

# GOWERTON SCHOOL



## ATTENDANCE POLICY



- ARTICLE 28 & 29: *Be punctual for lessons and come equipped ready to learn/teach*
- PUPILS WILL: *Come to lessons on time with correct equipment and a positive attitude to learning*
- STAFF WILL: *Support the pupils in becoming the best that they can be by encouraging regular attendance and achievement in lessons*

Reviewed 21.1.16

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# Gowerton School

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 Gowerton School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils / students and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.2 The whole school community – pupils / students, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.3 The policy is based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations.

## 2. School's roles and responsibilities

- 2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Gowerton School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils / students are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### 2.2 Attendance Leader

A member of Headship Team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared weekly with the Headship Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils / students and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the termly meetings of the Ethos & Wellbeing sub-committee of the Governing Body. (S)he will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### 2.3 Registration

- i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers / form tutors are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes.
- ii) Pupils arriving late, after the registration period, MUST report to the D£ Pastoral Room where they will be signed in and given a late mark thereby recording the pupil present on the school premises.
- iii) Similarly, pupils who are required to leave school premises MUST report to D3 and produce their planner/letter showing permission from a parent/carer, to leave the school premises during the school day.
- iv) Along with other secondary schools in Swansea, Gowerton School operates a computerised attendance recording system. This enables attendance records to be processed on computer, allowing immediate access to individual pupil data and whole school attendance data.
- v) All staff have access to Lesson Monitor in SIMS.net in the classroom. Accessing the register is done via the homepage which is unique to every member of staff. Teachers will see their timetable for the day displayed in the My Classes Today panel on the homepage. By double clicking on a lesson in this panel allows the Take Register page for that lesson or registration session to open.

A quick reference guide can be found in Appendix A.

Please refer to Appendix B for current absence codes. It is important to note that absence codes are issued by WG and it is the school's responsibility to ensure that the most current codes are in use and that staff are aware of any changes.

2.4 At Gowerton, we recognise the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. We recognise that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them 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 school**.

## 2.5 Authorised Absences

i) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –

- a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's / student's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,
- in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the pupil / student has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's / student's parents belong;

(f) in other **exceptional circumstances** (eg a family bereavement) and **for a very limited period**.

ii) Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil / student is staying at home to mind the house;
- the pupil / student is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil / student is absence for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;

- the pupil / student is absence from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil / student has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

#### 2.6 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

#### 2.7 Staff Training

The SDO will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

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### **3. Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to Headship Team, parents and the governing body . The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the Welsh Govt. within the stipulated time frame.

### **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Gowerton School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in tutor groups. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are displayed prominently in school as well as in the weekly bulletin for staff.

#### 4.2 First-day contact

Gowerton has in place a system of first-day contact. This means that parents will be telephoned or sent a text message on the first day a pupil / student is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils / students who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

#### 4.3 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's / student's absence over a 3 to 4 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school will invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil / student to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit – usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them.

#### 4.4 Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continue to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil / student is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

#### 4.5 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils / students are expected to arrive at school, and be in the correct room for registration, on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late.

4.6 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes are monitored for frequency of lateness. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give adequate reason. If this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, the EWO is informed.

4.7 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils / students arriving late should therefore report to D3. **It is important that all pupils / students arriving late following this procedure.**

4.8 For the same reason it is important that pupils / students leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day report to D3.

#### 4.9 Post-registration truancy

Post-registration truancy occurs when a pupil / student goes missing from school having previously registered for the session. This behaviour not only means the pupil / student will not be receiving a full-time education, it also potentially renders him/her vulnerable to harm. We take this very seriously and will endeavour to ensure it does not happen. Consistent use of lesson registration on SIMS is a good way of combating this. If, however, a pupil / student appears to have left the premises without authorisation, the school will make contact with his/her parents/carers immediately.

### 5. **Term-time Holidays**

5.1 Term-time holidays are intended for children whose parents are unable to take holiday at any other time.

5.2 The Headteacher will consider every application individually. Policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing, with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.3 The Head will consider authorising holidays for:

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during term-time;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and non-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and

- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 Gowerton School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision, if authorised leave is refused.

## **6. Extended leave of absence**

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Orford School will take account of the following:

- a visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal 'holiday';
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
- parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);
- the reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, particularly for minority ethnic families, where huge distances and high costs are involved;
- where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

## **7. Parents' / carers' responsibilities**

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers who will be supported and encouraged by the school.

7.2 Gowerton expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify school on the first day of absence, by telephoning the school before 9.00am, or by speaking to the school secretary whilst dropping off siblings.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing homework diaries when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. We will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## 8. Pupils' / students' responsibilities

- 8.1 All pupils / students should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or form tutor.
- 8.2 Pupils / students should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher or form tutor a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils / students also have a responsibility for following school procedures if they arrive late.

