



THE
GARIBALDI
SCHOOL

**ATTENDANCE
MATTERS**
ALL DAY, EVERY DAY

A Parents & Carers Guide

Introduction: Why Attendance Matters

At the Garibaldi School, we expect the highest standards of attendance from all our students so they may develop their full potential during their time with us. It is our aim to maintain a culture of excellence, attendance and punctuality. Missing out on education has a significant effect on students' life opportunities. Everyone within the school community – students, parents, all teaching and support staff and external agencies must do all in their power to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest standards for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so successful. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered, it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and further aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good Attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence;
- Students make better progress, both socially and academically;
- Students find school routines, schoolwork and friendships easier to cope with;
- Students find learning more satisfying;
- Students are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.

GOOD ATTENDANCE

MEANS BEING IN SCHOOL AT LEAST 97% OF THE TIME
OR HAVING NO MORE THAN SEVEN DAYS OFF!

0 07 19 29 38 47

DAYS
ABSENCE
100% ATTENDANCE

DAYS
ABSENCE
97% ATTENDANCE

DAYS
ABSENCE
90% ATTENDANCE

DAYS
ABSENCE
85% ATTENDANCE

DAYS
ABSENCE
80% ATTENDANCE

DAYS
ABSENCE
75% ATTENDANCE

EDUCATION + ATTENDANCE + EFFORT
= ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES



Our Attendance Procedures

Reporting Absence

What to do if your child is absent:

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required daily. If your child is too ill to attend school, parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible. Please give your child's name, mentor group, the reason for absence. You must contact us on 01623 464220 and select option 1 for student attendance **each morning**, before 8.00am if your child is absent.

If no one is available to take your call, please leave a message, alternatively you can email – **studentattendance@garibaldischool.co.uk**.

You may receive a call back from a member of staff requesting further information. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school. If your child experiences a prolonged illness or several short absences of the same type, medical evidence will be required by the school.

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence, the school is required to start child missing in education procedures. The Garibaldi School will make all the reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including home visits and making enquiries to known friends and wider family.

What to do if your child has an appointment:

We ask that where possible, you make routine medical appointments and other appointments out of school hours. **If this is not possible, we require notification in advance and you will need provide an appointment letter/card to confirm the appointment.** Your child should attend school before the appointment and return afterwards where possible. The absence will only be authorised for the duration of the appointment, including travel time.

Our Attendance Procedures

Contact with parents/carers

We take our safeguarding responsibility seriously. If the attendance team has received no reason for absence and a student is absent we will notify you and ask you to provide a reason for the absence. Contact, via text or calls, will be made daily to the contact numbers the school holds on record. Contact is made on a daily basis, even where your child has been absent due to illness on previous days. We cannot assume your child is still ill unless you have notified us. We would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. Please ensure your child realises the importance of attending their development time period, on time, and getting their present mark. Parents/carers can also support the school by ensuring we hold up a minimum of 2 up to date contact numbers.

Holidays in term time

Head Teachers are no longer permitted to agree a leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. This includes where parents decide to take their children out of school for a family holiday during term time. If a parent intends to take their child out of school during term time, they must have requested this in advance by completing a leave of absence form, and had their request agreed by the Head Teacher. Failure to do this could result in a fine or prosecution.

Leave of absence for other reasons

Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as shopping, birthdays, day trips, etc. If parents/carers wish their child to be absent for other reasons, such as compassionate leave, special family occasions, or to participate in sport or musical competitions etc. an application should be made in advance by completing a leave of absence form. It may be necessary for parents to apply for a performance license in such circumstances.

Persistent Absence

Students who are absent 10% or more of the time at school, for whatever reason, are defined as persistent absentees. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. The Garibaldi School monitors all absences thoroughly and the attendance data is shared with the Department for Education. If your child has persistent absence, you will be required to send in evidence for any absence, and both the parent/carer and the student may be subject to an Attendance Plan and/or home school contract to improve their attendance.

