



Policy Name	Attendance Policy
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This Policy should be read in conjunction with	See page 3 for further legislation
Senior Attendance Champion	Rebecca Brown- Headteacher

Attendance Policy

Reviewed

September 2024

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Aims

Good Attendance

Why Good Attendance is Important

Good attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, safety, wellbeing, and wider life chances. Our aim as a school is to work collaboratively and in a supportive way with our pupils and parents to ensure attendance is in line with national expectations.

Pupils who are late or miss school regularly are missing learning. Pupils who miss learning are in danger of not making the progress that they could if they were in school more regularly. Furthermore, regular absences from school can be stressful for some children as their school routine is disrupted and it can be difficult for them to re-join lessons after having missed teaching in previous lessons.

Nationally at the end of KS2, pupils with the highest attainment have higher rates of attendance over key stage 2 compared to those with the lowest attainment.

What we mean by good attendance

At Geoffrey Field our definition of good attendance is simple:

- **Being in school regularly**
 - We class good attendance as **96% or above**.
 - This means children being in school for at least 182.5 days out of the 190 school days a year.
- **Being on time every day**
 - This means being in school by 8.40am every morning.

Attendance terminology:

Excellent attendance	98.0% - 100%	0-4 days missed learning
Good attendance	96.0% to 97.9%	4.5 -7.5 days missed learning
Causing concern	94.0% to 95.9%	8 – 11.5 days missed learning
At risk of persistent absence	90.0% - 93.9%	12 – 19 days missed learning
Persistent absence	Below 90%	20 or more days missed learning
Severe absence	Below 50%	95 or more days missed learning

Sharing a child's attendance information with parents/carers

The school will share information with parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels at the parent consultations in the Autumn and Spring terms and in the annual end of year report. This will detail the attendance percentage and the number of days of learning that have been missed because of absence.

Where attendance drops below 96% the school will contact parents/carers separately to parent consultations or the end of year report so that parents are aware that their child's attendance is causing concern and to work together on a plan to improve this.

Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

This policy should also be read alongside the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions
- Public Sector Equality Duty

Roles & Responsibilities

Parent/Carer Responsibilities

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend and be on time every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as:

- the child being too ill to attend
- being given permission for an absence in advance from the school

Should a child's attendance fall to a level that starts to cause concern, the parents/carers are expected to proactively engage with the school and the support they are offering to prevent the need for more formal support.

Should a child's attendance fall to a level of persistent or severe absence, the parent/carer is expected to engage with the formal support offered by the school and/or local authority to help understand their child's barriers to attendance and to prevent the need for legal intervention.

Reporting Your Child's Absence

If your child is unable to attend school, it is the parent's responsibility to contact the school on the first morning of absence to explain the reason why their child is unable to attend school and how long they are likely to be absent for.

Parents/carers can report their child's absence from school in the following ways:

Before 8am or after 4pm

- Parent Mail app – absence notification
- Emailing admin@geoffreyfield-jun.reading.sch.uk

Between 8am – 4pm

- Parent Mail app – absence notification
- Phoning the school and leaving a message on the absence line 01189 375475 = Option 1

Reporting it on ParentMail is the school's preferred method of reporting and we encourage parents to use this method for ease.

School Responsibilities

Action the school will take if absence is not reported by a parent/carer-

First day of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school office will message, via Parent Mail, the parent/carer of any pupil who is not in school during the morning of the first day of absence to ask them to contact the school to notify them of the reason for this absence.• If the parent/carer has not contacted the school by 10:00am, the school office will ring the parent/carer to find out the reason for their child's absence.• If there is no reply, they will contact the second emergency contact on the child's file to ask them to contact the parent/carer and ask them to call the school as a matter of urgency.• If a child has a social worker, the school will notify them of any unexplained absences in line with Early Help support.
Second day of absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school office will message and ring the parent/carer asking them to contact the school to find out why their child is absent from school for a second day.
Third day of	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school will ring the parent and any contacts we have listed again.• If the parent/carer does not answer the call or does not contact the school, the school

absence	office will send the parent a message via Parent Mail advising that a home visit will be carried out today after we have sought advice from children's social care. This will be completed by members of Senior Leadership Team or Thames Valley Police depending on the advice received as we are concerned for the safety of the child as they have now been missing from education for three days.
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After returning from an unexplained absence:

Child returns to school after an absence but parent/carer has not contacted the school and/or no reason is provided for the absence:

- If the child returns to school after an absence, the school will continue to contact the parent/carer up to the 5th day after the absence to gain a reason for the child's absence.
- If no contact can be made or no explanation given after the 5th day, all of the days the child was absent for this period will automatically be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a child's attendance is already of concern, the school may require written evidence to support further absences, which will otherwise be classed as unauthorised.

