



Attendance Policy  
**Gentleshaw Primary Academy**

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## 1. Version control

<b>Date</b>	<b>Version</b>	<b>Revision</b>	<b>Owner</b>
28/06/18	1.0	New Policy	Future Generation Trust Policy Team
24/06/19	2.0	Annual Review of Policy	Future Generation Trust Policy Team
18/06/20	3.0	Annual Review of Policy	Future Generation Trust Policy Team
21/07/23	4.0	Review of Policy	Future Generation Trust Policy Team

## 2. Introduction

Future Generation Trust (FGT) expects excellent standards of pupil attendance and punctuality. Trust leaders are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. Regular attendance at school is also crucial in raising attainment in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential.

## 3. Statement of Intent

Our academies will strive to promote an ethos and culture in which pupils feel highly motivated to learn and where each pupil feels valued and secure, thereby encouraging excellent attendance.

To support good attendance and safeguarding our academies will;

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority.
- Create an ethos within the academy in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance.
- Ensure the academy is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging.
- Ensure the academy site is open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is complete by every class teacher each day. *This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the academy.*

We specifically: -

- have a designated attendance officer (champion) in each academy.
- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the academy in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.
- Use reward systems, to demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality are recognised as achievements in themselves.
- Take safeguarding seriously and we will always contact parents on the first day that their child is absent from academy.

Through our policy and procedures, we aim to meet the current DfE expectations of primary schools as detailed below:

- Have a policy that is understood by everyone.
- Develop and maintain a culture of high attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence (less than 90%).
- Build relationships with families.
- Have effective processes to follow up absence.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across our Trust.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full time education, to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

## 4. Strategic Approach Objectives

FGT academies adopt a 5 Foundation whole school approach which involves all parties working together. This holistic approach ensures all relevant staff within our academies prioritise building solid working relationships with children, and parents, prior to escalation. We follow a staged plan that ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internally within the academy and externally with outside agencies.

## 5. The Foundations

### Culture

The academy will have a fully embedded ethos, in which excellent attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. It will be characterised by:

*Aspirations for all children that are ambitious and re-enforced by all staff.*

*An escalated approach that is consistently followed by all staff.*

*An environment that ensures children feel respected and safe.*

*A commitment to partnership with families.*

*Challenge and support from the Executive Team, Trustees and Governors.*

## Supportive Policies

The approach to improving attendance is built upon clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures that continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy allows the academy to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance. The approach will be characterised by:

*An understanding of when to involve outside agencies.*

*Compliance with all statutory requirements.*

*A focus upon impact.*

*Manageable priorities for leaders.*

## Staff Development

The academy prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Champion delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families. Staff development will be characterised by:

*Delivery of relevant training and support*

*Identification of where specific best practice exists.*

*Targeted bespoke training.*

*Regular review of attendance performance.*

## Targeted Intervention

Data information and analysis are employed to direct resources, proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. This expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leaders understand the reason for attendance concerns, and how these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed. This approach will be characterised by:

*The Attendance Leaders looking beyond headline data.*

*Data is shared widely.*

*A commitment to early assessment.*

*A focus upon preventing minor mental health issues from escalating.*

## Link attendance approaches with behaviour management

Connecting and belonging drives the academy approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The academy has developed, and embedded, an effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success. This approach is characterised by:

*A broad curriculum focus that supports well-being.*

*A commitment to early identification that aims to reduce the risk of exclusion.*

*A commitment to identifying needs of children of children new to the academy or returning after a long period of absence, including exclusion, so that they can be adequately supported.*

## 6. Partnership with Parents

*The term 'parent' includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children's Act 1989 or have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.*

FGT values all children. In line with this policy, academies will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis, fairly and equitably always, remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern.

Absence can only be authorised by the academy; parents do not have this authority. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless satisfactory evidence for the child's absence has been received. In the first instance contact from the parent will be accepted as evidence. However, if a child's attendance continues to cause concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where absences occur repeatedly due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescriptions etc. Absence may be coded as unauthorised without evidence.

