



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 Lead (DSL), Adam Samson or Deputy Designated Safeguard Leads (DDSL) Nick Maclver, Louise Munz, Kate Wilkinson and Nancy Kirby

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy was reviewed: Autumn 2024

This policy will be reviewed next: Autumn 2025

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): 8.25am
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 in a predictable and safe environment, 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 procedures, processes, and strategies.

The school staff, including the Headteacher and Home School Link Worker (attendance team), 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 attendance team to discuss general attendance and absence matters as well as highlighting 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 within the attendance escalation flowchart, see appendix A. 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
- discuss promptly with their child's class teacher or senior staff, any problems that deter their child from attending school;
- not to take unauthorized leave 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 that is predictable for ALL 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”.

(WtISA 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 leave 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 (Appendix C) 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 Head teacher 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.

Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child’s unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 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.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the ‘leave of absence’ is without the authority of the Head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such

absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice - Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

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.

Appendix A

School Monitoring (L1) - Monitor attendance for all pupils, with a closer lens on vulnerable groups. Those between 92-95% may require in-school support from year group teams e.g. daily welcome at school gate/reception

School Monitoring (L2) - If attendance drops below 92%, class teachers are made aware and expected to share data with parents during meetings and may include email or phone contact, depending on the context of drop in attendance. HSLW (as Attendance Deputy) will also likely be aware following data analysis, meeting with the LA Inclusion Officer and/or class teacher. Identify potential barriers and consider referring to services for support.

Attendance Team Intervention (L3) - If attendance continues to drop below 90%, further contact from Attendance Team and parents will continue and 'green' letter issued highlighting concern. The letter illustrates time missed - in both percentage and sessions missed, makes reference to LA involvement and potential consequences and request to improve child's attendance over the next half term. The letter is signed off by the Headteacher (Attendance Lead)

Attendance Team Intervention (L4) - If there is no further improvement, 'red' letter issued requesting a meeting and action plan drawn up, and Attendance Meeting Form to be used, Appendix B. LA assistance requested as next step is LA formal referral. If there is no further improvement, this may lead to penalty notice and/or court proceedings.





Meeting Form

Present:	
GJS Staff Present:	
Date:	
Reason for Meeting:	Attendance
Main Points:	
Actions to be Taken: (and by whom and with dates)	
Date of next meeting if required:	



Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to validate your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more will result in the following action being taken:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice - Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. In the absence of a decision, parents/carers cannot assume that permission for the absence has been given. For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for from: _____ to: _____	
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested: 	
Has your child/children already had any leave of absence since 01 September 2024 resulting in a penalty notice being issued to you (applicant) or any other parent/carer? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details: 	
I also have children at...	
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:
Address : 	

To be completed by the Headteacher

Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:

Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we will be requesting the Surrey County Council to issue a penalty notice per parent/carer per child.

Explanatory notes:



Signed:

(Headteacher)

Date:



Appendix D



Godalming Junior School

School Request for Consideration of the Issuing of a Penalty Notice (Unauthorised Leave of Absence)

School: Tel No:.....

Pupil Details:

Name: D of B:.....

Address:

.....
Parent/Carer Details:

1) Full Name:

Address:
(if different)

..... Tel:.....

2) Full Name:

Address:
(if different)

..... Tel:.....

Parent (s) responsible for the absence ?..... Mother/Father/Both

• Has this parent/carer received any penalty notices since 01 September 2024? If so please provide the dates.....

• Has the parent/carer lived in another Local Authority/borough in the last 3 years? If so where?
.....

(1) Unauthorised Leave of Absence. I confirm that the pupil named above was absent without the permission of the Head Teacher/Governing Body.

OR

Unauthorised Absence. I confirm that the above named pupil has incurred at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during the last 10 school weeks.

(Please attach copies of any related correspondence, i.e. letter to and from parents, Form Ed221, Registration Certificate and **details of what efforts have been made by school to address the poor attendance with parents.**

Dates of Absence: From.....until.....

The absences have been recorded by the school as **unauthorised** and will not be altered.

Declaration:

I confirm that the details contained on this form are true to the best of my knowledge and belief. **I will provide a written statement, and I am willing to attend Court in the event of the parent failing to pay the penalty notice.**

Signed: Date.....

Head Teacher Name:

Appendix E



Godalming Junior School

Tel: 01483 421597

Email: info@godalming-junior.surrey.sch.uk
Website: www.godalming-junior.surrey.sch.uk

Headteacher
Mr Adam Samson BA (Hons) NPQH

Dear Mr and Mrs.....

Attendance at School

I am writing to inform you that your request for.....(pupil).....to be absent from school from.....(date).....until.....(date).....has not been approved as the reasons given for the absence are not considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If you take your child out of school in future without the approval of the school, and the total amount of absence is 5 or more days (including this absence), you will be liable to receive a penalty notice per parent/carer and the following will apply:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice - Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

I hope that you will re-consider your application.

Yours sincerely,

Mr Adam Samson
Headteacher