Governors Responsibilities

The school's governing body will set high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents, making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority.
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Recording Attendance

Day to day management of attendance

Morning Registration				
8:30am	8:40am	8.40 – 8.45am	8:55am	9:10am
Drop off	School Begins	Registration	Late	Absent
Parent/carers can drop their child off from 8.30am	All pupils are expected to be in school	Morning registers are taken	Any child arriving after 8:55am in the morning will be recorded as late .	Morning registers close. Any child arriving after will be marked as absent for the morning session .

Afternoon Registration			
Lower School (Y3/4)		Upper School (Y5/6)	
1:15pm	1:30pm	1:45pm	2:00pm
Registration	Asbent	Registration	Asbent
Parent/carers can drop their child off from 8.30am	Afternoon registers close. Any child arriving after will be marked as absent for the morning session .	Parent/carers can drop their child off from 8.30am	Afternoon registers close. Any child arriving after will be marked as absent for the morning session .

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Medical Appointments

We ask that parents/carers make routine medical appointments such as dentist check-ups or optician appointments out of school hours or during the school holidays.

If a child must attend a routine medical appointment during school hours, we expect them to come into school for lessons before the appointment and return to school after the appointment.

Where a child needs time off school for a non-routine medical appointment, such as a hospital appointment or operation, we ask for proof of appointment to be shared with the school office for the child's attendance records.

Granting Leave of Absence

Only exceptional circumstances will be considered for authorised leave of absence. Parents should make a written request to the headteacher in advance of the requested leave of absence. The headteacher will determine whether the circumstances are considered exceptional with advice from the Attendance Welfare Service.

A leave of absence form can be downloaded from the website link below or requested in person from the school office. <https://www.geoffreyfieldjuniorschool.co.uk/parent-information/>

Holidays & Extended Overseas Visits

We do not authorise any holiday in term time and do not class holidays as an exceptional reason for absence.

We do not authorise extended leave to visit relatives overseas during term time.

If a parent/carer chooses to take their child on an extended overseas visit and this extends into term time or is wholly in term time, the school may discuss this with the admissions team at Reading Borough Council and notify parents/carers that their child's school place is at risk if the pupil is absent for 20 or more school days and there is no confirmed date for the child to imminently return from overseas and return to school. We may request evidence of proof of a return date such as confirmation of travel arrangements where a pupil has been absent for more than 20 days.

Entrance exams

If a pupil is sitting an entrance exam for another school such as the 11+ entrance test, we will authorise absence for the day that the pupil sits the test. However, we will not authorise pupils to take study leave during term time to prepare for the test. Any preparation needs to be scheduled outside of normal school hours.

Fixed Penalty Notices

Each parent/carer of the child may be issued with a fixed penalty notice if the parent chooses to remove their child from school for a holiday, extended visits overseas or study leave in term time. Fixed Penalty Notices are issued where more than 15 sessions (7.5 school days) are missed over a school year.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

