

Attendance Policy

Scope of this policy

Gradually Developing Futures (GDF) will take a daily register of pupils as part of its legal obligation. This will be completed accurately, as attendance registers are legal documents. A pupil's name may not be deleted from the attendance register unless it has also been marked as a 'leaver' in the admissions register.

Children who attend school regularly and punctually are best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

This Attendance Policy is intended to guide, assist and empower GDF to maintain excellent levels of attendance and to meet the responsibility to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

Attendance expectations

Missing out on more time in an educational environment risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. GDF's rules on school attendance include:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the school's ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Rationale

We expect all children on roll at GDF to attend school every day when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We expect our children's' attendance to be at least 96%.

We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, due to ill health, are prevented from coming to school.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised.



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Parents whose children are of compulsory school age and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they fail to do this they are guilty of an offence and may be given a penalty notice or prosecuted under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Arrival

- Children are to arrive at school before 9:00am. The register is taken twice a day at 9:00am and 12.30. A day counts as 2 sessions of attendance.
- Morning registration ends at 9:00am. If a child arrives after the registration period, he / she will be marked in as Late. After 9.30 a.m. this will become an Unauthorised Absence unless a valid reason is provided. (see appendix 1)
- It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent / guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the School Office. This signing in / out register is used in the case of an emergency or a fire drill.

Illness and Medical Appointments

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. GDF ask parents to inform the School Office the day before this appointment and to provide evidence of medical appointments such as medical card, hospital letters etc
- The School Office should be informed by 9:00am during the morning of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning, if appropriate, for the duration of the absence. Parents are asked to leave a telephone answering machine message or speak directly with a member of the School Office Team from 8:30am onwards. If parents do not provide a suitable reason for absence within 5 working days, this absence will be classed as unauthorised.

Definitions

- **Authorised Absence:** An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell (see appendix 1) and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.
- **Definition of parent** Under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 (EA 1996), a "parent" in relation to a child or young person is defined as:



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- * The biological parents of a child, whether they are married or not
- * Anyone who although not a biological parent has parental responsibility for a child. (In family law, parental responsibility means all the rights, duties, powers, responsibilities and authority that a parent has in relation to the child.)
- * A person with parental responsibility can make decisions about the child's upbringing and is entitled to information about their child. For example, they can give consent to the child's medical treatment and make decisions about the child's education. They also have the right to receive information about their child's health and education
- * Any person, who although not a biological parent and who does not have parental responsibility, has care of a child or young person
- * A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of their biological or legal relationship with the child (for example, a foster carer or family and friends' carer who has been delegated responsibility for taking day-to-day decisions about the child but does not have parental responsibility).

If a Child is Absent

- When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register
- Parents are expected to telephone the school by 9:00am on the morning of the day of absence to inform the school that their child will be absent. They are asked to state a reason
- If no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence by 9:30am, the School Office will send a text message to the parent or guardian informing them of their child's absence and requesting a reason for absence
- If no contact has been made by the parent regarding the reason for a child's absence by 10:30am, the School Office will telephone the parent or guardian in order to check the safety of the child and seek a reason for absence
- In the unlikely event of a child's absence where the School Office is unable to reach a parent or guardian by 11:00am, emergency Safeguarding procedures will be taken by the Principal.

Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides



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- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the relevant Local Authority
- The Local Authority has the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with their Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found on the relevant Local Authority website)

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

If you would like to request a Leave of Absence (LOA) please:

- Visit the School Office for a Leave Request Form
- Return the completed request form with an accompanying letter addressed to the Principal explaining the full circumstances and reasons for your absence request. Please ensure you return the completed forms with as much notice as possible
- The Principal will respond within 5 working days, and may request a meeting with you to discuss the leave request further before making a decision. You will then be informed in writing as to whether the leave request has been authorised or unauthorised
- Please ensure you keep copies of the leave paperwork to provide you with evidence of the absence authorisation.

Any unauthorised LOA will be reported to the relevant Local Authority by the Principal.

