



Godalming Junior School

This school is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. If you have any concerns you should contact our Designated Safeguard Leads, Adam Samson, Nick MacIver, Louise Munz, Kate Wilkinson and Nancy Kirby

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was reviewed: Autumn 2023

This policy will be reviewed next: Autumn 2024

This policy was reviewed by: The Resources Committee

GJS Attendance Lead is: Adam Samson - Headteacher

GJS Deputy Attendance Lead is: Nancy Kirby - Home School Link Worker

“Every child has a right to an education” - Article 28

School Gates Open (Beginning of the day): 8.20am
Marshall Road and Hallam Road gates only

Registers Taken: 8.35am

School Gates Open (end of the day): 3.00pm
Marshall Road, Hallam Road and Meadow

End of school day: 3.05pm

Godalming Junior School promotes and supports every child's learning to enable each one of them to achieve their full potential. We endeavour to provide a school day that excites challenges and motivates each child, and allows them to develop as independent learners. We aim to inspire the individual, forge successful learning and create responsible citizens of the world. We know that attendance is never 'solved' and is a continuous process by regularly reviewing and updating messages, processes, and strategies.

The school staff, including the Home School Link Worker (attendance lead), alongside the Local Authority and parents, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. There are termly meetings between the LA inclusion service and school staff to discuss general attendance and absence matters as well as highlighting child attendance concerns. We know that every day lost to education can have a serious impact on children's attainment and overall progress in school. As a staff we do all we can to encourage parents and carers to ensure that the children have the highest possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. This policy is aligned to the school's [Children With Medical Needs Who Cannot Attend School policy](#) and DFE's [Working Together to Improve School Attendance guidance \(2022\)](#), which states:

“The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where ALL pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn”

We know that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance during their time at Godalming Junior School compared to those with the lowest attainment.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and is key for their social, emotional and academic success at GJS.

Key Objectives

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly; - (95%+ of sessions attended for the year)
- attend school punctually; - (Arriving before **8.35am** and no later than 9.15am)
- attend school appropriately prepared for the school day

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually, prepared for the school day in the correct [uniform](#);
- contact the school on the first day of the child's absence and send a note on their return to school (Appendix 1);
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- not to take holidays in term time.
- Follow school [Administration of First Aid Policy](#), such as keeping children off school for 48hrs due to sickness.

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming and **safe, calm** and **orderly** learning environment for children;
- encourage and celebrate good and improving attendance and punctuality;
- **monitor** and keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- contact parents as soon as possible when unexplained and/or prolonged absence occurs and obtain notes authorising the absence.
- meet with the parents of children whose attendance causes concern and attempt to **listen** and **understand** their own challenges;
- **facilitate support** in an attempt to remove barriers and with the help of the school HSLW, access support outside of school
- monitor every child's attendance using SIMS and CPOMS;
- **formalise support** by meeting with the school's Inclusion Officer regularly to discuss any new concerns and report on the progress of existing cases;
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Service and **enforce** attendance through statutory intervention with their support.

“The most effective schools consistently promote the benefits of good attendance at school, set high expectations for EVERY pupil, and communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents”.

(WTtISA 2022)

Leave of Absence

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and we strongly recommend that parents/carers book their family holidays during those times. Leave of absence for holidays taken in term time will NOT be authorised except in exceptional circumstances. If leave in term time is unavoidable, a NOTIFICATION OF CHILD'S ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME FORM must be completed and returned to school prior to the start of the leave. This can be obtained from the school office or it can be downloaded from the school website. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for their child as a right.

The Headteacher will decide whether to authorise the absence in exceptional circumstances having considered:

- The context of the application;
- The child's record of attendance;
- previous absence in term time;
- The time of the absence, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important assessments.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 which became law on 1st September 2013 state that headteachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. We do ask that all medical appointments for children be made outside school hours.

In the event of an unauthorised holiday taken in term time, the Headteacher may request the LA to issue a Penalty Notice **if this leads to the overall attendance for that academic year becoming lower than 90% at the point of the request.** The amount payable on issue of a penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 28 days. Each parent will be liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent.

On the advice of the Inclusion Service if any parent requests extended leave of absence of more than 4 weeks to visit their home country then the school may take their name off role and the parent may have to re-apply for a place when they return.

Responding to Non-Attendance

Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school when a pupil is unable to attend school (by **9.15am**). When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- Parents that phone the school to report their child being too poorly to attend school will be issued with a 'I' (authorized absence) A GP note should also be sent into school if possible

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer, the school will endeavour to contact them that day via telephone;
- if there is no response to the telephone call or the absence remains unexplained or is still a concern, the office will inform the Home School Link Worker and member of Senior Management and further investigation and action will be made accordingly;
- if there is persistent non-attendance, the school's Home School Link Worker will keep records of the contact with home during the period of absence and this will be discussed with the local authority inclusion officer when a formal referral can be made;
- if a pupil's level of attendance falls below 90% or a pupil is identified on a truancy patrol and meets the criteria for a penalty notice to be issued or has been taken out of school without the school's permission for five or more days, the school will liaise with the IO and LA to decide whether a Penalty Notice should be issued; This may be a point of discussion with the School Inclusion Officer (meetings with this member of the LA team and School carried out each term)
- To inform parents of school concerns regarding attendance, letters are sent out to ALL parents whose attendance has fallen below 90% during the autumn term. A phone call by the Attendance Lead will precede the letter at half term to seek more information and request an improvement in attendance.
- If there is no significant improvement a further letter may be sent out the following half term - this is likely to raise the prospect of a penalty notice if the attendance does not significantly improve

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the IS may result in further action, an application for an Educational Supervision Order, or court prosecution. Those who are regularly absent or have missed 10 school days or more without authorization may be at risk of becoming 'children missing education'. Taken from Surrey Safeguarding Children Partnership - 5.19 Children missing in Education

Responding to lateness

When a pupil is late for school, they should enter the building via the front office so that they can be recorded as being present. Registers are taken promptly at **8.35am**. After 9.15am, when the registers have closed, they will be recorded as late and arrived after the register has closed (U). This denotes an unauthorized absence.

If there is no contact from the parent, the child will go down in the register as 'O' (unauthorised). Persistent lateness will be monitored and letters sent to parents to inform them. If lateness remains a problem and this lateness is after close of register a referral may be made to the Inclusion Service.

Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform school staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address (if appropriate and known)

The pupils' school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Inclusion Service.

Deletions from registers

GJS is aware there is legislation around taking children off roll (Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and 2013).

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to EHE and a copy of the letter attached. If the case is open to Inclusion a copy of the letter should be provided to the IO. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate.
- If the parent advises that they are moving abroad and school have any reason to suppose that this might not be true they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.

Pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence

Deletions after continuous absence of not less than 20 school days

When taking children off roll due to twenty days absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools **must** ensure that the following applies:

That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised
- (ii) the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) both the school **and** the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil **cannot** be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

For further information regarding when children can be taken off school's roll please contact your IO or the SW Inclusion Service on 01483 518187.

Non-starters

In DfE Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice on School Attendance (August 2013) it advises that if a school is expecting a child to arrive at the beginning of term, the child **MUST** be put on the Admissions and Attendance register.

In the event of the child not arriving, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Admissions. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer to the Inclusion Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made.

