



Gidea Park

PREPARATORY SCHOOL AND NURSERY

Attendance Policy

This policy applies to all pupils in school, including in the EYFS

Reviewed	<i>October 2024</i>
Next review	<i>October 2025</i>
Revised by	<i>C Douglas</i>

General Statement

Every child has a fundamental right to be educated, and regular attendance is extremely important if children are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

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 in attending lessons.

All children are expected to attend school except when they are ill, in which case they should be fully recovered before returning. Punctuality is equally important.

The safety and well-being of all our pupils at Gidea Park Preparatory School and Nursery is our highest priority and it is, therefore, the duty of staff to follow up unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner, and to identify and deal with children who go missing or are absent from education (see Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024 and the School's Children Absent from Education Policy and Procedure).

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#).

School Attendance Champion

The school's attendance champion is the Headmaster.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

1. School Registration Procedures.

Form Teachers are required to complete the electronic register at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions and enter reasons for absence. Where the reason is not known at the outset, an 'N' ('no reason provided') is entered. However, teachers are required to establish the reason as soon as possible and update the register accordingly.

Where a pupil joins or leaves the school the following actions will take place:

- All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and provide held information.
- The register must include details of any change of address, including the full name of parent/s whom the pupil will be living with and the date of the change.
- Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school, the school must record the new school and the date when attendance started.

- All amendments made to the admission and attendance registers must include: the original entry; the amended entry; reason for the change and date; name and position of person making the amendment. The registers will be preserved for 6 years after the date on which an entry was made.
- Children at risk of Absent from Education: the school where reasonably practicable, will hold an emergency contact number for more than one person per pupil. The relevant local authority will be notified when a pupil moves school or when a pupil fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

2. Lateness

Should a child be unavoidably late and miss the register, they must report directly to the school office where their attendance will be recorded on the school register. Arrival after registration is completed will result in a 'Late' mark being recorded on the register.

3. Child Concern

If for any reason a child has any concerns about attending school, it is important that parents or guardians discuss the problem with the school at the earliest opportunity so that appropriate measures can be put in place to address the issues and support the child.

4. What to do if a child has to be away

Unplanned absence: If a child is unfit for school, the parent or guardian should contact the school before 8.40a.m. on the pupil's first day of any absence which has not previously been agreed with the school, and each subsequent day of absence.

The School Secretary will contact parents or guardians on the first day and consecutive day of absence if there has been no communication from the parents or guardians explaining reasons for absence.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

Planned absence: Leave may be granted in an emergency or for medical appointments which are unavoidably during school time but, wherever possible, appointments should be made outside of school hours.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 6.

5. What constitutes Authorised and Unauthorised Absence?

Authorised absences are those which the school agree are unavoidable, e.g. illness or family bereavement or medical appointments.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school considers unreasonable, to be determined by the Head. An absence is unauthorised until an acceptable explanation is received, and it is

for the school, not the parent/guardian, to decide whether an absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Family holidays in term time will not be authorised and will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absences.

Providing confirmation of the reason for the absence does not automatically register the absence as authorised; this is solely at the discretion of the Head.

6. Granting approval for term-time absence

The Head has a duty to ensure that term dates are protected, and leave of absence will not normally be granted in term time. Holidays are not considered a valid reason to authorise an approved absence.

In exceptional circumstances parents should write directly to the Head explaining fully why the request is being made to remove a pupil from school in term time. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head's discretion.

Valid reasons may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance
- Family bereavement

Family holidays in term time will not be authorised and will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absences.

7. Monitoring and Review

The Form Teachers, in liaison with the Head have responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children in the school and will work with parents to resolve any difficulties. Attendance is reviewed each term and the Head or Form Teacher will contact the parent or guardian should a child's attendance fall to 90% or below.

Where necessary, measures will be agreed to improve attendance which will continue to be monitored closely.

If attendance falls below 90% in subsequent terms, parents will be contacted in writing and asked to meet with the Deputy Head or Head. Where attendance repeatedly falls below 90% and there is concern regarding unauthorised absence, the authority attendance officer will be informed at the discretion of the Head.

The law states that it is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that a child attends school regularly and on time. Neglect of this responsibility will result in the school taking action to ensure attendance and ultimately can lead to further action being taken (Education Act 1996).

Within these regulations, the School has a legal duty to report certain attendance concerns to the Local Authority:

- ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence);
- Failure to attend regularly;
- Deletion from the school register when the next school is not known.