

# Graham James Primary Academy



## Attendance and Punctuality A guide for parents and carers

**Important Information for Parents.**

**Please ensure that you pay particular attention to pages 4 and 6, which highlight the use of Penalty Notices.**

# What we expect



At Graham James Primary Academy, we are working hard to promote excellent attendance and punctuality

In line with new Government direction, our basic expectation for each pupil is at least 96% attendance.



## Benefits of Good School Attendance

Children with good attendance

- Feel happier and gain in confidence
- Achieve more academically and keep up with work more easily
- Develop well socially and find it easier to make and keep friends
- Establish good educational habits and routines at an early age
- Are able to make a positive contribution to school life in general

**All of these are important life skills for your child.**

**How do we promote, monitor,  
improve and maintain attendance?**



**Rewards:**

We reward good attendance by:

- **Weekly:** Awarding 'Class of the Week' to the highest attending class in each Key Stage in our weekly Celebration Assembly. These classes are awarded an attendance ted.
- **Monthly:** Class achievement is also noted on the monthly newsletter.
- **Termly:** Those children achieving 100% attendance will get a special certificate at the end of term.



## Attendance Monitoring



### If your child is absent from school, we will:

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Send a letter of expectation if the absence reporting procedure is not being adhered to (Safeguarding concern)
- Class teacher will call on the 3<sup>rd</sup> day of absence for an update
- Apply the attendance escalation stages once your child meets the stage criteria (Attendance is monitored on a daily basis, however, the Senior Leadership team meet weekly to monitor every child's attendance and as a result, letters/ stage escalation will occur when needed and threshold met (Please note – earlier intervention may be applied – case by case knowledge)

#### **STAGE 1: Letter to parents**

Attendance drops below 96%. Letter to parents/carers informing of 'below 96% attendance' – opportunity to discuss barriers to attendance with the class teacher.

**3 weeks monitoring and review**

#### **STAGE 2: Letter to parents and attendance meeting**

No improvement or further drop in attendance – Class teacher and key stage lead – Letter to parents/carers and in school attendance meeting to be held by class teacher and key stage lead.

Barriers to attendance discussion and CAF (Common Assessment Framework) for additional support.

Any further medical/illness absences – medical evidence needed (if not = unauthorised).

(If parents/carers do not attend meeting or fails to engage – meeting held and recorded on the action plan).

Parents/carers sent action plan/notes from the meeting.

**3 weeks monitoring and review meeting**

#### **STAGE 3:**

No improvement or further drop in attendance – Attendance lead and/or key stage lead/governor lead formal meeting.

Notice to improve letter to parents/carers and in school attendance meeting to be held by attendance lead and/or key stage lead/governor. Formal warning of the risk of statutory action.

Action plan written up and shared with parent/carers.

**6 weeks monitoring and review meeting**

**If no improvement or action plan breached = Statutory action considered = Application for a Penalty Notice to be issued or referral made for prosecution – letter sent.**

Attendance Lead and governor to gather evidence.

#### **STAGE 4:**

**Referral** to Thurrock Local Authority and letter to parent/carers (all of the evidence from Stages 1 – 3 to be submitted to local authority for assessment).

**Penalty notice/prosecution likely**



## Authorised Absences

### Authorised illness absence



We will authorise absence for: Infectious diseases, vomiting, diarrhoea, throat/chest infections etc. However, if your child has reached stage 2 of the attendance process, no absences will be authorised without medical evidence

We understand there are times when children are clearly not well enough to be in school. However, there are also many times when they are kept off with minor illnesses, such as mild stomach ache, headache, coughs and sniffles, when they could have coped in school.

If you are in doubt, please send your child into school while informing their class teacher or the school office so we can monitor them throughout the day.

If your child is too unwell to remain in school, of course, we will contact you.

**Top Tip:** Try to talk to staff when your child is not in hearing distance. In our experience, children who overhear their parent's talking to us often persist in saying they are not feeling any better.

### Other authorised absences:

There are a number of other reasons when you may feel that you need to keep your child at home. However, only a handful of these reasons are likely to be authorised absences.

These may include:

- A hospital or emergency appointment (we expect all other medical appointments to be made outside of the school day).
- An unexpected family emergency
  - A religious observance



## Unauthorised Absence



### Term Time Absence

If you are planning to take your child out of school during term time, please complete a holiday/leave of absence request for term time leave form available from the school office and send it in with a covering letter.

**Please note we will not authorise term time holidays or visits abroad**

Special circumstances will be considered but the Chair of Governors (Mr Bradley Lane) decision is final.

### Penalty Notices

With effect from 4<sup>th</sup> October 2022 the school may apply for a Penalty Notice for unauthorised term time leave. Currently the fine is set at £160 (or £80 if paid within 21 days) for 1<sup>st</sup> offence. If there is a 2<sup>nd</sup> offence, within 3 years, the fine increases to £160 per parent, per child. Legal proceedings will be taken against you if your child has further unauthorised absences within 3 years.

If the fine remains unpaid after 28 days, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies, with the exception of very limited circumstances when the Notice may be withdrawn.

Please note that penalty notices are issued for each child and to both parents/carers.

For more information, please refer to the school's Attendance Policy.

### Other Unauthorised Absence

Your child should not be absent if:

- The weather is bad
- They had a late night
- It is their birthday
- You have family visiting
- You need to go shopping

If you, as a child's main carer, are poorly and cannot get your child to school, please try to find a friend or relative that can help you out. However, if this is not possible, please ring the school office from 8.30am and we will endeavour to help (01375-675889)

Please be aware that Penalty Notices (as set out above) may also be issued in cases where unauthorised absences occur.



## Punctuality



Getting to school on time is very important

The school gates open at 8.40am for all key stages

If your child arrives after 8.55am, he/she will be marked late.

It is important that you take your child to the school office to ensure that they receive their mark and that their dinner choice is recorded.

Children arriving after 9.25am will be marked as a 'U' code (arrived in school after registration closed) and an 'O' code (absent from school without authorisation) after 10.30am (please note – the school is able to prosecute using these marks).

## Attendance Target

We have set a target of 96% attendance for this year.

We are confident that all the children can hit this target and we look forward to working with all families to achieve this.



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If you are having any difficulties or have a question regarding school attendance please contact:

[info@grahamjamesprimaryacademy.thurrock.sch.uk](mailto:info@grahamjamesprimaryacademy.thurrock.sch.uk)

01375-675889



**Below are some 'top tips' to help with attendance and punctuality.**

**Establishing good habits early in life minimises problems later on.**

1. Ensure that your child has a good bedtime routine.
2. Get your child's uniform, book bag and lunch ready the night before.
3. Make sure your child eats breakfast.
4. If you are having difficulties getting out the door in the morning, try rewarding your children with a sticker chart – rewarding them if you arrive at school before the school gates are closed.
5. Try to make medical appointments after school or in school holidays. If you need to make a medical appointment during the day, try to make it after morning/afternoon registration. You can bring your child to school, get their mark and then take them straight off to their engagement.
6. If your child is absent, please advise the school on the first day of absence before 9.00am if possible.
7. Send your child to school if they are a 'little bit poorly'. We will send them home if they are unable to cope in school.
8. If your child needs medication during the day, you are welcome to come to the school to administer a 'midday dose' (e.g. Calpol). Our office staff will administer prescribed antibiotics (parents will need to complete a permission form).
9. Take an interest in your child's school work and support them with their homework.
10. Attend Parent's Evening to find out how your child is doing.
11. Make sure that your child understands the importance of good attendance.
12. Finally, if you have any worries about your child, please see your child's class teacher in the first instance.