



Goldfield Infants' and Nursery School

Attendance & Lateness Policy

Committee	Learning Matters & FGB
Next Review	Spring 2025
Duration	2 years

Statement of Intent

Goldfield Infants' and Nursery School is committed to high standards of attainment and progress for all children. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities planned for them. The Governors, Headteacher and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Goldfield.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality.

The school follows the guidance in Working Together to Improve School Attendance. [Click here](#) for the latest guidance

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child, they should be able to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school office on each day their child is absent, preferably by 8.30 am. The office can be contacted either by phone (01442 823551) or email admin@goldfield.herts.sch.uk. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents must ensure that contact details are up to date and that at least 2 emergency contacts have also been provided.

If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school then, as part of our safeguarding policy:

- The school office will contact you to establish the reason for absence.
- If it has not been possible to contact either the parent/carer or emergency contacts the school will give due consideration to making a home visit based on their knowledge of the child. If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a home visit will definitely be made.

The classroom doors are open at 8.45am. Pupils are expected to arrive by 8:50 am after this the classroom doors are secured and they will need to be brought to the main school entrance where they must be signed in late. Carers are asked to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school.

Timings of the school Day

Nursery

Morning Session 8.30am – 11.30am

Lunch Club 11.30am-12.15pm

Afternoon Session 12.15pm – 3.15pm

Reception, Year 1 and Year 2

8.45am – 3.15pm

The Role of the School Staff

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance and has to work with Hertfordshire Attendance Improvement Officers to report attendance records. The Senior Leadership and Safeguarding Teams also support the monitoring of attendance across the school. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Attendance is recorded as 'I' if the school has been notified of an illness, 'M' if the child is attending a medical appointment and an 'N' if a child is absent with no reason given. The School Office Manager & admin assistant administers the registers and will ring parents of absent children if they have not already made contact. It is their responsibility to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence within 2 hours of the register having been taken. If no reason is provided, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'.
- When a reason has been provided the School Office Manager & the Admin Assistant will ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register

The County Attendance Improvement Officer will monitor absence and support the School in taking appropriate action to track and address patterns of poor attendance.

The Role of the ISL Attendance Team

Hertfordshire's ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents to meet their respective responsibilities. Each school in Hertfordshire has a link Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who will work in close partnership with the school.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 8.30 am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

- a) Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- b) The School requests an appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments.
- c) 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.
- d) If a child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- e) For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness, the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card, letter from the doctor or a copy of a prescription).

f) Where there are concerns about a child's attendance (particularly when it drops below 90%) the school will request medical evidence for any absence.

Moving School

If a family are moving out of the area there are a number of things we require them to do:

- Notify us in writing at least 2 weeks in advance, including contact details for where they are moving to and if possible the details of the school their child will be attending
- Notify us in writing when the child has started their new school

We will also

- Request an email from the new school to confirm when the child started regardless of the country.
- If we do not hear from the family about their child's new school, we will contact the local authority where they have moved to find out whether the child is in school. If they are on the waiting list or have started school, we will request a confirmation email and remove the child from our school roll following this confirmation.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

A child will not be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Attendance Team.

If no reason has been given for a child's absence after 3 days and the school have not been able to contact parents/carers or any emergency contact, a home visit will be arranged. If a visit takes place and there is no one home the school may contact the police (having sought advice from the Local Authority). If a child has been absent from school for 2 weeks with no reason given, or if they have moved and no new school has contacted Goldfield, a safeguarding referral will be made.

Lateness

At Goldfield Infants' and Nursery School the register is taken at 8.50 am and 1.10 pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to reception to record their name and reason for lateness in the Late Book. The pupil will be marked as late when registration has closed (Code 'L').

Parents will be contacted by the school if their child is late regularly. If punctuality continues to be a concern the class teacher will meet with parents to discuss any issues which are causing lateness and how things can be improved. If the situation continues a meeting will be arranged with the Headteacher. Persistent lateness after 9.00am, may result in local authority involvement.

Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The Headteacher may authorise absence in “exceptional circumstances” but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Headteacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Headteacher’s decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent’s explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. An electronic Absence Form must be completed prior to the absence. A copy of the form can be obtained from the School Office. On receipt of the form parents will receive an email from the school confirming whether the absence will be marked as authorised or unauthorised. Once a child has started Reception, holidays in term time can’t be authorised. Following a child’s fifth birthday, as attendance in school is then statutory, the number of unauthorised absences will be monitored and may result in a penalty warning or penalty notice being issued. Unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions (5 days) or more can result in local authority involvement. The application for leave of absence must include a return date. Children who return 10 days or more after the expected date will be reported to the local authority as a ‘Child Missing in Education’ and may be taken off the school roll.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child’s/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays
- Absence of child as a result of another member of the family’s illness or medical appointment

Goldfield follow the Hertfordshire guidance on penalty notices which we use as part of our whole school approach to improving attendance. Penalty notices may be issued once a pupil has 15 or more sessions (a session is a half day) of unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous school term. The absences may have occurred in a block or a series of odd days. Initially a penalty warning letter will be sent to parents informing them that they are at risk of receiving a penalty notice and asking them to make efforts to improve their child’s attendance. If the school decides to apply for a penalty notice, the application will be made to the Local Authority, and it must comply with the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct. Once the penalty notice has been issued, there is no statutory right to appeal. If the notice has been issued incorrectly, the Local Authority may withdraw the notice.

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

Our expectation is that a child’s attendance is 96% or above at the end of the school year. The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimise poor attendance and punctuality through:

- Staff speaking to parents and carers as soon as concerns arise
- The schools Leader for Social Emotional and Mental Health working closely to support families
- Contacting parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve

The school monitors children’s attendance when it drops below 96%. A series of letters is sent when attendance does not improve, approaches or drops below 92%

Letter 1 – advising parent or carer that attendance is low and requesting medical evidence if appropriate

Letter 2 – raising concerns that attendance has not improved and setting the expectation that all future absences need to be accompanied by medical evidence. This may be accompanied by a telephone call from a member of the Senior Leadership Team

Letter 3 – either a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team, Headteacher or the involvement of the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer to review attendance.

What your child’s attendance percentage means

Child’s Attendance	Action
97% +	Excellent attendance
95% - 96%	Good, continue to build on this
Below 95%	Causing concern - Children’s attendance is below average and they will be missing areas of the curriculum and might be finding it harder to settle into routines. Parents need to work closely with the school to improve the situation. The children’s attendance will be closely monitored and parents contacted when additional absences occur. Contact will be made by the Headteacher or member of the Senior Leadership team if attendance does not improve.
Below 90%	Involvement of the County Attendance Team, possible further proceedings, this may include penalty notices. Any child whose attendance falls below 92% is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence. The Government is focused upon this area and has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children. Schools have targets to reduce the levels of persistent absence and the school and local authority work closely with families to support them in getting their child to school each day. If a child’s attendance does not improve next steps may include a penalty notice and possible legal proceedings – for more details see below.

Attendance figures are included within pupil’s BLP Reports at the end of the autumn and spring terms as well as the end of year Report, attendance directly impacts progress and attainment.

Persistent absence

The absence is known as ‘persistent’ if the pupil has had at least 15 half days of unauthorised absence in the current and / or previous term. The school will send a formal warning prior to the school, police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could stop any more absences.

Support from the school

The school understands that from time to time situations may arise which make it difficult for parents to ensure their child is in school. For example

- Housing issues
- Health issues
- Children’s behavioural issues
- Financial issues

Please let us know if there are issues which are affecting your child’s attendance.

Local Authority Action

The Use of Legal Action:

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date. In cases where parents wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to co-operate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

The Local Authority has the right to issue a penalty notice under Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty. A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent has failed to engage in any supportive measures.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.