



The Park Federation Academy Trust

The Godolphin Junior Academy

Attendance Policy

Approval

Signed by CEO and Federation Principal on behalf of the Board of Directors	Dr. Martin Young
Date of Approval	August 2024
Date of Next Review	August 2025

Notes on Document Control

This document is the property of The Park Federation Academy Trust and its contents are confidential. It must not be reproduced, loaned or passed to a 3rd party without the permission of the authoriser.

It is controlled within the Park Federation Academy Trust Admin Server where the electronic master is held and can be accessed on a read only basis, subject to security permissions.

Users of the document are responsible for ensuring that they are working with the current version.

Paper or electronic copies may be taken for remote working etc. However, all paper copies or electronic copies not held within the Admin Server are uncontrolled. Hence the footer 'DOCUMENT UNCONTROLLED WHEN PRINTED' which must not be changed.

Once issued, as a minimum this document shall be reviewed on an annual basis by the originating team/function. Any amendments shall be identified by a vertical line adjacent to the right hand margin.

To enable continuous improvement, all readers encouraged to notify the author of errors, omissions and any other form of feedback.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Park Federation Academy Trust The Godolphin Junior Academy

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Promoting Regular Attendance:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give you details on attendance in our school newsletters and Piota App posts
- Report to you regularly on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements
- Reward good or improving attendance through class rewards and certificates
- Where absence is causing the school concerns, parents will be informed in writing and in some cases asked to attend a meeting with the school's Attendance Officer and the school Principal.

1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting 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 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

The governing board:

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The Principal:

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader along with the Senior Attendance Champion is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Helen Abell and The Senior Attendance Champion is Mrs Rizwana Hussain.

The Attendance Officer:

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance and the principal
- Working with the Local Authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Mrs Claudia Balague and can be contacted via gjaoffice@theparkfederation.org

Class teachers:

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the schools Management Information System (MIS) Arbor. Registers will be taken in the mornings and after lunch

If teachers are made aware of a pupil absence this is to be communicated to the office.

School Office staff:

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Follow up poor attendance with parents and outside agencies

Parents and Carers:

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school using option 1 or email the school using gjaoffice@theparkfederation.org to report their child's absence before 8:30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with two or more emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils:

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Section 4: Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause or taking part in approved religious observance.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority, through its Attendance Service (AS) using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which never have been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register
- Day trips and holidays in term times
- Excessive illness without medical evidence
- Shopping or looking after siblings

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

You can support your child by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times
- Helping with homework
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Providing a healthy breakfast
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly to the school
- Retaining open and honest communication with your child's school
- Being positive about school (even if your own experience was less than positive)
- Encouraging your child to invite friends home for play dates

Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil is defined by the Department of Education (DfE) as being a persistent absentee is any pupil who has missed 19 days (38 sessions) across the school year for whatever reason. The Attendance Services at the Local Authority (Slough Borough Council) monitor pupils that are on track to become a PA by the number of sessions (2 sessions = 1 day), the following guidelines are used to help schools identify these pupils at the end of each **half term**.

Identification at the end of each half	Number of sessions of absence, at the term end of the half term, to be on track for persistent absenteeism
Term 1	7 sessions
Term 2	14 sessions
Term 3	20 sessions
Term 4	25 sessions
Term 5	32 sessions
Term 6	38 sessions

Therefore, a child is a persistent absentee as defined by the DfE once they have reached 38 sessions of absence, irrespective of which part of the year we are in at the time, and for whatever reason.

For example, if a child has had a block of illness during half term 1 for 20 days, they would have been absent for 40 sessions which make them a persistent absentee in half term 1 and therefore they will remain a PA for the rest of the academic year.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and the school needs parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

All attendance is discussed weekly by the GJA Attendance Working Party. This key group is made up of the Principal, The Senior Attendance Champion, The Attendance Officer, SENCO and Inclusion Assistant. Within this meeting, all attendance will be reviewed with a focus on persistent absentees and any pupils at risk of persistent absenteeism. Actions to support, address and improve attendance for specific pupils are set and recorded in each meeting.

Section 5: Absence Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us by telephone using option 1 or email the school on gjaoffice@theparkfederation.org as soon as possible on the first day of absence and keep the school regularly informed, preferably daily.
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception – please do not speak to teachers directly

If your child is absent and you have made contact with the school we will:

Day 1

- The Attendance Officer will note the absence in the register. However, if we have a safeguarding or welfare concern we will conduct a home visit.

