



**The John of Gaunt School**  
**Attendance Policy January 2019**

Originator	Reviewed by	Date of Review	Approved by	Date of Approval	Next Review Date	Website
School	S&C	22/01/19	FGB	11/02/19	Jan 2021	Yes

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**1. Vision Statement**

**‘Creating an irresistible climate for achievement’**

- We challenge, support and encourage every student to **achieve their potential**.
- We believe **effort** and **dedication** lead to success and we **raise aspirations**.
- We **personalise our provision** to meet the needs of individuals.
- We enable our students to flourish as **confident learners and leaders** of our community.
- We create a culture where all stakeholders **feel valued, supported and proud**.
- We **work collaboratively** to improve outcomes for our students and support other schools to improve.

## **2. Core Principles:**

### **Government Guidance states:**

“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all students can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – students need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled and act early to address patterns of absence. Parents are expected to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly and arrive to school on time”

*School attendance Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities October 2014*

We believe that good attendance at school increases a child’s ability to achieve and attain in line with their potential. Good attendance also enables students to fully participate in whole school life.

Research indicates that students with poor school attendance are more likely to have poor mental health, be involved in anti-social behaviour and be vulnerable to safeguarding concerns.

*The British Psychological Society - Behaviour Change: School attendance, exclusion and persistent absence*

### **The legal requirements:**

*Under the Education Act 1996 parents/carers have a duty to ensure their children regularly attend school. The Act states: "If a registered student is absent without authorisation from school or alternative provision then the parent is guilty of an offence under section 441(1)*

## **3. Attendance Expectations**

All school staff will work with students and their families to ensure each student attends school regularly and punctually. The school has an established system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of students to improve their attendance and timekeeping. For the benefit of the school community, we will challenge the behaviour of those students and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

We expect all students to reach a minimum of 96% attendance. Our target is above the Government’s expectations of 95% as we believe in the importance of students being in school and learning as much as possible. Some absences are unavoidable but we would ask that parents and carers to support the school in ensuring that their child’s attendance meets the school’s expectations.

We also acknowledge and understand that every student’s personal situation, both inside and outside of school, family and social backgrounds, medical background, religious and cultural backgrounds are different and we shall take these into account when working with the child and their parent(s)/carer(s). We will ensure that we meet the requirements of the Equalities Act, 2010 and put in place all reasonable adjustments to address any potential discriminatory practice

#### **4. Expectations of Parents**

We expect the following from parents/carers:

- To be aware of their legal requirements.
- To ensure their child attends school every day and on time.
- To telephone the school on the first day of absence by 8.45 a.m. and send a note into school on their child's return to school.
- To ensure that they contact the school daily if their child is unable to attend.
- To avoid making routine medical / dental appointments for their child during school hours. (Where this is not possible, to provide school with a copy of medical appointment).
- To provide medical evidence when their child is absent from school for a period of 3 days or more, in line with Local Authority guidance.
- To ensure that family holidays are only taken during the school holidays.
- To ensure that they contact the school whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.

#### **5. Expectations & Responsibilities of the student**

- To attend school every day.
- To ensure they arrive at school promptly before the 8.40am warning bell.
- To be present at their tutor base, or mustered for assembly, by 8.45am.
- To sign in at the reception if they arrive after the 8.45am bell has sounded.
- If they have been absent, they must complete the return to school form in detail. If the reason for absence is sensitive, they are to discuss matters with a member of the year team or a responsible adult must make contact with school and arrange a meeting to clarify the situation.
- It is the student's responsibility to ensure their attendance is high; this includes promptness to each lesson throughout the day.
- Students will accept help, support and guidance when offered if it is deemed appropriate.
- Students will not leave the school site during the school day for any reason without authorisation from a member of staff and without signing out.

#### **6. Responsibilities of Tutors**

- To promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- To be aware of the whole school target and to reward good and improved attendance.
- To keep an accurate record of attendance and absence using class registers on Sims at the start of each tutor period.
- To take the register promptly at 8.45 but tutors must not mark a student present before they have arrived to the class, even if other students state they are in school.
- To record and deal with lateness to registration after the initial register has been taken at the start of the lesson.
- To ensure the register is accurate, including the alteration of initial 'absent' marks to 'present' marks later on in that same tutorial. Tutors must then also include the number of minutes late to the revised 'present' mark. This should be carried out at an opportune moment before the end of the tutorial but should not stop the flow of any learning occurring.

- To record a register on paper in the event of an ICT issue resulting in SIMS being unavailable and pass this to the Data Manager as soon as possible.
- Use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise individual improvements in attendance.
- Discuss with their tutees the reason for any absence, completing the Student absence return to school form accurately and in detail. If tutees are not comfortable discussing the reasons with their tutor, they must direct the tutee to meet with a member of the year group pastoral team.
- The Student absence return to school form must be completed and returned to the attendance officer within 3 days of the student returning to school.

## **7. Responsibilities of the year Team**

- To visit every tutor group each morning to establish which students are absent.
- To praise students for their regular attendance at school.
- To clarify reasons for absence before co-ordinating phone calls home either before period 1 or during period 1.
- To liaise with responsible adults, being mindful of their child's emotional well-being and health, to ensure that students can make a speedy recovery to The John of Gaunt

## **8. Responsibilities of subject teachers:**

- Take the register for period 1 by 9am.\*
- To promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- To take class registers at the start of each lesson but not before each student has arrived to the class.
- To record on SIMS and deal with lateness to their lesson according to the B4L policy.
- To ensure the register is accurate, including the alteration of initial 'absent' marks to 'present' marks later on in that same lesson. Teachers must then also include the number of minutes late to the revised 'present' mark. This should be carried out at an opportune moment before the end of the lesson but should not stop the flow of any learning occurring.
- To inform their Director of Learning, The Head of House and the Attendance Officer of patterns of lateness or absence.
- To advise students and parents of the impact of non-attendance on attainment and progress.
- Where possible and practical to ensure students complete work missed due to absence and where requested provide work for students on long term absences.
- Use praise which emphasises the importance of attendance for learning.
- Meet and greet all students at the beginning of each lesson to make them feel valued.
- Integrate late arrivals quickly and smoothly by planning appropriate starter activities.
- Integrate returning students and inconsistent attenders by using tools such as seating plans, differentiation and peer support.
- Inform Attendance Officer of known specific absences if not already coded on SIMS class registers.
- Use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise individual improvements in attendance. Relate it to improved learning.