### The Role of Parents

- Parents should notify the academy of a pupil's absence on the first day of absence by telephone, e-mail, letter, academy parent app (where available) or in person.
- Parents should, wherever possible, make all medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, children should attend school for part of the day. Appointment cards should always be provided as evidence of medical/dental appointments.
- Parents should complete a request form for absence in term time for exceptional circumstances (available on the academy website).
- Parents should provide medical evidence for 5 or more days absence due to illness
- Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted by the academy absence will not be authorised.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET or other purposes.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease.
- Leave during term time taken without authorisation of the academy
- Head lice

We recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform the academy of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the academy to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Senior Lead for Child Protection. We will always follow the current Keeping Children Safe in Education expectations and our Child Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or EHCP plan will be monitored and supported in school. At FGT, we will proactively identify and follow up on a child's non-attendance and gather information about the child. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted support.

## **7. The Role of the Attendance Officer/Champion**

Each academy has a member of staff who will be the Attendance Officer/Champion and assumes the responsibilities of the Attendance Officer to support the academy in achieving its targets and address concerns.

The Attendance Officer/Champion at Gentleshaw Primary Academy will;

- Monitor attendance on a daily basis and track ongoing attendance.
- Support families in ensuring their child/children attend school regularly and punctually on a daily basis.
- Facilitate school attendance review meetings for poor punctuality and low attendance.
- Contact parents by telephone, e-mail, letter or home visit to discuss the academy's concerns and discuss how attendance and punctuality can be improved.
- Ensure first day absence calls are made and record reasons for absence.
- Inform and meet with parents whose children's attendance causes concern.
- Make referrals to the external agencies where appropriate.
- Check records, including any from other schools which the child has attended previously.



- Discuss with staff how the child is coping with the curriculum.
- Speak to the Special Educational Needs Coordinator to establish whether the child is on the Special Educational needs register.
- Take into account, the voice of the child and understand any difficulties, e.g. curriculum or bullying and their views on the issue could be addressed.

Where there is a lack of engagement from parents/carers or concerns regarding the reason for absence the Attendance Officer/Champion will use their knowledge and understanding of the child and family to issue formal letters as appropriate. A three-stage incremental approach will be implemented following academy expectations, employing exemplar letters attached as appendices.

## **8. The Role of the Class Teacher**

At each academy the designated class teacher will:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual.
- Provide a welcoming environment for their classroom and provide support as necessary when children return after absence.
- Complete registration at the start of each session (morning and afternoon).
- Monitor daily patterns of attendance and swiftly report any concerns to the Attendance Officer, including patterns of lateness.
- Follow the Attendance policy when dealing with absence and punctuality.
- Provide work for children at the request of parents in the event of a child being absent due to a long illness, disability or other circumstances.

## **9. Late Procedures**

Children who arrive after 8.55am must go through the academy office entrance and be signed in by their parent, carer or appropriate adult, providing a reason for lateness. Please note that 'late' is not a reason. Children who arrive frequently late will be monitored; parents will be contacted and a referral to the Education Welfare Officer considered.

To help monitor and minimise lateness the Attendance Officer may carry out unannounced 'Late Gate' sessions to establish with parents the reasons for poor punctuality.

Any child arriving after 8.55am will be marked as an unauthorised late which will impact upon a child's attendance percentage.

Children who leave the academy for any reason during the school day must be signed out at the academy office by their parent, carer or appropriate adult.

## 10. Family Holiday during Term Time

FGT discourages holidays during term time due to the impact they have on pupils' learning. In line with national regulations Headteachers may only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances' and there is no automatic right to any leave in term time.

Family holidays taken during term time will be categorised as an unauthorised absence. Only in exceptional circumstances will a holiday be authorised.

It is paramount that we are aware of every child's whereabouts if they are not in school. Therefore, it is imperative that in the event of your child not attending school that we are notified of your intention to take them on a family holiday and would ask for a formal request to be made.