Day 2

- The Attendance Officer will note the absence in the register and inform parents of their child's attendance figure. However, if we have a safeguarding or welfare concern we will conduct a home visit.

Day 3

- The Attendance Officer will note the absence and parents will be advised to supply medical evidence on their child's return to school. However, if we have a safeguarding or welfare concern we will conduct a home visit.

Day 4 & 5

- If medical evidence has not been provided parents are still required to call in every day. However, if we have a safeguarding or welfare concern we will conduct a home visit.

Day 6

- If no medical evidence has been provided, the Attendance Officer will discuss the absence with the Principal and a welfare home visit will be conducted to see if the school can offer any support in aiding the child's return to school.

Further Contact

If no medical evidence is provided and previous attendance is low a referral will be made to Slough Attendance Service and a fine may be incurred.

If your child is absent and you have not made contact with the school we will:

Day 1

- Telephone or email you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you. However, if we have a safeguarding or welfare concern we will conduct a home visit.

Day 2

- If we still have no contact with you a second telephone call will be made. However, if we have a safeguarding or welfare concern we will conduct a home visit.

Day 3

- If we still have no contact a home visit will be carried out and SLT informed.

We follow set procedures for when absence falls below the expected level (**Appendix 1**) In addition to these, Slough Attendance Service will be informed of any child who has attendance below 90%.

Telephone numbers:

Parents are required to provide **three emergency contact details and numbers.**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. In the rare event that we cannot contact you to determine an absence we will:

- call the two remaining contact numbers to check everything is ok and ask you to make contact with the school
- send two members of staff to the family home if we cannot make contact with all three contact numbers held on the school system
- contact the police immediately for a welfare check if we have failed to make contact via telephone and a home visit has taken place and been unsuccessful

The Attendance Officer:

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Officer (AO) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. The legislation is the Education Act 1996 sec. 44.1 and 44.1.a.

"If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence."

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the Attendance Service themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is 01753 787670 or attendance@slough.gov.uk.

Fixed Penalties Notices:

From August 2024, the fine for school absences across the country will be £80 if paid within 21 days, or £160 if paid within 28 days.

In the case of repeated fines, if a parent receives a second fine for the same child within any three-year period, this will be charged at the higher rate of £160. Fines per parent will be

capped to two fines within any three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action like a parenting order or prosecution will be considered. If you're prosecuted and attend court because your child hasn't been attending school, you could get a fine of up to £2,500. More information from Slough Borough Council can be found in Appendix 4.

Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. When pupils arrive late, they miss out on the essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, this can significantly reduce achievement regardless of academic ability. Your child may also feel awkward arriving to the classroom when everyone else is settled. Furthermore, when one pupil arrives late, it disrupts the entire class and the teacher – everyone's education is compromised.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 8:45 for all pupils and we expect your child to be in class at that time, not walking through the gates at this time. If your child arrives after the start time, you will be required to sign them in at the office. Your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time. We operate a 'soft start' to the school day, so the school gates are open between 8:30-8.40am every day and the children can enter their classrooms from that time.

At **9.10 am** the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If your child has a persistent late record you will be informed in writing. If persistent lateness continues you will receive a phone call from the Year Lead and if your child's punctuality still does not improve you could be asked to attend a face-to-face meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and Attendance Officer to resolve the problem. Please remember you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Children who are picked up late at the end of the school day will be dealt with following the Children Collected Late Protocol (**Appendix 3**). Should lateness continue, a monitoring letter will be sent and advice sought.

Leave during term time:

Taking leave in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking leave in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on leave.

- It is widely known that the link between a student's attendance and attainment is irrefutable.
- Early poor attendance habits follow through into secondary school and employment.
- Graduates earn an average of £16.91 per hour. Young people that leave school with no qualifications earn an average of £6.40 per hour.

- All Slough schools are encouraged to adopt a policy of not authorising leave. The Principal will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. You will be asked to provide substantial evidence in support of your request.
- A member of SLT will meet personally with every family applying for leave where possible to stress the importance of good school attendance habits and links between attendance and attainment.
- Reasons for leave will be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process.
- The Attendance Services from Slough Borough Council will issue Notice to Improve and Fixed Penalty Notices (fine) for any unauthorised absence.
- After consultation with the Local Authority, any child on extended leave may be off rolled after 20 days.
- Notice to Improve or Penalty Notices will be considered for any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks.