Long Term Absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, and arrangements can be made for the child to have access to alternative means of education from the school.

Repeated Unauthorised Absence

- Unauthorised absences remain on the child’s record and will be reported to the relevant Local Authority which may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored by the school, overseen by the Principal
- If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will receive a written warning letter indicating their child’s attendance level. The school will then monitor



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your child's attendance as it improves, or use this as part of the evidence base should legal action be required

- If your child's attendance falls below 87% then this is classed as Persistent Absence which would automatically trigger high level family support services from school and other agencies including the offer of Early Help, a structured conversation and invitation to meet with teaching staff
- If repeated absence continues, further written, face-to-face and formal meetings will take place to provide both challenge and support to parents/carers to improve your child's level of attendance
- School recognises that illness cannot be avoided, however when absence falls below the school's expected level of 96%, then medical appointments and illnesses will need to be evidenced with a medical note/certificate/letter to authorise any absence – should this evidence not be presented or is not satisfactory then the pupil will receive a mark of unauthorised absence
- A representative from school or the relevant Local Authority may also visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation
- The Local Authority has the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis. The consequences of this may include Fixed Penalty Notice

Monitoring and Reviewing

- It is the overall responsibility of the governors to monitor attendance
- The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for monitoring its consistent application
- The Governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school's attendance figures are as high as they should be
- The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years
- Attendance and punctuality are overseen by the Principal
- Persistent Absence is regular absence causing a pupil's attendance to fall below 87%. At GDF the target for attendance is 96%.

Not all diseases, illness and conditions prevent children from attending school – for guidance see appendix 1 - Health Protection for schools, nurseries and other childcare facilities

The Charlie Taylor Report (DFE) (Government advisor on behaviour) outlines the key findings of school attendance and persistent absenteeism nationally.

EYFS

'Children with low attendance in the early years are more likely to come from the poorest backgrounds. These children are likely to start school already behind their peers, particularly in their acquisition of language and their social development. They have little chance of catching up



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their peers if their attendance is bad. If they fail to succeed early on in their school careers they are likely to get further behind; disillusionment with education sets in and they become excluded or begin to truant.'

The Importance of Attendance

'One of the most effective ways that schools can improve achievement is by improving attendance. Even the very best teachers struggle to raise the standards of children who are not in school regularly. Schools that relentlessly pursue good attendance also get better overall attainment and behaviour.'

Review

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis as a minimum. Next review date 01.09.2026



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Appendix 1

Further Guidance about diseases and conditions that prevent pupils from attending school Health Protection for schools, nurseries and other childcare facilities (Health Protection Agency (2010))

Infection	Exclusion Period	Comments
Athlete's foot	None	Athlete's foot is not a serious condition. Treatment is recommended
Chicken pox	Five days from onset of rash and all the lesions have crusted over	
Cold sores (herpes simplex)	None	Avoid kissing and contact with sores. Cold sores are generally mild and heal without treatment
Conjunctivitis	None	If an outbreak/cluster occurs. Consult your local HPT
Diarrhoea and vomiting	Whilst symptomatic and 48 hours after last symptoms	See section in chapter 9
Diphtheria *	Exclusion is essential. Always consult with your local HPT	Preventable by vaccination. Family contacts must be excluded until cleared to return by your local HPT
Flu (influenza)	Until recovered	Report outbreaks to your local HPT
Glandular fever	None	
Hand foot and mouth	None	Contact your local HPT if a large number of children are affected. Exclusion may be considered in some circumstances
Head lice	None	Treatment recommended only when live lice seen
Hepatitis A *	Exclude until seven days onset of jaundice (or 7 days after symptom onset if no jaundice)	In an outbreak of hepatitis A, your local HPT will advise on control measures
Hepatitis B *, C *, HIV	None	Hepatitis B and C and HIV are blood borne viruses that are not infectious through usual contact. Contact your local HPT for more advice
Impetigo	Until lesions are crusted/healed or 48 hours after starting antibiotic treatment	Antibiotic treatment speeds healing and reduces the infectious period
Measles *	Four days from onset of rash and recovered	Preventable by vaccination (2 doses of MMR). Promote MMR for all pupils and