Attendance	Category	School Action
94% - 95%	Cause for Concern	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A cause for concern letter is sent making parents/carers aware that attendance has dropped below 'good' (96%) and the number of days missed from learning that this equates to. ● The letter invites parents/carers to contact the school if they feel they would like to discuss their child's attendance or if they would like support to improve their child's attendance.
90% - 93%	Early Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Amber attendance letter sent to parents/carers informing them that their child's absence level is in danger of falling into persistent absence. ● The letter invites parents/carers to contact the school if they feel they would like to discuss their child's attendance or if they would like support to improve their child's attendance and discuss any medical conditions that are impacting attendance. ● Weekly check on pupil's attendance and contact with parent/carer. ● Local authority Attendance Support Worker notified if parent/carer is not willing to engage in early intervention support with the school or if attendance continues to fall.
Below 90%	Persistent Absence Targeted Intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Persistent Absent Letter (red) sent to parent/carer. ● Local authority Attendance Support Worker informed - letter or home visit - Parent/carer invited for local authority Attendance Panel Meeting with the LA Attendance Support Worker and school. ● The local authority will facilitate early help support from external organisations where this is needed. ● Weekly check on pupil's attendance and contact with parent/carer. ● The local authority may provide formal support which could include a formal parenting contract and/or legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court. ● An Attendance Panel Review Meeting will be held 4-6 weeks after the initial panel meeting to review progress. ● Where parents/carers are not engaging with the support to improve their child's attendance, the local authority may enforce attendance through legal intervention through a Fixed Penalty Notice for irregular attendance or prosecution in the Magistrates Court for non-attendance or non-compliance of an Education Supervision Order.
Below 50%	Serve Absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Severe Attendance Letter (red) sent to parents/carers. ● Referral to social care to safeguard children's right to a full time education. ● Daily check on pupil's attendance and contact with parent/carer if pupil is absent. - Parental meeting with local authority Attendance Support Worker, school and other relevant outside agencies. ● The local authority will facilitate multi-disciplinary

		<p>support for families.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The local authority will provide formal support which could include a formal Parenting Contract and/or legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court. ● Where parents/carers are not engaging with the support to improve their child's attendance, the local authority may enforce attendance through legal intervention through a Fixed Penalty Notice for irregular attendance or prosecution in the Magistrates Court for non-attendance or non-compliance of an Education Supervision Order.
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Sharing information and working collaboratively with external partners

When a pupil's attendance is at risk of becoming or is at a level of Persistent Absence or Severe Absence, the school will work with the local authority and other local partners, including schools where siblings of the child attends, to share attendances and absence data for individual pupils.

The aim of sharing this information will be to:

- Access the best support for the pupil and family to enable the child to access full time education every day
- Safeguard the child's right to a full time education

The school will also share with the local authority the names and addresses of any pupil:

- Who is added or removed from the school's register
- Who fails to attend school regularly
- Who has missed school for 10 days or more with the absence being recorded as unauthorised by the school

The school shares daily pupil level attendance data with the DfE through their School Daily Attendance Collection service.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Promoting and Celebrating Attendance

We celebrate good attendance, as something that impacts on children's outcomes very significantly. We monitor attendance rigorously and celebrate where attendance is good or has significantly improved.

Weekly:

HEROs (**H**ere, **E**very day, **R**eady and **O**n time) are our two animal mascots who help children to understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality:

- **Geoffrey**, the giraffe is awarded to the class with the best overall attendance (by %) for the previous week
- **Ophelia**, the otter, is awarded to the class with the lowest number of lates (by number) for the previous week.

A message is sent to all parents congratulating the class with the highest attendance. The class also gets their name displayed in the school entrance and on the information screen in the school office.

Parents/carers of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern will be sent a well done message each week their child has been in school every day.

Weekly

Class attendance is published on the school website

Attendance winners announced

Half termly:

Parents/carers of pupils who were in danger of becoming persistently absent (PA – ie below 90% attendance); who are already PA or severe absence are sent a well done letter if their child's attendance has improved over the past term

Termly:

We run an attendance challenge termly for classes with a reward for the class.

The class that has earned Geoffrey the most times during that term, is allowed an afternoon treat (to be planned by the class teacher)

Yearly

Parents/carers are informed of attendance through reports.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils with medical conditions and SEND that may impact attendance

Some pupils with medical conditions and some SEND face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore our attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as they are for any other pupil.

Where needed, we will work with parents/carers to:

- Help overcome barriers
- Make referrals for additional support to health services or the local authority in a timely manner
- Put into place an individual healthcare plan or adjust an ECHP where necessary to help the pupil access their full-time education.
- Provide, where possible, access to educational materials

Pupils with long term illnesses, lengthy hospital stays or other health conditions may need additional support to continue their education such as alternative provision provided by the local authority or a temporary part-time timetable to meet their needs. The school will support parents/carers to ensure that their child can access the most appropriate education.