**Relevant request forms and guidance notes are available on individual academy websites.**

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the child is still absent from school, the absence will be **unauthorised**. This may lead to a Penalty Notice being implemented.

## 11. Attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing in Education

Staff will follow the Trust's procedure for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All academies are required to make the Local Authority aware of every registered pupil who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days.

In the event that an absence is unreported, and a child has not been seen for 3 days a safe and well check will be completed which will be a visit to the home of the child to establish the child's whereabouts and well-being. In the event that contact is not made with someone with parental responsibility, a letter must be issued to advise that a visit had been attempted.

The academy will further

- notify the Local Authority within 5 days if a new child is joining the school roll.
- inform the Local Authority of children whose parents have notified the academy in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.

## 12. Persistent Absence

We have a particular focus on reducing Persistent Absenteeism at the school.

The Persistent Absence threshold for children is currently 10%. The threshold means that any child will be classed as Persistently Absent when they have missed 38 or more sessions.

This equates to 19, or more, missed days during the academic year - which is as little as 6 days over each of the three Terms. This also equates to the equivalent of 1 day of absence, or more, a fortnight across a full school year.

We will use a 19-day tracking system to make you aware of the number of days your child has missed in education. This will allow us to work together to reduce the number of days and attempt to prevent your child from reaching this number.

Once a child has reached 38 sessions, or 19 days absence, they will be classified as Persistently Absent from school and we may report this to the Local Authority and follow external legal proceedings.

Where a child falls under 50% attendance the child will be classified as a Severely Absent child. Ultimately this will indicate that all intervention, and support, offered has not made the expected impact to improve overall attendance. Where attendance remains a concern and all other interventions and support have not made a significant impact, we will escalate with external partners.

### **13. Illness**

It is an academy decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence. In the majority of cases where a reason for a child's absence is provided this will be accepted without question or concern. For periods of absence for more than 5 days we require medical evidence and in the event of lower attendance, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested.

If you have any concerns please discuss the matter promptly with a member of staff to ensure that we can provide the maximum support at the earliest opportunity.

During any long-term absence the Academy will:

- Maintain contact with the child.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school so the child feels welcome and regains a sense of belonging.

Once returned the class teacher will

- Ensure the child once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to work with.
- support a child when returning to class and help them with any work they may have missed.

### **14. Rewarding Good Attendance**

FGT Academies feel it is important to reward children who have achieved good or improved attendance. Each individual academy will implement their own reward systems with a view to encouraging good attendance.

Enter specific rewards:

## 15. Monitoring and Review

The Future Generation Trust Board has overall responsibility for this policy and for reviewing its content and effectiveness.

The Headteacher has operational responsibility for implementation and must ensure that staff and parents are aware of the contents and expectations of the Trust with regard to attendance.

This policy and all arrangements and procedures will be reviewed every three years.

**Policy adopted on:** 5<sup>th</sup> October 2023

**Review Date:** September 2026

**Signed:** Fliss Dale **Designation:** Chair of Trust Board

## Appendix 1 - Safe and Well Letter



*Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Telephone No: 01543 277420*

Date:

«salutation»

«address block»

Dear: «salutation»

I have attempted to visit your property today as your child has been absent from the academy for 3 days without any contact from a person with parental responsibility. In line with the Trust's Attendance Policy a Safe and Well check is carried out to any household where a child has not been seen for at least 3 days and there has been no contact or reasonable explanation from a person with parental responsibility for that child's absence.

Please could you make contact with the academy as a matter of urgency to discuss your child's absence. This can be done by contacting the academy office on the above number or if it is out of office hours contact may be made by email on [Office@gentleshawprimary@academy](mailto:Office@gentleshawprimary@academy)

If no contact is received then consideration will be made about sharing information with other services such as police/health/social care in order to determine the safety and wellbeing of your child/children.