Our Attendance Procedures

Authorising Absence

Only the school can authorise absence. Government guidelines are specific and allow the school to authorise the following:

- student absence through “leave” given by the school (this commonly includes medical appointments, interviews and other similar special circumstances)
- student illness
- religious observance where applicable

Examples of absence which have **not been authorised** in the past include:

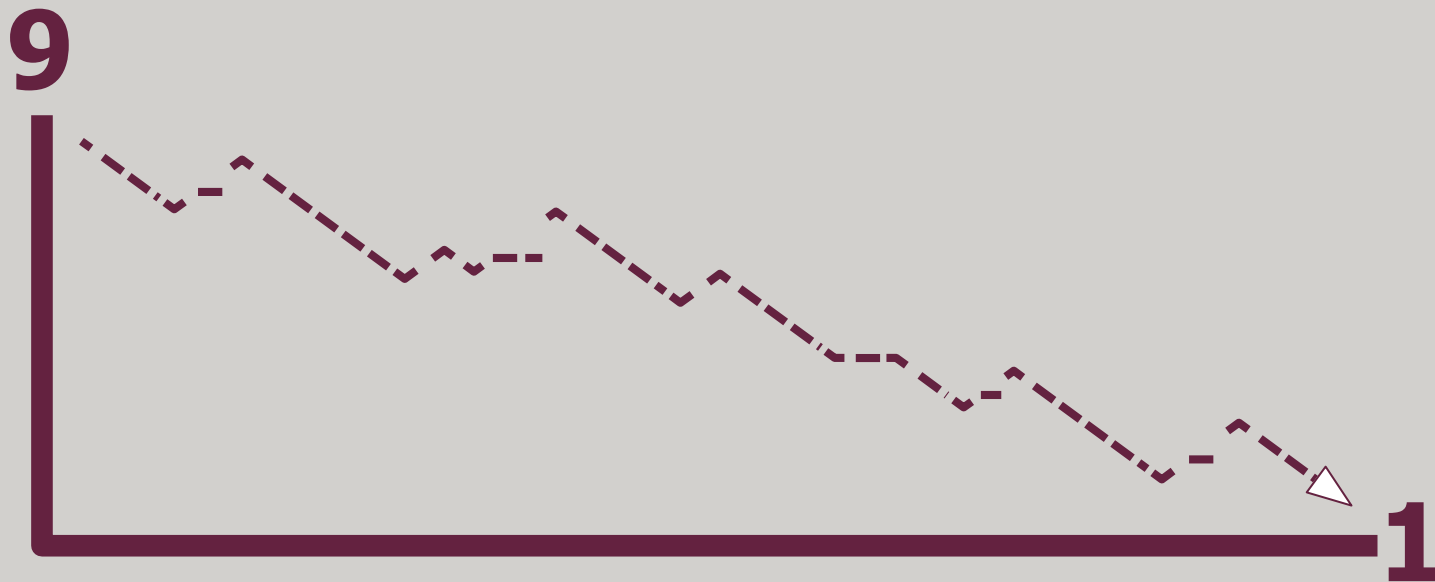
- shopping or day
- looking after brother/sister, elderly relatives, cat/dog etc
- arrival after the close of the register (9.00am) with no valid reason for the late arrival
- truancy
- holidays taken during term time

Unauthorised Absence Fixed Penalty Notices – NEW National Framework for Penalty Notices from 19th August 2024

In Nottinghamshire, parents can be fined if their child has 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 weeks.

- The first penalty notices are charged at £160 (per child, per parent) if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second penalty notice issued to the same parent for the same child is charged at a flat rate of £160 if paid with 28 days
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same child within 3 years of the date of issue of the first. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead – this will often include considering prosecution.

DAYS OFF COST GOOD GRADES



RESEARCH SUGGESTS THAT FOR EVERY 17 DAYS
MISSED FROM SCHOOL, YOUR GCSE RESULTS
WILL GO DOWN ONE GRADE

Being Punctual is the Expectation

Lateness to School

Students who arrive late will be issued with a mark in their character card and parents will receive a text message which informs them of the lateness. According to DfE guidelines, registers must be closed after a certain time in the morning. Therefore, if a student arrives **after 9.00am**, they cannot receive a late mark but will be marked as absent for the whole morning session. If the lateness is due to a legitimate reason e.g. a medical appointment, the absence can be authorised providing we have been notified of this in advance and evidence of the appointment is seen. Otherwise, the session is marked as an unauthorised absence. A text is sent home to parents informing them of this and the fact that they could be liable for a fixed penalty notice if the child receives 10 or more unauthorised absence sessions.

