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, Jonathan Poole or Karen Sutton

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was reviewed: Autumn 2020
This policy will be reviewed next: Autumn 2021
This policy was reviewed by: The Safeguarding Committee

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.
The school staff, alongside the Local Authority, firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. 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.

Key Objectives

We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly;
- attend school punctually;
- 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;
- 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.

We expect that the school will:

- provide a welcoming and safe learning environment for children;
- encourage and celebrate good and improving attendance and punctuality;
- 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;
- monitor every child's attendance using SIMS;
- meet 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.

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 or not 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 Head teachers may **not** grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

In the event of an unauthorised holiday taken in term time, the Headteacher may request the LA to issue a Penalty Notice. 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.

Full details of the Code of Conduct relating to Penalty Notices are available on request in school.

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 will take their name off role and the parent will 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. 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;

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.

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 8.45am. 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.