

Date Adopted	Spring 2020
Review Date	Autumn 2023



GORDANO SCHOOL ATTENDANCE GUIDELINES JANUARY 2020

1. PHILOSOPHY

- 1.1 Gordano School is part of Lighthouse Schools Partnership and follows the principles of the **Partnership Attendance Policy**, although there may be some slight variation of procedures to suit the individual school setting. In addition to, and in line with the Policy, Gordano outlines its expectations below, and these guidelines should be read in conjunction with the Lighthouse Schools Partnership Attendance Policy.
- 1.2 We are committed to providing high quality inclusive learning opportunities for all students. We believe that if students are to reach their full potential, then excellent attendance is crucial. It is the policy of Gordano to celebrate achievement. Full attendance is a critical factor in ensuring positive educational outcomes for our students. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students.

2. PRINCIPLES

- 2.1 Heads of Houses, Head of Year 7 and other key staff will be involved in tracking and monitoring registration periods conducted by tutors.
- 2.2 Tutors and classroom teachers are expected to complete accurate registers at the start of every session/lesson.
- 2.3 Attendance rates will be shared with Heads of Houses/Head of Year/tutors and good and improved attendance will be rewarded for all students (for example, Going for Gold and termly attendance prizes).
- 2.4 Parents/carers and students will be informed of attendance rates and related issues. The primary way of communicating attendance with parents/carers and students will be through the "Class Charts" App.
- 2.5 We will have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members such as homework club and access to the library at lunch and break times. Students are expected to catch up with learning missed after an absence from school and should get in contact with their teachers in a timely manner (e.g. via email) to make appropriate arrangements regarding missed learning.

3. PERFORMANCE

- 3.1 Our target attendance rate for each student is 100%. However, we would regard an individual's attendance to be 96% or more to be deemed regular. Any attendance under 90% is the figure the Government deems to be a persistent absence from school.
- 3.2 It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to ensure that their child receives full-time education. Individual student's attendance will start to be monitored and reviewed every second week when a student's attendance figure falls below 95%. An appropriate course of action to improve a student's attendance in school will be discussed with the Head of House and implemented immediately. The school may involve the Education Welfare Service where a student's attendance falls below 90%.
- 3.3 In line with statutory requirements of Section 444 Education Act, 1996, parents/carers could be liable for actions such as the issuing of a Penalty Notice or School can recommend the matter goes before a Magistrates Court if there is no improvement. Gordano School will only take this course of action once all other strategies and interventions have failed.

4. FIRST DAY CONTACT

- 4.1 First day contact is an integral part of our Attendance principles. First day contact sends a clear message to students and parents/carers that attendance is very important.
- 4.2 Parents/carers should contact the school by **9.30am** on the first morning that their child is away. The school has a dedicated attendance phone line (Tel: 01275 841374 Years 7-11 and 01275 841380 Sixth Form) with an answer machine. **Full reasons for the child's absence should be given - reporting a student "not well" or 'ill' does not constitute a full reason.** Alternatively, parents/carers can email the Attendance Team directly on attendance@gordanoschool.org.uk. Parents/carers are required to contact the school on each day of their child's absence.
- 4.3 If the parent has not contacted the school by 9.30am, the parents/carers of the students identified as absent will be contacted by the Attendance Team.
- 4.4 Parents/carers will be challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence, or if the reasons given for absence are unacceptable.

5. MAIN TYPES OF ABSENCE

- 5.1 **Authorised Absence:** An absence with an explanation from parents/carers.
- 5.2 **Unauthorised Absence:** An absence not agreed or unexplained. The School will attempt to obtain reasons for unexplained absence but where parents/carers fail to respond, any unexplained absence will be deemed as unauthorised. If a student has 5 or more unauthorised absences (10 sessions) within a 6 month period, the school may recommend to the Education Welfare Service that a Notice of Fixed Penalty is issued. They may decide to refer the matter to a Magistrates Court.
- 5.3 **Medical:** Will usually be authorised although the school will normally request a doctor's note for any absence exceeding 5 consecutive days.

6. PROCEDURES

- 6.1 If no contact is achieved with the parent/carer of an absent student on the first day of absence, contact will be made with the parent/carer by phone or email. Any unexplained absences of one week or longer may be reported to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO), and further action decided upon.
- 6.2 For any student returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, the school will make provision to allow the student to ease back into the school system if necessary. In the event of a student returning after a long-term absence, a Re-inclusion Plan may be implemented to help support the students return to school. This plan will include all relevant members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the student as possible.
- 6.3 Where patterns of non-attendance emerge, for example, a student missing regular Mondays or Fridays or last days of terms, the School will challenge these absences and reserve the right not to authorise them, even if a parent/carer has reported a student as unwell. The school reserves the right not to authorise absences where siblings are reported unwell on the same day.

