

GOOD ATTENDANCE + PUNCTUALITY = SUCCESS!

5/12/22

Dear Parents/Carers,

I hope you are all well and getting ready for the festive season.

We are on an extremely important mission at Greengates Academy to improve our school attendance and we need your support to do this.

The Government expectation is that children should have an attendance of at least 95%. At Greengates we aim higher than this and want to achieve an attendance of at least 96% for every child. Sadly, our whole school attendance is 3% below the national average of 95% and we need to improve this as quickly as possible.

Children below 90% are classed as persistently absent from school and this means they are in great danger of falling behind with their work.

Above 97%: Less than 6 days absence a year Good and excellent attendance! These children stand the best chance of reaching their full potential both academically and socially. They will form a good habit of attendance in their future education and work life.
90% - 95%: 10 days to 18 days absence a year These pupils are less likely to achieve their full potential and form a good habit of attending school regularly. Pupils who take a 2-week unauthorised holiday every year can only achieve 95% attendance.
90% and below: 19 days + absence a year The Government classes Young People in this group as “Persistent Absentees”, and it will be almost impossible to keep up with work. Parents of young people in this group may also face the possibility of legal action being taken by the Local Authority.

We currently have 99 children with an attendance of over 95% which is great for those pupils, but we need every child to achieve at least this target moving forward.

We do understand that children become ill and there has been an increase in winter illnesses over the past few weeks. Also, there are occasional times when children must be absent from school such as for a hospital appointment/treatment. However, we need to work together to minimise the number of absences your child has by making sure they attend every single day possible and return to school as quickly as they can after an absence.

Minor Illnesses

Children can usually attend school with minor illnesses such as a mild cough or cold. We are able to administer medicine to pupils if you complete a consent form at the main office. If you are unsure if your child is well enough to attend, please contact us to discuss. When children attend school slightly ‘under the weather’ we will monitor them carefully and contact you if their condition worsens. We may un-authorise absences for minor illnesses where we believe it was possible for a child to attend.

Punctuality

We have several children arriving late for school: some on a regular basis. Please ensure your child arrives to school on time by 8.50 every morning, (8.45 for AM Nursery or 12.15 for PM Nursery). Children who arrive late to school miss essential learning that is very difficult to replace and will leave gaps in their education. Also, when pupils arrive late, they disrupt other pupil’s learning.

Non-urgent Medical Appointments

Parents are asked not to take children out of school for dental and medical appointments, except for emergency or consultant appointments. Where this is impossible, please make the appointments for the very end of the school day and ensure that children return to school so that minimal time is missed. If children are taken out for urgent appointments the main office will need to see a letter or an appointment card. The office team will contact an Attendance Officer or the Head of Academy immediately if a parent/carer asks to take their children out of school for non-urgent appointments. Non-urgent appointments made in school time may be unauthorised.

Children should not be taken out of school due to appointments for parents/carers. If you are struggling to collect or drop children off at the normal times due to personal appointments, please contact school so we can help. Please note that children's attendance will have to be marked as unauthorised in these circumstances.

Holidays in Term Time

The school does not authorise any Holiday in Term Time for any reason or length of time, including visiting relatives. We strongly discourage this. The school enforces the Fixed Penalty Notice system of £60 per child per parent/carer following guidance from Bradford Local Authority. If the £60 is not paid within 21 days, it will rise to £120 per child per parent/carer. If this is still not paid you may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates court which can incur a fine of up to £2500 plus costs.

- If a parent/carer does request a holiday, they must meet with the Head of Academy/Senior Leader **prior to the holiday being booked**. It will be clearly explained that the absence will be unauthorised and that a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.
- Parents/carers will receive written confirmation that the holiday is unauthorised prior to the absence when possible.
- A letter will also be sent after the child has returned to school to explain the next steps of the fining process.
- The Head of Academy will also meet with the parents/carers post-holiday to discuss with them how the absence has affected their child's attendance percentage and learning.

We are currently reviewing and updating our attendance policy which you will be able to read on the school website very soon. We are also putting lots of incentives and prizes in place for children with good and excellent attendance, but also to reward improving attendance.

Please always contact school by 8.30 if you think your child is unable to attend school. To keep our children safe, we must ring you on the first day of absence if you do not notify school. We will also carry out home visits where we do not get contact or would like to check in with a family to offer support and advice. We are currently working with a company called BCL to help monitor our attendance, meet with parents, and make home visits etc.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any concerns or questions about your child's attendance or any other matters you wish to discuss. We are here to support our children and their families the best we can.

Thank you for your support with this important issue,

Mrs Donna Brown on behalf of the whole Greengate's Team

Delta Associate Executive Principal