Where a short term, temporary part-time timetable is agreed as the best course of action, the school will authorise the absence for the times when the child is not in school.

Support for pupils after a lengthy period of absence

Where a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period of time, the school may consider one or more of the following supports to enable a positive return to school for the pupil:

- Holding a return to school meeting with parents and/or pupil
- Part-time timetable in the week/s leading up to full time return
- Pastoral support sessions prior to and during the return to school
- Adaptation of health care plan where in place

The decision about whether support is needed and which support would be most appropriate will be made between the Pastoral & Family Worker, class teacher, pupil and parent/carer.

Attendance Monitoring

Geoffrey Field Junior Attendance Staff

Staff Member	Role
Rebecca Brown Headteacher	Attendance Lead
Dave Marks Deputy Headteacher	Pupil Premium/Disadvantaged Lead
Simone Redagonde & Julie Bryan School Office	Day to day attendance, medical conditions, health care plans

Attendance Analysis

Each half term, we analyse and evaluate the attendance and absence of:

- The whole school and each cohort, looking at overall attendance, authorised absence and unauthorised absence, persistent absence and severe absence. For each of these categories we analyse attendance for the following sub groups:
 - Gender
 - SEND
 - Pupils who are eligible for Pupil Premium
 - Pupils eligible for Free School Meals
 - Pupils with a social worker
 - Looked after pupils
- Pupils whose attendance has fallen below good
 - Letter sent to parents notifying them of attendance drop and offering support for the pupil and/or parent/carer to improve attendance.
- Pupils in danger of Persistent Absence (below 90%)
 - The list of all pupils in danger of falling into Persistent Absence is reviewed, including whether attendance has improved over the last half term.
 - Actions are agreed for each pupil
- Persistent and Severe Absence
 - The list of all pupils with attendance at Persistent or Severe absence is reviewed, including whether attendance has improved over the last half term.
 - Pupils will be discussed with the LA Attendance Support Worker at the termly review meeting.
 - Actions are agreed for each pupil

Benchmarking

The school benchmarks attendance data against local, regional and national levels using:

- The DfE attendance analysis tool
- Weekly attendance data provide by the DfE
- Attendance data for Reading primary schools provided by the local authority
- Annual national attendance data for all state primary schools and for similar schools to Geoffrey Field

Lateness Analysis

Children who are not in school by 8.55am must enter through the school office and will be marked as **late** as long as the registers remain open. Lateness data is analysed by the attendance team and used to inform support offered to parents/carers

Any parent/carer of a child who is late three or more times in a week will be rung by a member of SLT or Office to have a supportive chat about any barriers that they may be experiencing in the morning. During this chat we will remind parents/carers of the start time for pupils and start of day support available, such as breakfast club.

Where a child has already received two lateness letters in a half term and punctuality continues to be an issue, the parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting with senior leadership to discuss barriers to the child coming to school on time. Where appropriate referrals for external agency support such as Early Help may be agreed.

If the child's punctuality does not improve despite the support of the school, a referral will be made to the local authority Attendance Support Worker.

Appendices

Attendance Short Policy

At Geoffrey Field we expect all children to have at least good attendance.

Our definition of good attendance is simple:

- Being in school regularly

We class good attendance as 96% or above.

This means children being in school for at least 182.5 days out of the 190 school days a year.

- Being on time every day

This means being in school by 8.40am every morning.

Our aim is to work in partnership with parents/carers to ensure good attendance for their child. Where a child's attendance is of a level of concern we want to have open and honest discussions with parents/carers about in-school and out of school barriers, medical or SEND needs that may be affecting attendance and support the pupil and parent/carer to find solutions to these.

Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend and be on time every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as the child being too ill to attend or being given advance permission for an absence by the school. Parents/carers must notify the school with a reason for any absences. Tel: 01189 375475 email: absence@geoffreyfield-jun.reading.sch.uk

Parents/carers can only apply for absence during term time in exceptional circumstances. We do not authorise holiday in term time. Fixed penalty notices may be issued for holiday absences of 15 sessions (7.5 days) in a school year.