If you require any support with attendance or generally in getting your child into school then please make contact and arrange to meet with me and we can discuss appropriate support.

Yours sincerely,

**Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Headteacher**

## Appendix 2 - Primary Stage 1 Letter



Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Telephone No: 01543 277420

Date:

«salutation»

«address block»

Dear «salutation»

**Re: «forename» «surname», «year/reg»**

I am writing regarding your child's attendance, which is causing concern. So far this year **name** has been absent for **\_\_\_\_\_** days of school. This means that their attendance is currently **percentage %**.

I have enclosed a copy of **«forename»'s** attendance record so that you can view a detailed breakdown of your child's absence from school.

Regular attendance is an important factor in a child's personal, social and academic success. At Gentleshaw name we place great importance on regular school attendance.

An attendance of 90% is recognised as Persistently Absence (PA) and equates to 19 days missed over a school year. Once a child has been absent for 19 days or more, they remain PA for the rest of the academic year.

When a child accumulates 10 days absence, they are identified as at 'Risk of Persistent Absence'.

We are keen to work with you to address any barriers to your child's attendance. If you require any advice or support on this matter, please get in touch with me to discuss this and we will do our best to help.

Yours sincerely

**Miss Genevieve Saunders**  
**Headteacher**

*Enc Attendance Record*

## Appendix 3 - Primary Stage 2 Letter



Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Telephone No: 01543 277420

Date:

«salutation»

«address block»

Dear «salutation»

**Re: «forename» «surname», «year/reg»**

With reference to the letter dated «insert date» I have reviewed «forename»'s attendance and as you will see from the enclosed Attendance Record there has not been a sustained improvement in «his/her»'s attendance which is currently ?? days, which equates to «percentage attendance»%.

The academy will continue to monitor «forename»'s attendance over the next 4 weeks. If there has not been a significant improvement during this time, you will be invited to a meeting discuss how we can work together to support «forename» in achieving an improvement.

An attendance of 90% is recognised as Persistently Absence (PA) and equates to 19 days missed over a school year. Once a child has been absent for 19 days or more, they remain PA for the rest of the academic year. When a child accumulates 10 days absence they are identified as 'Risk of Persistent Absence'.

***I have to advise you as a parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education through regular attendance at school or otherwise (Section 444 of the Education Act 1996)***

We are keen to work with you to address any barriers to your child's attendance. If you require any advice or support on this matter, please get in touch with myself to discuss this and we will do our best to help.

Yours sincerely

**Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Headteacher**

Enc Attendance Record



Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Telephone No: 01543 277420

Date:

«salutation»

«address block»

Dear «salutation»

**Re: «forename» «surname», «year/reg»**

Please find enclosed a copy of «forename»'s Attendance Record. «Forename»'s attendance is currently «percentage attendance»% which is ?? days and has not shown a sustained improvement since our letter dated «insert date» and therefore remains a concern.

An attendance of 90% is recognised as Persistently Absence (PA) and equates to 19 days missed over a school year. Once a child has been absent for 19 days or more, they remain PA for the rest of the academic year. When a child accumulates 10 days absence, they are identified as 'Risk of Persistent Absence'.

An appointment has been made for you to discuss your child's attendance concerns on «insert date» at «time» with myself. Please let the academy know if this is not convenient and a mutually agreeable appointment will be arranged.

It is the Headteacher's decision to authorise any absence based on the information provided by parents. I must inform you that further absences may **not be authorised** unless evidence is provided. In the case of illness, the academy will accept as proof the following: medical appointment card/letter; proof of a prescription (medicine/tablets label/container) showing the date prescribed.

***The academy would like to remind you that in line with Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, As a Parent/carer of a child of statutory school age, you have a legal responsibility to ensure full time education through regular attendance at school or otherwise.***

If you require any further clarification regarding school attendance, please read our Attendance Policy which is available on the academy's website and if you would like to discuss the reasons for your child's absence please contact me on 01543 277420.

Yours sincerely

**Miss Genevieve Saunders  
Headteacher**