The Garibaldi School's Support for Good Punctuality

We place a strong emphasis on good punctuality; we support this by:

- Giving sanctions to students who arrive late to school or lessons;
- Informing parents, by text, if their child arrives late for school;
- Senior staff patrolling the local area, first thing in the morning, to encourage students not to loiter in these areas and make themselves late;
- Uploading attendance records into a student's MCAS App, allowing parents the chance to monitor any lateness/ absences;
- Addressing issues of poor time keeping with individual students and their parents;

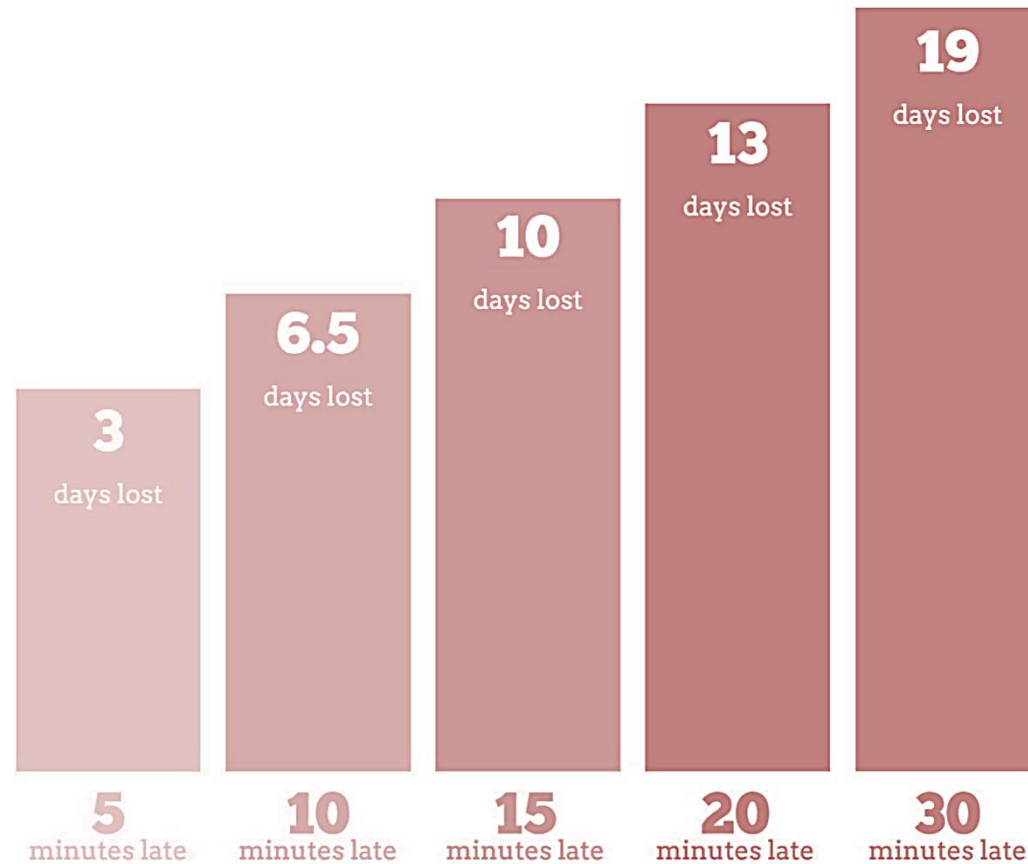
Parents' Support for Good Punctuality

We would ask parents to support us in maintaining good punctuality by:

- Ensuring that their child gets up in plenty of time to be ready and prepared for school;
- Ensuring that their child has organised their bag and equipment the night before so that this does not delay departure in the morning;
- Discussing any issues of lateness to ensure this does not become a habit;
- Monitoring their child's attendance record when it is sent home and looking for patterns of lateness.

Do you know what good time keeping means?

Lost minutes = Lost learning



*Over one full academic year

Make sure your child is at school and ready to learn, before the bell rings.

Students: Try to get to school 10 minutes early, get settled and ready to learn!

Did You know?

Being 15 minutes late each day is the same as missing two weeks of school!

Ways for parents to encourage good attendance...

- Find out about your child's absence regularly and check if this matches your own records.
- Phone the school as soon as possible to tell them why your child is absent and when you expect them to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illnesses, complaints of a headache or stomach ache might be a sign of anxiety and not a reason to stay at home.
- Talk regularly with your child about school and how they feel about it. They are more likely to attend school if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- If your child is ill, but feels better later in the day, encourage them to come into school – a part day missed is better than a full day missed.
- Avoid taking holidays in term time.
- Know the routines of the school days to avoid issues e.g. Have they brought in their PE kit?
- If you have concerns—phone the school.
- Praise and reward good attendance at school.