7. LATENESS

- 7.1 Being punctual is an important life skill to prepare a young person for the world of work. Parents/carers are expected to ensure that students are present at the start of registration. The bell rings at 8.40am and students are expected to be in the tutor base at 8.45am ready to be registered. Registration is an important part of the school day. Tutors are required to complete the registers before registration has finished. Students arriving after 8.45am will be considered to be late. Students arriving after 8.45am but before

9.30am (when registration closes) must sign in at the Student Centre and will also be recorded as late. Students arriving after 9.30am will be recorded 'late after registration closes', which counts as an unauthorised absence. These unauthorised absences will affect the student's attendance figure and they can be taken into account when deciding whether to issue Penalty Notices.

7.2 There are two negative results caused by students who constantly arrive late:

7.2.1 The loss of learning suffered by the student themselves, which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school.

7.2.2 The disruption to other students in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task in hand.

7.3 The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

7.3.1 Informing parents/carers when a student is late more than 3 times and placing the student in a 30-minute afterschool detention on the next available school day. Thereafter, a 30-minute afterschool detention will be incurred for each following late. Once a student has been late on 10 occasions the detention will increase to a one hour detention on each late mark thereafter.

7.3.2 To reward improvements, if a student goes through a whole term without being late to school they can apply to the Attendance Officer or House Head to have their 'lates' tally zero'd. It is the students' responsibility to check their own attendance in this regard.

7.3.3 Students being kept in at break, lunchtime or after school after repeated and persistent lateness to make up lost learning time.

7.3.4 Registration with a member of SLT, not with tutor and tutor group.

7.3.5 Use of Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence.

7.3.6 Repeated lateness could mean a student is placed on Stage 1 of the school's disciplinary procedures.

8. SAFEGUARDING STUDENTS DURING SCHOOL HOURS/TRUANTING OFF SITE

8.1 There are two reasons why a student may need to leave the school site during school hours:

8.1.1 Needing to attend a medical or dental appointment, college interview, approved sporting activity

8.1.2 Being sent home by the First Aider when the student is unwell. Students must NOT contact parents/carers themselves asking to be fetched if they feel unwell.

8.2 When a student is unwell, the First Aider will contact parents/carers to arrange for a student to be collected. Under no circumstances will the student be allowed to leave the site unaccompanied if they are unwell.

8.3 For reasons of safety and safeguarding, any student who needs to leave the school site during the school day (to attend a medical appointment for example) must be picked up on site (*main reception*) by a parent or guardian and will only be allowed to leave if we have parental permission.

- 8.4 Students are not permitted to walk out of school unattended without prior agreement of a parent/carer AND the School.
- 8.5 Should there be an exceptional reason for a student to leave the school site without being accompanied by an adult, parents/carers are asked to contact the Attendance Officer explaining the reasons why the student will not be collected on site. The Attendance Officer will then give permission or seek permission from the Senior Leadership Team or Head of House and, once in place, we will allow the student sign out at Student Reception.
- 8.6 This guidance will not apply to Year 11 students once they start Exam Leave (although they must sign out at Student Reception before they leave the school site).
- 8.7 **Any student leaving the school site without permission are classed as truanting and will be dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedures.**
9. **HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME/LEAVE OF ABSENCE**
- 9.1 With effect from the 1st September 2013, the law no longer gives any entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time and Headteachers can no longer grant any extended leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 9.2 If you are going to request a leave of absence under exceptional circumstances you are asked to complete a Leave of Absence Under Exceptional Circumstances Form and return it to the Attendance Officer. Before completing the form, parents/carers should consider the following:
- 9.2.1 **We would strongly advise** that requests for holiday are submitted prior to booking any holiday in order that you can be clear if the school will be authorising the absence, not authorising the absence, or not authorising the absence AND recommending a Fixed Penalty Notice be issued.
- 9.2.2 We are happy to give advice if you are considering taking holidays in term time and you are welcome to contact the Attendance Officer in this regard.
- 9.2.3 As previously stated in this document, Curriculum Enrichment Week (for Years 7-9) and Work Experience Week (Year 10) is a legal week of school and, as such, students are expected to attend. Any absences for holidays during this time will fall under normal leave of absence procedures.
- 9.2.4 The last day of Term 2 (Christmas) and the last day of Term 6 (summer) are counted as two sessions and therefore constitute a whole school day.
- 9.2.5 Where we see repeated unauthorised holidays which have incurred a Fixed Penalty Notice we may request further absence is dealt with by way of the Magistrates Court rather than Fixed Penalties. School will seek guidance from the Local Authority on a case by case basis and parents/carers will be informed that we may take this action if further holidays in term time are taken.
- 9.2.6 If the Headteacher does not authorise an absence, but the child is still absent, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued. If a student has been absent and the reason has been reported as illness but the school has reason to believe this not to be the case and the student is actually attending a family holiday, we may require evidence of illness. If illness cannot be proved, the school may take action by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.