



September 2023

*Preparation for life's journey*

Dear Parents/Carers

At Gresham Village School and Nursery our aim is to collaborate with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. Our expectation is that every child, unless there are exceptional circumstances, will have an annual attendance of at least 95%. Attendance under 90% is considered persistent absence by the DfE and you will be requested to attend an Attendance Review Meeting should this happen.

I know that you will all understand the importance of punctuality and attendance for your child. Lateness gives children a bad start to the day and when this is regular they miss out on crucial parts of their learning and this will have a detrimental effect on how well they are doing at school. Equally, frequent or extended absences mean that children lose continuity with their learning, which, again, can have a cumulative effect. We understand entirely that children are sometimes ill and that there will be times when they are away from school, but it is important that children do not have any unnecessary absences.

This letter is to remind all parents about the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly. The Government is very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment.

### **Illness**

If your child is ill, please contact us as early as possible to let us know. You can do this by ringing and leaving a message or through Parent Mail. It is helpful for us if you tell us the nature of the illness. If your child is off school for more than one day, please contact us on each day of absence. For quarantine times for different illnesses, including coronavirus, please see the NHS list of contagious diseases that can be found on the school website <https://www.greshamvillage.co.uk/for-parents-carers/>

### **The Important Legal Information**

The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil with at least **9 sessions (4.5 school days) of unauthorised absence within 6 school weeks** meets the criteria for legal intervention. The intervention could be in the form of a fixed penalty notice. Any pupil at Gresham Village School and Nursery who meets that criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered.

If issued, the penalty notice is £60 when paid within the 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. When penalty notices are issued, each parent will receive one per child. Therefore, each parent could receive multiple notices if they have more than one child who has been absent. Failure to pay the total amount within the timescale will result in legal action being taken.

There is no right of appeal against a fixed penalty notice.

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In some circumstances, the Norfolk County Council Attendance Team may choose not to issue a penalty notice and may instead choose to prosecute a parent under the Education Act 1996 S444.

### **Requests for Leave of Absence**

The DfE advises all schools that they should only grant a leave of absence during term time in exceptional circumstances, considering each request on a case-by-case basis. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Although we recognise the value and benefits of family holidays, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for a family holiday during term time as they would not typically be seen as an exceptional circumstance.

If the school does not receive a request for leave of absence, we will be unable to consider your individual circumstances and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Headteachers are not obligated to reconsider authorising leave if an application was not made in advance.

I hope we can count on your support in this matter. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Goodliffe', written in a cursive style.

Headteacher