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		staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife
Meningococcal meningitis */ septicemia	Until recovered	Meningitis ACWY and B are preventable by vaccination (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk). Your local HPT will advise on any action needed
Meningitis * due to other bacteria	Until recovered	Hib and pneumococcal meningitis are preventable by vaccination (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk). Your local HPT will advise on any action needed
Meningitis viral *	None	Milder illness than bacterial meningitis. Siblings and other close contacts of a case need not be excluded
MRSA	None	Good hygiene, in particular handwashing and environmental cleaning, are important to minimise spread. Contact your local HPT for more information
Mumps *	Five days after onset of swelling	Preventable by vaccination with 2 doses of MMR (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff
Ringworm	Not usually required	Treatment is needed
Rubella (German Measles)	Five days from onset of rash	Preventable by vaccination with 2 doses of MMR (see national schedule @ www.nhs.uk). Promote MMR for all pupils and staff. Pregnant staff contacts should seek prompt advice from their GP or midwife
Scarlet fever	Exclude until 24 hours of appropriate antibiotic treatment completed	A person is infectious for 2-3 weeks if antibiotics are not administered. In the event of two or more
Scabies	Can return after first treatment	Household and close contacts require treatment at the same time
Slapped cheek/Fifth disease/Parvo virus B19	None (once rash has developed)	Pregnant contacts of case should consult with their GP or midwife
Threadworms	None	Treatment recommended for child & household
Tonsillitis	None	There are many causes, but most cases are due to viruses and do not need an antibiotic treatment



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Tuberculosis (TB)	Always consult your local HPT BEFORE disseminating information to staff / parents / carers	Only pulmonary (lung) TB is infectious to others. Needs close, prolonged contact to spread
Warts and verrucae	None	Verrucae should be covered in swimming pools, gyms and changing rooms
Whooping cough (pertussis) *	Two days from starting antibiotic treatment, or 21 days from onset of symptoms if no antibiotics	Preventable by vaccination. After treatment, non-infectious coughing may continue for many weeks. Your local HPT will organise any contact tracing

* Denotes a notifiable disease. It is statutory requirement that doctors report a notifiable disease to the proper officer of the local authority (usually a consultant in communicable disease control).



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Appendix 2

Following the global pandemic of Covid 19, the following information is available in case of future instances.

Pupils who are shielding or self-isolating

Following the outbreak of coronavirus (COVID-19), we now know much more about coronavirus (COVID-19) and so in future there will be far fewer children and young people advised to shield whenever community transmission rates are high. Therefore, the majority of pupils will be able to return to school. You should note however that:

- a small number of pupils will still be unable to attend in line with public health advice because they are self-isolating and have had symptoms or a positive test result themselves; or because they are a close contact of someone who has coronavirus (COVID-19)
- shielding advice for all adults and children will pause on 1 August 2021, subject to a continued decline in the rates of community transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can also return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- if rates of the disease rise in local areas, children (or family members) from that area, and that area only, will be ~~advised~~ given the choice to shield during the period where rates remain high and therefore they may be temporarily absent.
- some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment).

Where a pupil is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, they should access remote education provided by the school. School will monitor engagement with this activity.

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Attendance and Covid-19 Symptoms

Should there be another pandemic, the following previous COVID-19 principals will apply.

In order to continue to work together to minimise the spread of Corona Virus (COVID-19) GDF will implement measures to minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school.

Staff will work with families to ensure that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#), or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home.



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If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)' and [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID19).

If a child is awaiting collection, they will be escorted to a room where they can be, with appropriate adult supervision. GDF will provide reassurance until a parent or carer has arrived.

Staff caring for the child while they await collection will be wearing PPE.

Parents must support GDF and the community by taking any symptomatic child for a test at the earliest opportunity.

Parents must work with GDF to communicate in a timely fashion should any member of their household test positive for coronavirus.



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