



Giffards Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality—A guide for Parents & Carers - See also the full Attendance Policy for more detailed information

At Giffards Primary School, we are working hard to promote excellent attendance and punctuality. In line with new Government direction, our basic expectation for each pupil is at least 96% attendance.

Benefits of Good School Attendance

Children with good attendance:

- ✓ Feel happier and gain in confidence
- ✓ Achieve more academically and keep up with work more easily
- ✓ Develop well socially, and find it easier to make and keep friends
- ✓ Establish good educational habits and routines at an early age
- ✓ Are able to make a positive contribution to school life in general

All of these are important life skills for your child.

Your children take their lead from you – Please give them the message... Attendance Matters

Any absence that a child has from school affects them as their learning becomes disrupted and social interactions can also be affected. Regular absences will have a serious effect on their academic progress and can affect a child’s confidence and emotional well-being within school. Ensuring your child attends school regularly is your legal responsibility and allowing absence from school without good reason is an offence and may result in a prosecution.

A few days absent a week/month can quickly build up

A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.

No absence	9 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	181 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	96%	94%	90%	85%	80%
Very Good Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.		Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder for your child to make progress.		Serious Concern Your child will find it very difficult to make progress.	

What incentives do we have for attendance?



Class of the Week

'Class of the Week' awarded to the highest attending class in each Key Stage. Extra playtime at the end of break/lunch.

Termly Rewards

The Class with the best attendance at the end of the term in each key stage will receive a class certificate and participate in a fun activity afternoon.

Children with **96%** or more attendance receive a certificate.

Children with **100%** attendance receive a certificate and an attendance achievement badge.

1 term of 100% attendance = bronze attendance achievement badge

2 terms of 100% attendance in same academic year = silver attendance achievement badge

3 terms of 100% attendance in same academic year = gold attendance achievement badge



End of Year Rewards

Children with **96%** or more attendance receive a certificate. and an attendance achievement pencil.

Children with **100%** at the end of the academic year receive a certificate and gold attendance achievement badge. They will also have the opportunity to win a special prize in the attendance raffle which will be drawn in Celebration Assembly in each Key Stage.

Children with **100 %** attendance in more than one year will receive a certificate and a book voucher.

Individual pupil incentive schemes are used for pupils with low attendance, this is done sensitively to encourage and reward pupils for achieving their personal attendance target.

Absence Procedures

If your child is absent from school, you must:

- ✓ Contact us on 01375 672138 as soon as possible on the first day of absence, ideally by 8.30am and inform us of the reason for the absence. Please note unwell cannot be accepted as a reason. We have a 24hr phone line to receive absence calls. A call each day of absence will be needed.
- ✓ Provide us with appointment card/appointment letter if taking your child out of school for a medical appointment; your child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- ✓ Provide the school with medical evidence of any absence lasting more than 5 consecutive days (i.e. medical note, medical appointment card, medicine bottle – named and dated)
- ✓ Provide the school with medical evidence for all future illness if your child's attendance falls under 96%.



Please note: the burden of proof with regards to providing medical evidence sits with parents and therefore if medical evidence is not provided when requested the absence will be unauthorised

If we do not receive information from a parent/ carer regarding absence – it will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

- If we have not heard from a parent/carers or any of the contacts listed, for safeguarding reasons, we will carry out a home visit. If there is no answer we are obliged to take this further to ensure the safety of our children.



Authorised Absences



We understand there are times when children are clearly not well enough to be in school, we will authorise absence for:



Infectious diseases, vomiting, diarrhoea, throat/chest infections etc.

However, there are also many times when children are kept off with minor illnesses, such as mild stomach ache, headache, coughs and sniffles, when they could have coped in school.

If you are in doubt, please send your child into school while informing their class teacher or the school office so we can monitor them throughout the day.

If your child is too unwell to remain in school, of course, we will contact you.

Top Tip: Try to talk to staff when your child is not in hearing distance. In our experience, children who overhear their parent's talking to us often persist in saying they are not feeling any better.

Other authorised absences:

There are a number of other reasons when you may feel that you need to keep your child at home. However, only a handful of these reasons are likely to be authorised absences.

These may include:

- A hospital or emergency appointment (we expect all other medical appointments be made outside of the school day).
- An unexpected family emergency
- A religious observance.



Unauthorised Absences



Please note that we will not authorise term time holidays or visits abroad.

The Education Regulations make clear that Headteachers /Chair of Governors **may not grant** any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

However, if you are planning to take your child out of school during term time, you must complete an absence 'request for term time leave form' available from the school office and send it in with a covering letter. **All applications need to be made at least 4 weeks before the period of absence and before personal and travel arrangements are made.**

Please note: It is imperative that parents are honest with the school about all absences, asking pupils to tell an untruth is not acceptable and is damaging to the pupil, giving them the wrong moral message, as well as to the relationship between school and home. The school retains the right to convert an authorised absence to unauthorised should it become clear that a parent has not been truthful about an absence e.g. where a parent has said a child is sick and it later becomes clear a holiday/ long weekend was taken.