Any parent wishing to apply for leave is required to submit a request to the Principal using the form found in Appendix 2

Section 6: Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session (after lunchtime). It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for three years after the date on which the entry was made.

All pupils in Years 3-6 must arrive in school by **8:40am** on each school day.

Section 7: Monitoring Attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly across the school half-termly, termly and yearly across the school at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Reporting to parents/carers:

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via half termly and end of year reports. Weekly attendance will be shared with parents via newsletters and school website.

Analysing attendance:

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance:

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Children Missing in Education (CME):

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have.

Children missing in education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Children missing in education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

At GJA, when a child has left the school or not been in school and we have not been able to make contact with parents/carers or received a forwarding address within 10 days, a CME is completed and sent to the Local Authority.

If we have a safeguarding or welfare concern or if they have a high SEND need then a CME

could be completed prior to 10 days)

Section 8: Academy targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets. The minimum level of attendance for this school is 96% attendance and we will keep you updated regularly about progress to this level and how your child's attendance compares. When attendance drops below 96% an initial warning letter will be sent to parents.

Our target is to achieve better than this however because we know that good attendance is one of the keys to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in Slough.

Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. Weekly meetings are held to analyse and assess all children who are absent to see if there are patterns to note or children to monitor. We look for ways to ensure that high attendance is supported in school. All children and staff are made aware of the attendance figures in weekly briefings/assemblies.

Attendance is celebrated weekly and termly:

- Each class that achieves 100% attendance for a full week will be rewarded with a mufti day.
- Every three weeks, we provide every child who had 100% attendance within those three weeks with a special attendance prize. The prize changes each time.
- Attendance is celebrated in a weekly celebration assembly and specific classes and pupils who have achieved well are rewarded with bouncy balls and merits.
- If a child has achieved 100% attendance all year, they will receive a special recognition award and a **£10:00** Smyths Voucher.

Information on any projects or initiatives that will focus on these areas will be provided in our schools newsletters and we ask for your full support.

Staff responsible for attendance management in this school are:

- Mrs Abell (Principal)
- Mrs Hussain (DSL and Senior Attendance Champion)
- Ms Balague (Office Manager/Attendance Officer)
- Mrs Tudor (SENCO)
- Mr. Graham (Inclusion Assistant)
- Mrs Sangha and Miss Powell – (SLT members)

Summary

The academy has a legal duty to publish its absence figures and its attendance policy to parents and to promote attendance. School attendance data must be available to the Local

Authority and the Department for Education (DfE). Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

Being in school is important to your child's academic achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. There is evidence to suggest that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes. Schools can facilitate positive peer relationships, which is a contributes to better mental health and wellbeing.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the below school policies (these can be found on our school website)

Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Regulation and Management Policy

Anti-Bullying Policy

Admissions Criteria Policy

Suspensions & Exclusions Policy

Penalty Notice Changes

With the introduction of the new National Framework for Penalty Notices, the following will come into force for absences that start after 19th August 2024. This is nationwide and also across borders if you move school or house.

Term Time Leave is only allowed in exceptional circumstances communicated in advance with evidence provided as soon as possible to the Headteacher.

First Offence

The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be

£160 per parent per child paid within 28 days

Reduced to £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days

Second Offence

Within 3 years of the first offence
The second time a Penalty Notice is issued for unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance the amount will be:

£160 per parent per child paid within 28 days

No reduction for early payment.

Third Offence onwards

Within 3 years of the first offence

The third time an offence is committed for unauthorised term time leave or irregular attendance a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates' Court. Fines can be around £2500 per parent, per child.

Cases found to be guilty in Magistrates' Court can show as a criminal record and also on the parent's future DBS certificates due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education.

Don't Forget

Penalty Notices are issued **Per Parent, Per Child.**

For example 3 siblings absent would result in each parent receiving 3 fines.

This could amount to £960

Please ensure you communicate with your child's school.

Term Time Leave is only allowed in exceptional circumstances communicated in advance with evidence provided as soon as possible to the Headteacher.

10 sessions in 10 weeks - Penalty Notices will be considered for any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks.

5 Consecutive days of term time leave can trigger a Penalty Notice