For further advice contact the Garibaldi School's Attendance team on 01623 464220 or via email – studentattendance@garibaldischool.co.uk.

Or you can contact Nottinghamshire County Council's Early Help Unit on 0115 804 1248

How we promote good attendance in school

What does the school do to encourage good attendance?

- ✓ Inter mentor group competitions and rewards
- ✓ Individual rewards for students with good and excellent attendance records
- ✓ School, year group and mentor group targets are set for attendance and individual targets where necessary
- ✓ Regular attendance information sent to parents/carers to assist them in monitoring their child's attendance
- ✓ Regular promotion of good attendance in assemblies, the student bulletin, termly newsletter and at parents'/carers' evenings
- ✓ Detailed analysis of attendance figures and trends for individuals, year groups, sub groups and the whole school
- ✓ Regular reports to Governors
- ✓ Computerised registration system which allows every lesson to be monitored
- ✓ A member of the office staff dedicated to the administration of attendance
- ✓ Contact with parents/carers when students are absent or late
- ✓ Dedicated School Attendance Manager
- ✓ Support for students and parents/carers where attendance difficulties are emerging

We are always asking our students...

What is your attendance %?

How are you going to improve it?



PARENTS AND CARERS – FAQs (FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

What do I do if my child is ill?

Telephone the school absence line 01623 464220 (option 1) or email studentattendance@garibaldischool.co.uk on each morning of your child's illness by 8.00am and let us know the reason why your child cannot attend.

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. If your child is ill, but feels better later in the day, encourage them to come into school – a part day missed is better than a full day missed.

- **Coughs and colds** - It's fine to send your child to school with a minor cough or common cold. But if they have a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes.
- **High temperature** - If your child has a high temperature, keep them off school until it goes away.
- **Feeling anxious or worried** - It's normal for children to feel a little anxious sometimes. They may get a tummy ache or headache, or have problems eating or sleeping. Avoiding school can make a child's anxiety about going to school worse. It's good to talk about any worries they may have such as bullying, friendship problems, school work or sensory problems. You can also work with the school to find ways to help them. If your child is still struggling and it's affecting their everyday life, it might be good to talk to your GP.

Further information can be seen on the NHS UK website via the following link. <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

If your child is ill for more than 3 days, we will ask for medical evidence. If absence becomes persistent then medical evidence is required for all illness. This can be in the form of a notification confirming a GP appointment, receipts for medication purchased, prescriptions or photos of named medication or any other form of medical evidence.

What can I do if my child is starting to present attendance difficulties?

These difficulties can show themselves in a number of different ways e.g. a reluctance to go to school, feigning illness, failure to attend school even though the child is sent, missing lessons whilst in school. If a problem seems to be emerging parents/carers should talk to the child to try to ascertain if there are any problems or worries at school on the journey to or from school or at home and contact their Mentor as soon as possible.

Why doesn't the Garibaldi School authorise holidays?

Head Teachers are no longer permitted to agree a leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. This includes where parents decide to take their children out of school for a family holiday during term time. Further information can be seen on the Nottinghamshire County Council Website access via the following link.

<https://www.nottinghamshire.gov.uk/education/school-discipline-and-exclusions/attendance-absence-truancy>

Why do you issue fixed penalty notices if parents/carers remove their children for a holiday?

We cannot authorise an avoidable absence which causes harm to the continuity of a child's education. We are aware that holidays in term time are cheaper than those in school holidays and that this can be a motivating factor. The penalty notice therefore attempts to remove this incentive as well as reinforcing the importance of school attendance. Please note: the monies received from Fixed Penalty Notices are not given to the school.

Would I have received a fixed penalty notice if I had lied about the absence?

We expect honesty in our dealings with parents/carers and we are sure parents/carers wish to model this to their children. However, it is also our experience that children will tell their friends of their holiday who inadvertently tell their teachers. The length of absence can also trigger an attendance investigation, including home visits, leading to the truth of the matter.

If my child refuses to attend school, can I be held responsible?

Yes. Once your child is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your child fails to do so, you risk getting a penalty notice or being prosecuted in court. Please contact your child's mentor if you are concerned about your child's attendance.