Penalty Notices

With effect from September 2022 the school may apply for a Penalty Notices for unauthorised term time leave. Currently the fine is set at £120 (or £60 if paid within 21 days). If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies, with the exception of very limited circumstances when the Notice may be withdrawn. Please note that penalty notices are issued for each child and to both parents/carers.

Irregular attendance

Penalty Notices can also be issued for unauthorised absence, when the following criteria are met:

- At least 12 sessions of unauthorised absence are recorded against the pupil's name within 120 available sessions. (One session is a half day)

Other Unauthorised Absence



Your child **should not** be absent if:

The weather is bad
They had a late night
You overslept
It is their birthday
You have family visiting
You need to go shopping
Another sibling is off school

If you, as a child's main carer, are poorly and cannot get your child to school please try to find a friend or relative that can help you out. However, if this is not possible, please ring the school office from 8.30am and we will endeavour to help (01375 672138)

Please be aware that Penalty Notices (as set out above) may also be issued in cases where unauthorised absences occur.



Punctuality



Getting to school on time is very important.

The school gates open at 8.40am for all key stages.

If your child arrives after 8.55am, they will be marked late.

It is important that you take your child to the school office to ensure that they receive their mark and that their dinner choice is recorded.

If a child is up to 30 mins late they are marked as 'late' (L), pupils arriving after 9.25am which is 30 minutes or more after the close of registration will be regarded as absent from the morning session and will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U). This will have an impact on a child's Attendance record. Any child arriving after 9.30 will need a packed lunch - unless you have rung ahead and advised us to book a school meal. All meals need to be ordered before 9.30am.



Attendance Monitoring



The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) monitors the attendance and punctuality of all of its pupils on a weekly basis.

We follow a 4 stage 'scale of escalation' which starts when a child's attendance falls below 96%.

Please note that we will not authorise term time holidays or visits abroad.

Absences due to any leave of absence is likely to lead to attendance falling below 96%. Letters from school will still be sent to families where this is the case in line with our policy

Stage 1

Attendance drops below 96% - letter to Parent/Carer informing of below 96% attendance – opportunity to discuss barriers to attendance with Learning Mentor.

3 week monitoring period and review



Stage 2

No improvement or further drop in attendance – Learning Mentor letter to Parents/Carers and in school attendance meeting to be held.

Barriers to attendance discussion and CAF (common assessment framework) discussed as way to secure further support

Any further medical/illness absences will require medical evidence (If not - then unauthorised)

If Parents/Carers do not attend meeting or fail to engage then meeting will still be held – absence recorded on the minutes

Action plan agreed and review meeting arranged, Parents/Carers given copy of action plan.

3 week monitoring and review



Stage 3

No improvement or drop in attendance – Attendance lead letter to parents

In school meeting with Attendance Lead and Learning Mentor. Formal warning of the risk of statutory action given at this meeting.

Parenting contract drawn up and shared. Parents/Carers to sign and given a copy including date for review meeting. **6 week monitoring and review**

If no improvement or parenting contract breached – statutory action considered – application for a penalty notice or referral made for prosecution – letter sent



Stage 4

Referral to Local Authority and letter sent with evidence from actions at stage 1-3 to be submitted for assessment – **Penalty notice likely**



Please note: any unauthorised absence due to a holiday/leave of absence may automatically put your child into the below 96% attendance/Persistent Absence category – the school is obliged to still follow the 4 stage 'scale of escalation' even if this is the case.



Attendance Target



We have set a target of 96% attendance for this year.

We are confident that all the children can hit this target and we look forward to working with all families to achieve this.

YOUR SUPPORT IS THE KEY THAT OPENS THE DOOR TO EDUCATIONAL ACHIEVEMENTS

If you are having any difficulties or have a question regarding school attendance please contact: Mrs V Teager (Assistant Head Teacher/Attendance lead) or the school office on: 01375 672138



Below are some 'top tips' to help with attendance and punctuality.

Establishing good habits early in life minimises problems later on.

- ✓ Ensure that your child has a good bedtime routine
- ✓ Get your child's uniform, book bag and lunch ready the night before
- ✓ Make sure your child eats breakfast
- ✓ If you are having difficulties getting out the door in the morning, try rewarding your children with a sticker chart - rewarding them if you arrive at school before the school gates are closed (Mrs V Teager can support you with this)
- ✓ Try to make medical appointments after school or in school holidays. If you need to make a medical appointment during the day, try to make it after morning/afternoon registration. You can bring your child to school, get their mark and then take them straight off to their appointment
- ✓ If your child is absent, please advise the school on the first day of absence before 8.30am if possible
- ✓ Send your child to school if they are a 'little bit poorly'. We will send them home if they are unable to cope in school.
- ✓ Our office staff will administer prescribed antibiotics/medication with parental permission (parents will need to complete a permission form). Medicines must be in a measured dose in a clearly marked bag
- ✓ Take an interest in your child's school work and support them with their homework
- ✓ Attend Parent's Evening to find out how your child is doing
- ✓ Make sure that your child understands the importance of good attendance
- ✓ Finally, if you have any worries about your child, please see your child's class teacher or speak to Mrs Teager.