Attendance	Days learning missed	Parent action	School action	Local authority action Education Welfare Service
98% - 100% Excellent attendance	0 – 4 days	Continue sending child to school regularly	Celebrate attendance	No involvement
96% - 97% Good attendance	4.5 – 7.5 days	Continue sending child to school regularly	Celebrate attendance	No involvement
LESS THAN GOOD ATTENDANCE				
94% - 95% Cause for concern Attendance below good level expected	8 – 11.5 days	Ensure child is in school regularly Consider school offer of support	<u>Early Intervention</u> Concern letter home Offer of support	No involvement
90% - 93% At risk of Persistent Absence	12 – 19 days	Ensure child is in school regularly Meeting with Mrs Burton Attendance contract Engage with offer of school support	<u>Early Intervention</u> Amber letter home Meeting with parent/carer Focus on barriers to attendance Facilitate early help support from external agencies	Notified if attendance continues to be a concern and parent/carer does not engage with school support
Below 90% Persistent Absence	20 or more days	Ensure child is in school daily Attendance Panel Meeting with Mrs Burton and EWO Engage with formal support offer from school and LA	<u>Targeted Intervention</u> Red PA letter home Support to remove in school barriers to attendance Referral to Education Welfare Weekly monitoring + contact with parent/carer	Letter home or home visit Facilitate early help from external agencies to remove out of school barriers Formal and legal intervention: Parenting / Contract/ Education Supervision Order/ Fixed Penalty Notice
Below 50% Severe Absence	95 or more days	Ensure child is in school daily Multi-agency Meetings Engage with formal support offer from school and local authority	<u>Targeted Intervention</u> Red SA letter home Support to remove in school barriers to attendance Referral to social care Weekly monitoring + contact	Letter home or home visits Facilitate multi-agency support for family Legal intervention: Fixed Penalty Notice or court prosecution



Attendance Concerns

Red Warning Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

We are writing to inform you that your child's attendance has **dropped below 90%**.

This means they have had 20 or more days of missed learning this academic year. More than 1 in every 10 lessons has been missed. As per our attendance policy, our Attendance Welfare Support Worker will be automatically notified that your child's attendance has fallen below 90%.

We appreciate that each family's circumstances are different and we strive to work in partnership with parents to provide the best education for every child. We want to ensure that pupils and families feel well-supported and will strive to work closely with you to improve your child's attendance.

If there are any particular reasons for the recent lower attendance that you wish to discuss, please do get in touch as soon as possible.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ms Brown".

Ms Brown
Headteacher



Attendance Concerns

Amber Warning Letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

Your child's attendance has fallen recently and is currently between 90 - 93%. This means that your child's absence level is in **danger of falling into persistent absence** and equates to between 12 - 19 days of missed learning. This automatically leads to a conversation between school and local authority (Attendance Support Worker, previously EWO).

At Geoffrey Field Junior School, we consider 'Good attendance' is between 96 – 97% and I am sure you will be keen to see an improvement in your child's attendance.

We recognise that each family's circumstances are different and want to work in partnership with parents/carers to provide the best education and support for every child.

If you feel there are specific reasons for the recent low attendance that you would like to discuss, please do get in touch.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ms Brown'.

Ms Brown
Headteacher



Good Improvement in Attendance

Dear Parents/Carers,

I just wanted to write to acknowledge the good improvement we have seen in attendance since Autumn half term. **They are in the top 10% of most improved for attendance since the end of October** and this will undoubtedly have a positive impact on their learning. As you know, we believe that children do their best learning when they are in school every day and when they arrive on time.

The school will continue to monitor all pupils' attendance throughout the year and keep you informed as attendance is a team effort between home and school. You will most likely hear from your child whether they have had a visit from Geoffrey the Giraffe, our attendance mascot or Ophelia the Otter, who visits the most punctual class each week. These mascots are a great way to promote good attendance which we class as above **96% or above**.

Thank you for all your undertakings in supporting your child's improvement in their attendance and we hope to continue to see more of them over the course of the year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ms Brown".

Ms Brown
Headteacher