

Attendance Policy

Reviewer: AP February 2019
Approved by Governors March 2019
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Next review date March 2020



1. Principles

- 1.1. Pupils are expected to attend school every day. Parents have a duty to ensure that their daughters attend school and the School is committed to working with parents to achieve as high a level of attendance as possible.
- 1.2. A pupil should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Allowing a child to be absent without good reason is unlawful, and ultimately parents could be fined by the courts.
- 1.3. Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, not the parents, as either authorised or unauthorised. Hence information about the cause of each absence is always required.
- 1.4. Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school with good reason; for illness or other unavoidable cause.
- 1.5. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes keeping a pupil off for trivial reasons, as well as truancy, absences or late arrivals which have never been properly explained.
- 1.6. Pupils should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, looking after the house, or looking after siblings or relatives. Where the letter does not specify absence, further investigation may be necessary after consultation with the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head Mistress.
- 1.7. On very rare occasions where a pupil needs encouragement to attend school, any problems are best sorted out between the school, parents and the pupil. However, the School is obliged to notify the local authority if a pupil fails to attend school regularly or is absent without leave for more than 10 consecutive school days.
- 1.8. If a pupil does not arrive at school, or is found to be missing during the school day, the procedures set out in Section 4 of this Policy will be followed.

2. Procedures

The Godolphin and Latymer School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with absences:

2.1. Illness or Other Legitimate absence

- 2.1.1. For all absences, parents are asked to email the absence email address absence@godolphinandlatymer.com, specifying the reason and dates, and times if applicable, for each period of absence. Notes addressed to the pupil's Form Tutor and both written and signed by the parent can be accepted as an alternative to email. Absence for pupils in Years 7 to 11 cannot be authorised without this procedure.
- 2.1.2. If pupils are ill and unable to attend school, parents are requested to contact the school before 9.30am on the first, and each subsequent, morning of absence. This should be done using the email address absence@godolphinandlatymer.com. A phone call to the switchboard number (020 8741 1936) **will need to be followed by email or written confirmation**. The school has an answering machine until 8.25am; thereafter Reception will take your call.

- 2.1.3. If no contact is made, an automatic alert will be sent via SMS to parents' mobile phones.
- 2.1.4. With this system, parents can be confident that their daughter has arrived safely at school.
- 2.1.5. Wherever possible routine appointments with the doctor, dentist, etc. should be arranged for outside school hours. If this is not possible parents should email the absence email address or give a note to their form teacher at least three days in advance. In these circumstances it is not necessary to telephone the school on the day of absence.
- 2.1.6. If a pupil is absent from school for reasons other than ill health, this must be discussed with the school on each separate occasion. Leave may be granted in exceptional circumstances, provided a written explanation is received.
- 2.1.7. During absences from school due to occasional or acute illness, work will not generally be provided for the pupil to complete at home. If a pupil is not well enough to attend school then she should rest at home until she is recovered. In the event of a longer period of absence, due to illness or an ongoing medical condition, parents should contact the pupil's Head of Year to discuss how she can best be supported in her studies.

2.2. Holidays

- 2.2.1. Please note that we ask parents **not** to make holiday arrangements that require their daughters to miss days during term-time. Holiday leave in term time will not be granted unless circumstances are exceptional. Our terms are short and intensive and a relatively long period of holiday is available.
- 2.2.2. If your daughter needs to be away from school in exceptional circumstances, a letter requesting permission should be sent to the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) **at least three days in advance**. With the issue of school attendance and the safeguarding of your daughter being of such importance, phone requests of this nature are not considered appropriate by the school. In every case, a letter signed by a parent/guardian, or an email from the parent/guardian's email address, will be required to authenticate the request.

3. Registration

- 3.1. **Morning Registration:** It is important that all pupils are in their form rooms by 8.30am each day. All pupils must attend a brief registration meeting with their form tutor to start the day from 8.30am - 8.35am and important notices are often given out during this time. If a pupil arrives after 8.35am she should enter via Reception and thumb in. Failure to do so may cause unnecessary concern. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the morning session without good reason is counted as unauthorised absence.
- 3.2. **Afternoon Registration:** All pupils in the Lower and Middle School are expected to thumb in if present and attend registration with their form tutors at 2.05pm. In the event that a pupil has a speech and drama lesson, or a musical extra-curricular activity which prevents her from attending afternoon registration, she should thumb in before 2.05pm and explain her absence to her tutor in advance. Sixth-formers do not have an

afternoon registration meeting but must thumb in before their first lesson of the afternoon if they are due to be in School.

- 3.3. **Lateness:** Pupils must attend registration on time. Parents are expected to ensure that their daughters are present at morning registration. Sanctions are imposed for persistent lateness at registration and may vary depending on whether the pupil is in the Lower School, Middle School or Sixth Form.

4. Missing Pupil Procedures

- 4.1. **Non-arrival at School:** If a pupil has not attended morning registration or thumbed in, and no explanatory message has been received by Reception by 9.30am, an automatic alert will be sent via SMS to parents' mobile phones. If a parent believes the pupil should be in School, the Receptionist will check whether the pupil is where she is timetabled to be at that time and, if she is not, will inform the relevant Head of Section immediately. If the Head of Section cannot explain the absence, he or she will inform the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will decide on the next steps (see 4.4 below).
- 4.2. **Missing during the School Day:** If a pupil fails to attend afternoon registration and has not thumbed in or if she is noted to be absent during a lesson without explanation, the Head of Section should be informed immediately. If the Head of Section cannot explain the absence, he or she will inform the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will decide on the next steps (see 4.4 below).
- 4.3. **Missing on an educational visit/sports fixture:** If a pupil is found to be missing while on an educational visit or at a sports fixture, an immediate head count should be carried out to ensure other pupils are all present. An accompanying member of staff should alert the manager of the venue and/or search the immediate area as appropriate. If the pupil cannot be located then, depending on the age of the pupil and the circumstances in which she is found to be missing, the Group Leader may need to contact the police immediately. Otherwise, the Group Leader should inform the School Office. The School Office should notify the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) who will decide on the next steps (see 4.4 below). If the visit is outside school hours, the Group Leader should inform their emergency contact.
- 4.4. **Action by the Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral):** The Deputy Head (Pastoral) will inform the Head Mistress, Security and School Office as appropriate. Security may be asked to organise a search of the school site. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) or the Head Mistress will contact the pupil's parents and then ultimately the Police if deemed necessary.
- 4.5. **Records:** The Senior Deputy Head (Pastoral) will ensure that a record is made of any incident, the action taken and, if applicable, the reason given by the pupil for being missing.

5. Publication of Attendance Information

- 5.1. Parents can access information concerning their daughter's attendance via the Parent Portal.
- 5.2. The School is usually asked to disclose information on attendance and punctuality when writing references for pupils.