**\* Registers close at 9.15. Students arriving after this time will be marked as 'Late After Close of Register' – this will generate an unauthorised absence mark on the student's attendance record.**

## **9. Responsibilities of Senior Leadership Team including the Senior Teacher with Responsibility for Attendance:**

- To promote, encourage and praise good attendance and punctuality through house and year group assemblies.
- To promote positive attendance through strategies such as the Prom Pledge and School Rewards.
- To liaise with the Attendance Officer and Education Welfare Officer on whole school attendance. To monitor progress against attendance targets.
- To monitor the impact of intervention strategies.
- To support the Attendance Officer and Year Teams where needed in producing and monitoring individual support plans for persistent absentees.
- To support the Attendance Officer and Year Teams and be actively involved in driving up attendance through various strategies for the Year team they are line managing.
- To report to the Senior Leadership Team every fortnight on the attendance statistics and resultant actions of the Year group they are line managing.
- To ensure that attendance is a known priority for all staff through sharing information at briefings and via staff bulletins etc.
- To regularly report to Governors on attendance.

## **10. Responsibilities of Attendance Officer:**

- To promote and encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- To monitor the taking of accurate registers.
- To monitor attendance of students who persistently arrive late after the registers have closed or to individual lessons.
- To liaise with the Data Manager and update registers and to input absence codes.
- To operate Truancy Call first day contact system when no reason for absence received by 9:30 a.m.
- To carry out a follow-up phone call if a student has been absent for 3 days to request medical evidence.
- To contact home if there is doubt about the reason given for absence.
- To involve the Education Welfare Officer when a student's attendance or punctuality continues to give cause for concern.
- To liaise with the Senior Leader with Responsibility for Attendance to review year group attendance and report to Senior Leadership Team and Governors on actions taken.
- To ensure effective communication on attendance issues with the whole school community.
- To provide attendance data for all Persistent Absence students (less than 90% attendance – absence threshold) to the Senior Leadership Team as requested.
- To liaise with Senior Leader with Responsibility for Attendance, the relevant member of the Student Development Team and the when appropriate the Education Welfare Officer when a student's attendance triggers the absence threshold.
- To hold School Attendance Meetings (SAM) where a student meets the absence threshold in order to offer support, set targets and continue to monitor the attendance of individual students.
- To work with the Education Welfare Officer and meet weekly to review all students with low attendance.

## **11. Responding To Student Absence**

When a student does not attend school we will respond in the following manner if a reason has not been provided by the parent or carer:

- Make parent/carer aware that student is absent through the use of Truancy Call.
- Truancy Call should be sent by 10 am each morning. This will request for explanation for absence.
- The Attendance Officer will log parental responses in order to determine appropriate registration coding.
- An unexplained absence letter will be sent to parent/carer asking them to contact the school with a reason for the absence if a parent / carer does not respond to truancy call.
- If an acceptable reason for absence is not provided the absence will be classified as unauthorised.
- Where necessary school will work with parents/carers and students to support and overcome any barriers to attendance. This may involve working with external agencies including health professionals or social care.

Persistent non-attendance will be referred to the *Education Welfare Officer (See Appendix 1 Attendance Concern Flow Diagram)*.

*Note: If a student's attendance falls below 90%, we reserve the right to ask for doctor's notes to confirm the absence from the first day.*

## **12. Requests for leave during term time – Exceptional Leave**

The Head Teacher is the only person able to authorise exceptional leave during term time however they may delegate this to the Senior Leader responsible for attendance. The school is unlikely to authorise exceptional leave as The John of Gaunt School discourages parents taking their children out of school during term time. There is no automatic entitlement in law for schools to allow absence during term time for the purpose of holidays. If a parent / carer wishes to take their child out of school for extenuating circumstances they must make a request in writing to the Head Teacher with a minimum of two weeks' notice using the absence request form available from the school reception.

## **13. Celebrating and Encouraging Attendance**

**Good Attendance is celebrated and rewarded regularly examples include:**

- Three times a year letters are sent out from the Senior leader with responsibility for Attendance to all students who have 98% attendance and a separate letter to those with 100% attendance.
- We will acknowledge and recognise factors that impinge upon the student's ability to meet these thresholds and act accordingly to ensure there is no potential for discriminatory practices.
- Termly celebration of attendance for students who meet the thresholds of 96%, 98% and 100%. This is to be completed in year assemblies.
- Pre School Attendance Meeting (SAM) letters are sent to parents warning them of the potential that they may be called to attend these meetings if regular attendance does not stabilise.

- Three times a year letters are sent to parents and carers of students who have attendance between 95% and 90% (the threshold for persistent absence) informing them of their child's current attendance percentage and what this will mean over the year.
- Attendance is a regular topic in assemblies for year leaders.
- A display with up to date attendance information is situated outside Gloucester Hall.
- Parents and carers are informed about the importance of attendance as part of the schools transition and induction process.

APPENDIX 1

