either by registering the child at a school or by arranging an effective alternative to school.

From September 2025, children under the age of 5 (EYFS) must also be monitored for attendance and any concerns on non-attendance must be raised with MASH. Although there is no legal requirement for under 5's to be in school, absences are identified as a possible indicator of safeguarding or support being needed by the family.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for an acceptable reason eg illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or another unavoidable cause. For absence due to a Religious observance 1 day only will be authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given eg parents keeping children off school unnecessarily, absences which have never been properly explained, shopping or birthdays, and day trips/holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Extended absences Where leave has either been authorised or unauthorised for holidays, if extended absence continues and you do not return when stated, we would then consider each case individually and also consider whether the child should be taken off roll.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we expect parents full support and co-operation to tackle this.

All EYFS children will be monitored for attendance and concerns will be passed on. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system, and by the leadership team.

Fixed Penalty Notices – over 5's only

We expect all children to arrive in school so that they are in class for the register at 8.30am. Any child arriving after the register closes at 8.30am is recorded as being late. The school gates **open at 8:20am** and close at 8:30am. **It is important that you are aware of the new national guidance on attendance and punctuality at school.**

Under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 (*per child, per parent*) if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. We will notify you if your children reaches 3 days absent (six sessions). If your child reaches a total of 4 days (8 sessions), an urgent meeting will be arranged to explore ways in which the school can support you and your family in order to minimise any further disruption to your child's education.

If your child is late, this may be recorded as a 'missing session.'

Any term-time absence recorded during your child's time from the beginning of Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) will continue to be part of their attendance record throughout their time at our school, up to the end of Year 2. This means that absences are not reset each academic year. In line with Local Authority guidance, unauthorised absence of 5 school days or more (equivalent to 10 sessions) may trigger a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) being issued. Additionally, if a child is absent

during the final term of Year 2, this information will be shared with their next school as part of the transition process, in line with statutory requirements and our duty to ensure continuity and safeguarding.

In addition, as a 'late mark' equates to a session missed, this will also be recorded and stay on record throughout your child's time at the school.

Responsibilities of parents:

There are legal obligations on parents to secure education for their children of compulsory school age, whether at school or otherwise. If they are on the school roll parents should send them to school regularly, punctually and in a fit state to learn. Under 5's are not required to attend each day, but non-attendance may indicate other safeguarding issues and will be monitored and assessed, and may be passed onto MASH if there are any concerns. If safe to do so parents will be informed before a referral is made.

If the school is to achieve its attendance targets, parents must see themselves as partners with the school in their children's education and support the school in the following ways:

- Ensure the fullest possible attendance of their child by keeping requests for their children to be absent from school to a minimum
- When absence is unavoidable, provide a verbal or written explanation, by 9am on the first day of absence
- On the first day of absence, where no reasons have been given, the school office will contact the parents/carers.
- In cases of long term sickness (more than one week) a medical certificate should be obtained from the GP and a copy given to the school
- Ensure that their child arrives at school and is collected from school on time.
- Due to the age of our children, all children must be brought to school and collected from school by a named person who is 16 years or older

Responsibilities of the school:

It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to deal with problems which may lead to non-attendance. The school employs a wide range of strategies to improve and encourage good attendance and punctuality including responding to requests for leave and pursuing unexplained absence with parents. The school will investigate promptly any patterns of unexplained absenteeism liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. Staff will notify the Headteacher on a child's third day of absence where reasons for absence have been given. (see monitoring first day absence for further information)

Responsibility of the Headteacher:

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To take the lead on attendance and punctuality on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.

- To deal with parental requests for extended leave.
- To oversee analysis of/ analyse week/termly/yearly data and respond to findings.
- To meet with the Office Admin Assistant to monitor systems and structures, ensuring that they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

Responsibility of the Office Admin Assistant:

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school or when no reason has been received.
- To monitor weekly attendance data.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the Headteacher if there are concerns relating to attendance/punctuality.
- To produce weekly/termly/yearly data for the Headteacher to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and update class registers.
- To liaise with and report to outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To report to the Local Authority as requested.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To support the Headteacher with the promotion of good attendance and punctuality, through finding/organising incentives.
- To ensure that staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- To inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

The responsibility of Class Teachers:

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons are sought.
- To provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.

- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Parents Evenings.

The importance of registration/punctuality:

Registers are important legal documents and are kept securely. The law requires schools to call the register twice a day:

- At the start of the morning session, 8.30am
- Once during the afternoon session.
At Glastonbury Thorn the register is called at the start of the afternoon session at 1.00pm.

Calling the register is a key part of the school day and should be seen as such by staff, children and parents.

At Glastonbury Thorn School children are marked either present or absent in the register. Particular attention is given to accurate registration; staff use consistent rules and coding for registration. It is our policy at Glastonbury Thorn to actively discourage the late arrival of children at school. A child who arrives late may seriously disrupt not only his/her continuity of learning but also that of others. A firm line is taken on late arrivals.

When a child arrives after the registration period, the child will then be registered 'late' for that session. If a child arrives 30 minutes or more after the closure of the register, the lateness will be recorded as **unauthorised** absence for that session unless an appropriate explanation is received.

When a child is absent, the register must also show whether the absence was authorised by the school or unauthorised. The Office Admin Assistant enters this information onto the computer on a weekly basis. If this persists the Class Teacher or the Office Admin Assistant will inform the Headteacher who will contact the parent. Unresolved lateness will then be referred to Children's Services.

Important:

Child protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring First Day Absence:

If a child is absent from school and the school has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The Office Admin Assistant follows this system:

- Phone parents / carers
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence if there is no response. An electronic communication will be sent requesting that contact be made as a matter of urgency

- If no response has been received by 10:00am, phone emergency contact number(s) to get an up –to-date contact number for the parent/carer and update the school system accordingly. Inform Headteacher.
- If no response has been received by 12:00pm, a home visit will be made issuing an attendance letter of concern
- If there are any concerns, the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub will be contacted
- Speak to the parents at home time, if they are at school to pick up other children.
- Speak to parents face-to-face or by phone the next day.

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name in the absence diary and on Sims.

The Office Admin Assistant must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as 'N' (No reason given) code.

Letters are sent out to parents whose children's attendance is below 95% and parents that are concerned about their child's attendance, are invited to work in partnership with the school.

Request for medication/appointment evidence:

If a child has been absent for 3 consecutive days (or 3 times during a two-week period) with an illness, the school will request information of what intervention has taken place e.g. doctors appointment, medication etc. Evidence of such intervention will be required to ensure that we fully understand the current situation so we can offer support for the family.

Health concern:

Where there are issues relating to the health of a child impacted school attendance, if deemed necessary and if/when agreed by the Headteacher, an Individual Health Care Plan will be put in place. (IHCP APPENDIX 2)

Applications for leave of absence:

There is **no** automatic entitlement in law for authorised leave in school time to go on a family holiday. Taking holidays in term time affects a child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away during term time. Any savings parents make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to their child's education.

Following government regulations that came into force in September 2013, Glastonbury Thorn School does not authorise any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If leave is granted the head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be absent from school with authorisation.

All applications for leave must be made at least 3 weeks in advance using a “leave of absence” form. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application on a case by case basis.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice and fines.

Taking children off roll:

Children will be removed from the school roll after written confirmation from the parent of the day that they are leaving school. Checks will be made to ensure that the child arrives at their next school.

If a child does not attend school for a period of four weeks without contact from the parents they will be removed from the school roll. During this time, MASH will be contacted and safeguarding procedures will be followed to locate and ensure that the child is safe.

In the first four weeks that a child does not attend school, the school and other agencies, will make enquiries and assess the child’s circumstances and their vulnerability. In some cases the situation will be resolved between the school and the parent. For other cases the timescale for initiating a multi-agency response will depend on the school’s view of the vulnerability of the child.

Concern for a child may be so high that a referral may be made to the police immediately the child is found to be missing. Alternatively, information may emerge over the course of time which raises the level of concern about a child’s welfare and a referral should then be made to the police and Children’s Services.

Exclusions:

Where a child has been excluded (fixed term or permanent) he or she will remain on the school roll. The absence will be regarded as authorised. Once a permanent exclusion is confirmed the child will be removed from the school roll.

Communication with parents:

As attendance is crucial to effective learning and the continuity of learning experiences, the school places great emphasis on this in its communication with parents.

School website:

Information on lateness, illness and absence is given to parents on the School website. This highlights the importance of being at school on time and notifying school if their child is absent for any reason.

Pre-School induction meetings:

At the pre-school induction meetings held in the Summer term for children who will enter our Foundation Stage in the following September, the importance of regular attendance is discussed and explained. This talk also includes parents and children arriving at school on time so that each child can be given the best possible start to

each school day. Being picked up on time is also stressed, especially for young children who can be very upset if they are the only child left in the building.

Children are also admitted to school at various times of the year, and into various year groups. All parents requesting a place and accept are given an Induction Pack which contains our Admission and Consent form and Attendance and Punctuality Expectations letter (Appendix 1) along with all other relevant school documents.

Parental concerns:

Glastonbury Thorn School is a happy school. Children learn best when they are happy and relaxed. All the staff at Glastonbury Thorn School are concerned about children's regular attendance, and the importance of continuity in each child's learning. We are also concerned about each child's safety, welfare and happiness. Parents are asked to share any worries their child might have in school. Sometimes little things upset children which mean they become unhappy, and may not want to attend school. Parents are encouraged to bring their child to school, so that reasons for the child not wanting to attend can be discussed and hopefully resolved.

The Class Teacher or Headteacher will talk to the child concerned to find out if there are any worries or problems in school that might make that child not want to attend. If there are, then these will be discussed with the parent and appropriate action taken.

Strategies for promoting attendance:

- Attendance data is monitored regularly and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.
- Regular attendance is encouraged, right from the beginning of children's early years' experience in school. This promotes a good ethos right from the start and encourages the parent and child to adopt the culture of regular attendance before it becomes a legal requirement.
- Attendance awards are presented termly and at the end of each school year.
- Parents are reminded regularly (via newsletters, the Induction pack for new starters, parent's evenings, etc) of the importance of regular attendance and punctuality.
- Children who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them or asked to access the remote learning on our school website and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- Children who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually tailored re-integration programmes prepared for them.
- The Headteacher will make a termly report to the schools Governing Body on attendance matters.

- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other services and agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher may contact Children's Services in order to identify how best to support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

The attendance of children will be monitored on a regular basis by the Headteacher. The Headteacher will keep governors informed on attendance issues through the Headteacher's termly report to the Governing Body.

This policy and the procedures included within it will be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure continued high standards in all aspects of attendance.



September 2025

APPENDIX 1

Dear Parent / Carer,

I am writing to you because your child has been absent for (*insert*) sessions times since the start of the new academic year.

As you are hopefully aware, new national guidance has been sent out which reiterates the importance of children regularly attending school. Please see the paragraph below which was in my newsletter at the beginning of September:



*We expect all children to arrive in school so that they are in class for the register at 8.30am. Any child arriving after the register closes at 8.30am is recorded as being late. The school gates will now **open at 8:20am** and close at 8:30am. We are once again using both school gates. Please enter through the usual gate at 8:20am and exit the school grounds via the gate by Joshua's Garden (Forest School). **It is important that you are aware of the new national guidance on attendance and punctuality at school.***

Under the national rules, all schools are required to consider a fine when a child has missed 10 or more sessions (5 days) for unauthorised reasons. From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 (per child, per parent) if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days. We will notify you if your children reaches 3 days absent (six sessions). If your child reaches a total of 4 days (8 sessions), an urgent meeting will be arranged to explore ways in which the school can support you and your family in order to minimise any further disruption to your child's education. If your child is late, this may be recorded as a 'missing session.'

It is my statutory responsibility to follow national guidance, however I would very much like to avoid any of our families receiving fines. If you need any support, please do not hesitate to contact the school office: office@glastonburythorn.co.uk or speak to me on the playground at the beginning or end of the school day.

Thank you for your understanding and support,

J. Cursley

Mr Cursley
Headteacher

APPENDIX 2

Annex A: Model process for developing individual healthcare plans