## 9. Governors' responsibilities

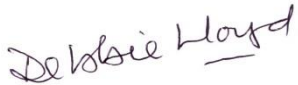

- 9.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

## 10. Conclusion

- 10.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring we develop each child as well as possible and maintain our ethos of inclusion and participation.

### Reviewing the policy

The school will review this policy each year in consultation with its allocated Education Welfare Officer.

	Name	Signature	Date
Chair of Governors	Debbie Lloyd		15/03/17
Head Teacher	Nigel Jones		15/03/17
FGB			05/04/17

Review Date	March 2018 Standards & Provision
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## APPENDIX A

Quick Reference Sheet

APPENDIX A

# Lesson Monitor in SIMS .net

## Accessing the Register via the Home Page

Teachers will see their timetable for today displayed in the My Classes Today panel on the Home Page.

1. Double-click the required lesson to display the Take Register page.



2. The Select Class browser, which displays the timeline, is hidden but can be displayed by clicking the Browse button. If required, the SIMS .net Home Page can be accessed again via Focus | Home Page.

## Adding Additional Identification Columns

Additional identification columns, i.e. Date of Birth, Gender, Year and Admission Number, can be added and removed as required but apply only to the current register.

Right-click the Name or Reg column heading and select one or more additional columns from the pop-up menu.

The register expands to accommodate the additional columns, which can be removed if required by right-clicking the Name, Reg, or any of the additional column headings and deselecting the unwanted column(s) from the pop-up menu.

## Accessing the Register via the Focus Menu

Select Focus | Lesson Monitor | Take Register to display the Select Class browser. Alternatively, click the Take Register button located on the SIMS .net Focus Bar.



### Class Teachers

1. Ensure that the required date is displayed.



2. Double-click the required class on the timeline to display the associated register.

### Staff covering lessons

If you are covering for another teacher or you are, for example, an administrator who wishes to view a teacher's classes/lessons:

1. Ensure that the required date is displayed.
2. Click the Search button adjacent to the Teacher field to open the Browse for Lessons dialog.
3. Enter all or part of the name and/or select the period you are teaching and then click the Search button.
4. Double-click the required lesson or highlight and click OK to display the register for the selected lesson.

To view the timeline, click the Browse button to return to the Select Class browser.

## Taking the Register

The orange highlight indicates the name of the pupil/student and the period for which the mark is about to be entered.

Right-click the Name or Reg column heading to add additional identification columns.

Hovering over a cell displays the teacher's name and class. Comments and minutes late are also displayed if they have been entered.

Extra names will initially be added to the bottom of the list.

### Entering a mark using the keyboard

Click in the cell and enter a mark using the keyboard. As each mark is entered the highlight automatically moves down to the next pupil/student.

### Select the required code from a list of all available codes

Either right-click in the cell in which you wish to enter a mark and select Display Codes from the pop-up menu or click the Codes button to open the Codes dialog.

Double-click the required code which is then displayed in the current cell. The highlight moves down to the next pupil/student. The Codes dialog can remain open while the register is marked. Continue entering marks as required. Click the Close button to close the Codes dialog.

*TIP: To enter mark(s) using the keyboard while the Codes dialog is open, click in the register where the next mark is to be entered (this returns the focus to the register page) and enter the required mark via the keyboard.*

### Enter the same code for ALL pupil/students

1. Click the column heading for the current period. The background colour of the selected cells changes to cyan.
2. Enter / or \ as appropriate to flood fill the entire column.
3. Where the present mark is not applicable, individual marks can be edited by clicking in the appropriate cell and entering the correct mark using the keyboard or Codes dialog.

### Enter the same code for a block of pupil/students

1. To select pupil/students who are listed sequentially, click in the first cell in which you wish to enter the mark. Hold down the Shift key and click the last cell in which you wish to enter the same mark. The background colour of the selected cells changes to cyan.
2. Enter a mark using the keyboard or Codes dialog.

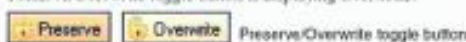
### Editing/deleting a mark

If you wish to edit or delete a mark before it is saved, ensure that the highlight is on the cell displaying the required mark. Enter the correct code using the keyboard or Codes dialog, or press the Delete key, as appropriate. A dash (-) is displayed in the cell where a mark has been deleted.

### Saving the data

Click the Save button to save the marks. If there are any pupil/students with missing marks, SIMS .net will offer to mark them as absent using the code N (no reason yet provided for absence). If you click the No button you will be returned to the Take Register page without saving. Missing marks can then be entered manually before the register is saved.

*NOTE: If you wish to edit marks after saving, ensure that the Preserve/Overwrite toggle button is displaying Overwrite.*



### Printing the register

Click the Print button to open a standard Windows® Print dialog. Ensure that the printer settings are correct and then click OK.

**APPENDIX B****REGISTER CODES**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances