



Norton Primary School

Attendance Policy 2026–2027

Policy information	Details
School status	Local authority maintained primary school
Senior Attendance Champion	Jane Farren, Headteacher
Attendance Officer	Fionn Higgins
Approved by	Full Governing Body
Approval date	September 2026
Review date	September 2027, or earlier if guidance changes

This policy reflects the Department for Education statutory guidance updated 9 July 2026 and Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) Education Inclusion Service attendance procedures and Code of Conduct for 2026–2027.

1 Purpose and principles

Improving attendance is everyone's business. Norton Primary School aims to provide a calm, safe and supportive environment in which pupils want to attend, belong and learn. Regular attendance is essential to pupils' achievement, wellbeing and future opportunities.

The school will work in partnership with pupils, parents and carers, Gloucestershire County Council and relevant services. We will identify concerns early, listen to families, remove barriers where possible and provide support before considering formal legal intervention. Safeguarding responsibilities remain central throughout.

This policy applies to all pupils on roll, including pupils below compulsory school age. Legal enforcement provisions apply only where the pupil is of compulsory school age.

2 Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been prepared with regard to the following legislation and statutory guidance:

- Working together to improve school attendance, Department for Education statutory guidance, updated 9 July 2026.
- The Education Act 1996, including sections 7, 444 and 576.
- The Education Act 2002 and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended, and the national framework for penalty notices.
- The Education (Information About Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013, as amended, including daily attendance data requirements.
- Gloucestershire County Council Education Inclusion Service attendance guidance and Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

The 2024 Regulations replaced the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The school will use the current national attendance codes and comply with statutory admission and attendance register requirements.

3 Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Parents and carers

- ensure their child attends every day the school is open, on time and ready to learn;
- notify the school before 9.00am on the first day of an unplanned absence and on each subsequent day, giving the reason and expected return date;
- provide at least two current emergency contact numbers wherever possible;
- arrange routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours wherever possible;
- request leave of absence in advance and provide evidence when reasonably requested; and
- engage with support and any attendance contract or other agreed plan.

3.2 Pupils

- attend every day and arrive on time;
- follow the school's attendance and punctuality routines; and
- speak to a trusted adult about barriers that make attendance difficult.

3.3 Governing body

- promote attendance through the school's ethos and policies;
- ensure leaders fulfil statutory duties and staff receive appropriate training;
- review attendance data, including groups and pupils who are persistently or severely absent;

- challenge and support leaders on the impact of attendance strategies; and
- hold the headteacher to account for implementing this policy.

3.4 Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion

Jane Farren is the school's designated Senior Attendance Champion and is responsible for:

- setting a clear whole-school attendance strategy;
- ensuring effective systems for recording, monitoring and following up absence;
- using data to identify pupils and cohorts requiring support;
- coordinating support with the SENCO, designated safeguarding lead and external services;
- regularly evaluating the impact of attendance work and reporting to governors;
- authorising leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances; and
- deciding, with due regard to support-first expectations, whether the school should request a Notice to Improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention from Gloucestershire County Council.

3.5 Attendance Officer and school staff

Fionn Higgins, Attendance Officer, monitors and analyses attendance, provides reports, follows up concerns and works with staff and families. Class teachers take accurate registers using the correct codes. Office staff record absence information, make first-day contact, maintain communication records and refer concerns promptly to the Senior Attendance Champion or safeguarding team.

4 Attendance and admission registers

The school will maintain admission and attendance registers in accordance with the 2024 Regulations. Registers are legal records. Every amendment will preserve the original entry and record the amended entry, reason, date, and the name and position of the person making it. Attendance register entries will be retained for six years from the date of entry.

The attendance register is taken at the start of each morning session and once during each afternoon session. The school records whether each pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend because of exceptional circumstances, using the current national code and any required supplementary information.

School day point	Time and code
Pupils should arrive by	8.55am
Morning register begins	9.00am
Morning register closes	9.30am
Afternoon register	1.15pm
Arrival after register begins but before it closes	Code L – late before register closes
Arrival after register closes without an authorised reason	Code U – absent after register closes

The school will submit attendance data to the Department for Education as required. It will also make statutory returns and referrals to GCC where required, including admission and deletion notifications, irregular attendance and absence lasting 10 school days or more, in accordance with GCC Schoolsnet attendance procedures and safeguarding requirements.

5 Reporting and responding to absence

5.1 Unplanned absence and illness

Parents and carers must contact the school by 9.00am on the first day of absence and on every subsequent day unless another arrangement has been agreed. The school will authorise illness unless it has genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness. Medical evidence will not be requested routinely, but may be requested where necessary and proportionate. Parents will be told if an absence is to be unauthorised.

5.2 First-day response and safeguarding

- Contact the parent or carer and, if necessary, other emergency contacts on the first day of unexplained absence.
- Establish the reason, decide whether the absence can be authorised and enter the correct code as soon as possible and no later than five working days after the session.
- Continue daily contact while the reason remains unexplained.
- Consider the pupil's vulnerability and known risks. Where contact cannot be made or there is concern for the child's safety, follow safeguarding and children-missing-education procedures without waiting for an attendance threshold to be reached.
- Notify relevant professionals where appropriate and keep a clear chronology of contact, support, decisions and evidence.

5.3 Medical and dental appointments

Code M may be used where leave has been granted for a medical or dental appointment. Parents should notify the school in advance and the pupil should attend before and/or after the appointment where practicable. Routine appointments should be arranged outside school hours where possible.

6 Leave of absence during term time

The headteacher may grant a leave of absence only where an advance application has been made by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives and the headteacher considers there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher decides whether leave is granted and, if so, the number of school days. Each request is considered individually; there is no automatic entitlement to term-time leave and a family holiday or leisure activity is not normally an exceptional circumstance.

Requests should be submitted as soon as the need is known and, where possible, at least four weeks in advance using the school form. Evidence may be requested. If leave is not granted, or a pupil is absent for longer than the period granted, the absence will be unauthorised. Holiday or leisure-related absence is recorded using Code G.

When leave is refused, the school will provide written confirmation that the absence is unauthorised, explain that a penalty notice may be requested and set out the consequences of non-payment. If leave is taken without a prior request, the school will not ask for a retrospective application; it will use Gloucestershire County Council's current notification letter and record the absence appropriately.

7 National attendance codes

The school will use the codes prescribed by the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Staff should use the current DfE code descriptions and record the required activity or circumstance where applicable. A summary is below.

Codes	Summary
/ \ L	Present for morning/afternoon session; late before register closes

B D K P V W	Approved educational activity, including other school, local-authority provision, sport, visit or work experience
C C1 C2	Leave for other exceptional circumstances; regulated performance/employment abroad; compulsory-school-age pupil on an agreed temporary part-time timetable
E G I J1 M R S T X	Authorised/unauthorised absence reasons prescribed in the Regulations
N O U	Reason not yet established; other unauthorised absence; late after register closes
Q Y1-Y7	Unable to attend for a prescribed reason, with required detail recorded
Z #	Pupil not yet on roll; planned whole-school closure

Code N is temporary and must be replaced by the correct code as soon as the reason is established and within five working days. Approved educational activity codes may be used only where the activity meets statutory requirements, including supervision arrangements.

8 Supporting and improving attendance

The school follows a support-first approach. Action will be proportionate to need and may include:

- welcoming routines, positive communication and celebration that does not shame pupils or disadvantage those with medical conditions or other barriers;
- early discussion with the pupil and family to understand barriers;
- reasonable adjustments and coordinated support for pupils with SEND, health needs, anxiety, bullying concerns or other vulnerabilities;
- an Attendance Intervention Meeting and a written attendance plan or attendance contract;
- referral to or collaboration with the local authority, health, early help, social care or other relevant services;
- regular review of progress and the impact of support; and
- formal intervention only where support is unsuccessful, not engaged with or not appropriate.

A part-time timetable will be used only in very exceptional circumstances, for the shortest necessary period, with parental agreement, a clear plan to return to full-time education, regular review and the correct Code C2. It will not be used to manage behaviour.

9 Monitoring attendance

The school monitors attendance and punctuality at least every six weeks and reviews emerging concerns more frequently. It analyses whole-school, pupil-level and group data; compares performance with national data; shares appropriate information with governors; and evaluates the impact of support and interventions.

Persistent absence means missing 10% or more of possible sessions. Severe absence means missing 50% or more. The school will prioritise intensive, multi-agency support for pupils who are severely absent or at risk of becoming severely absent. Parents receive attendance information through school reports in November and July and through earlier contact whenever concerns arise.

10 Gloucestershire legal intervention process

Legal intervention is a last resort and does not replace the school's duty to understand and address barriers. The local authority, not the school, issues penalty notices. Norton Primary School may request intervention where the statutory and Gloucestershire requirements are met.

10.1 National threshold

The school must consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate when a pupil has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and may span different terms or school years. Only unauthorised sessions count.

10.2 Notice to Improve

For Code N, O or U absences, or a combination including Code G, GCC requires a Notice to Improve before a penalty notice request. Since 22 February 2026, schools request Notices to Improve through GCC's MRI portal. The improvement period is normally three weeks. The school will continue support and monitor attendance during this period, then check that at least 10 unauthorised sessions fall within the preceding 10 school weeks before requesting a penalty notice. A Notice to Improve is not required for 10 sessions recorded solely as Code G. Any additional information entered on the MRI Notice to Improve request will appear verbatim in the parent's letter; staff must write factually and omit internal comments and sensitive information.

10.3 Penalty notice amounts and repeat offences

Occurrence within a rolling three-year period	Amount per parent, per child
First penalty notice	£80 if paid within 21 days; £160 if paid within 22–28 days
Second penalty notice	£160, payable within 28 days; no reduced amount
Third or subsequent occasion	A further penalty notice will not normally be issued; Gloucestershire County Council will consider prosecution

There is no statutory right of appeal against a penalty notice. If it is not paid within 28 days, Gloucestershire County Council may prosecute under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The local authority decides whether to issue, withdraw or prosecute. A penalty notice is issued to each parent who is liable under education law, subject to the local authority's assessment and Code of Conduct.

10.4 Evidence and communication

The school will use GCC's current MRI process and paperwork checklist when requesting a Notice to Improve or penalty notice. Evidence will include this policy, an attendance certificate signed and dated by the headteacher, a clear central chronology, records of support and meetings, and dated correspondence with each relevant parent. For Code G requests it will include the leave request and school response, or GCC's letter where no advance request was made. Only unauthorised sessions within the relevant 10 school weeks will be entered; present and authorised sessions will be excluded. Staff will consult relevant professionals where appropriate and write all referral information factually and professionally, bearing in mind that additional Notice to Improve information is shared verbatim with parents.

11 Equality, SEND and safeguarding

The school will apply this policy fairly and with due regard to the Equality Act 2010, the SEND Code of Practice and its safeguarding duties. Attendance expectations remain ambitious for every pupil, while responses will consider disability, special educational needs, physical or mental ill health, caring responsibilities, bereavement, trauma and other individual circumstances. Reasonable adjustments and suitable support will be considered before legal action. Absence itself can be a safeguarding warning sign and will be responded to accordingly.

12 Linked policies and review

This policy should be read with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Behaviour Policy, SEND Policy, Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, Children Missing Education procedures and Leave of Absence forms and letters.

The Senior Attendance Champion will review this policy annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance or Gloucestershire County Council procedures change. The Full Governing Body will approve each review.

13 Key contacts and sources

- School absence reporting: contact the school office before 9.00am.
- Gloucestershire County Council Education Inclusion Service: 01452 427274; attendance@gloucestershire.gov.uk.
- DfE statutory guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>
- Gloucestershire attendance guidance: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/attendance/>
- Gloucestershire legal proceedings and penalty notices: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/schoolsnet/your-pupils/attendance/information-on-all-legal-proceedings/> GCC Code of Conduct: <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/media/hn1afkus/gcc-pn-code-of-conduct.pdf>