

Giles Academy
Attendance Policy
Updated September 2019
To be reviewed: September 2020

gilesacademy

Purpose

A vital component to achievement in school is attendance. If your child has 95% attendance, he/she misses just 2 weeks in the academic year - a total of 60 lessons. Research shows that just *17 missed days per academic year can result in the drop of a whole GCSE grade* (Department for Education). In order to give your child the best opportunity to realise their full potential, regular and consistent attendance is essential. Giles Academy is committed to providing the very best possible educational experience for every single one of our students and will strive for learners to achieve; identifying and addressing attendance concerns swiftly.

The purpose of this policy is to improve and maintain attendance by:

- ✓ Ensuring that every child accesses the learning experiences and educational opportunities to which they are entitled
- ✓ Providing clearly defined guidelines that are easily understood by students, staff, governors and parents
- ✓ Supporting parents and carers in their legal responsibility (Education Act 1996) in relation to their child's attendance at the academy. In the first instance, it is the responsibility of the student and their parent/carers to ensure attendance at school.
- ✓ Supporting students and parents/carers in addressing reasons for poor attendance, working with external agencies where appropriate.
- ✓ Communicating regularly with parents with regards to their son/daughter's attendance to school.

A learner becomes a '**Persistent Absentee**' when their attendance falls below 90%. If a student falls below this threshold, parents will be informed in writing and absences will not be authorised unless medical evidence is received. Persistent Absence has a significant impact on a young person's current education and future opportunities.

The table below indicates how much learning per academic year is missed by student absence.

Attendance %	Days Absent (per academic year)	Weeks missed (per academic year)	Lessons missed (per academic year)
100%	0 Days	0 Weeks	0 Lessons
95%	10 Days	2 Weeks	60 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	114 Lessons
85%	29 Days	6 Weeks	174 Lessons
80%	38 Days	8 Weeks	228 Lessons
75%	48 Days	10 Weeks	288 Lessons
70%	57 Days	11 Weeks	342 Lessons

Expectations

Our expectations are in line with government expectations;

- ✓ All students to attend regularly and be punctual at all times
- ✓ Giles Academy expects a **minimum attendance** per academic year of 95%.
- ✓ For students and parents/carers to communicate with pastoral teams regarding pupil absence.
- ✓ For medical appointments, where possible, to be booked outside of the school day. In the event that a medical appointment must be taken during the school day (e.g. hospital appointment) it should be for a maximum of 2 hours and the child should be in school before and after the appointment where appropriate.

Parental Responsibility

Regular and punctual attendance at school or any alternative provision is essential for children to realise their educational potential and it is a legal requirement for all children of compulsory age. It is a parental responsibility to ensure their child attends, on time, every day that the academy is open. Permitting absence from the academy, without a valid reason, is an offence by the parent/carer.

When a student's absence is unavoidable, parents must contact the academy (via the **Giles App** or **01205 870693**) on **each day of absence** before 8.50AM to provide an explanation for the absence. You may also be required to provide details in writing on return (usually in the form of a written note given to the student's form tutor).

If the academy has not received any information to explain why your child is not attending school, on the occasions when your child is missing during AM registration, an automated text message will be sent to you. This is not only to ensure that we have an explanation for the absence, but potentially to alert you that your child is not in school by 8.50AM. If you have already informed the school, please ignore the text message. If you have not called, and you know your child is absent please use this as a reminder to do so. If your child should be in school, please contact the year team immediately to discuss and resolve.

If your son/daughter's attendance falls below 90% (and so is categorised as a persistent absentee), medical evidence must be provided to support any further absence. This can include an appointment card, copy of prescription/medication, hospital letter or compliments slip.

Authorised and Unauthorised absences:

Absences which are considered as **unavoidable** will be **authorised**.

- ✓ Genuine illness
- ✓ A family crisis (e.g. bereavement)
- ✓ Interview
- ✓ Religious observance
- ✓ Medical or Dental appointment (only for part of the school day)
- ✓ Hospital treatment
- ✓ Public examination
- ✓ Exceptional Circumstances (at the discretion of the Headteacher)

Absences which are considered as **avoidable** will be **unauthorised**.

- ✗ Holidays
- ✗ Appointments (e.g. Dentist, Hairdressers)
- ✗ Missing the bus
- ✗ Sleeping in
- ✗ Special Occasions e.g. having a birthday
- ✗ Looking after younger siblings
- ✗ Looking after ill relatives
- ✗ Staying at home for deliveries/workmen
- ✗ Holidays - Parents are encouraged not to take holidays during term time. In light of guidance from the Department of Education and Education Welfare Service, we will not be authorising **any term time holidays**. In all cases, holiday absence will be coded as unauthorised from school.

Explanations of the various attendance codes can be found in Appendix 1.

When your child is genuinely ill for an extended period of time (more than one week), you are expected to regularly contact the academy and provide the academy with medical evidence from your child's doctor. If a reason for absence has not been obtained, the academy will send a letter to the parent/carer requesting information about the absence.

Student Responsibility

It is the responsibility of the student to attend school promptly. He or she should discuss any concerns relating to attending school with his or her form tutor or pastoral team.

Staff Responsibility

Staff are responsible for accurately recording learner attendance during the school day – during registration and lesson sessions. Staff will make first day contact with parent/carers through the text messaging service, email or telephone conversation when a learner fails to attend the academy without explanation. Staff may also complete unannounced home visits if we are unable to identify a reason for absence. Staff will liaise with external agencies to provide support to students and families to resolve attendance problems where required.

Punctuality

Our morning registration period is from 8.30am to 8.45 am. Students that are in school for 8.40 will be marked as present ('/'). Students are considered late if they arrive after this window and your child will be marked as 'L' after this time. The legal close of registers at Giles Academy is 9.10am (30 minutes after the end of AM registration) and if your child arrives after this time, they will be marked as 'U' for unauthorised absence.

Students who arrive late, after the registration session, must sign in on arrival at reception with an explanatory note for their lateness. Students regularly late for morning and/or afternoon registration will be placed on punctuality report by the Head of Year at their discretion. If students are consistently late, a letter will be sent to parents/carers by the pastoral team. If lateness persists, a letter will inform parents/carers that this is not acceptable and they may be invited to meet with the Education Welfare Officer, or the pastoral team to address the concern. Punctuality is a requirement of the Education Act and legal proceedings may be taken to ensure that this is complied with.

Rewarding Attendance

At the academy, a culture of good attendance is encouraged. Individual attendance will be regularly monitored and rewarded as the academy deems appropriate.

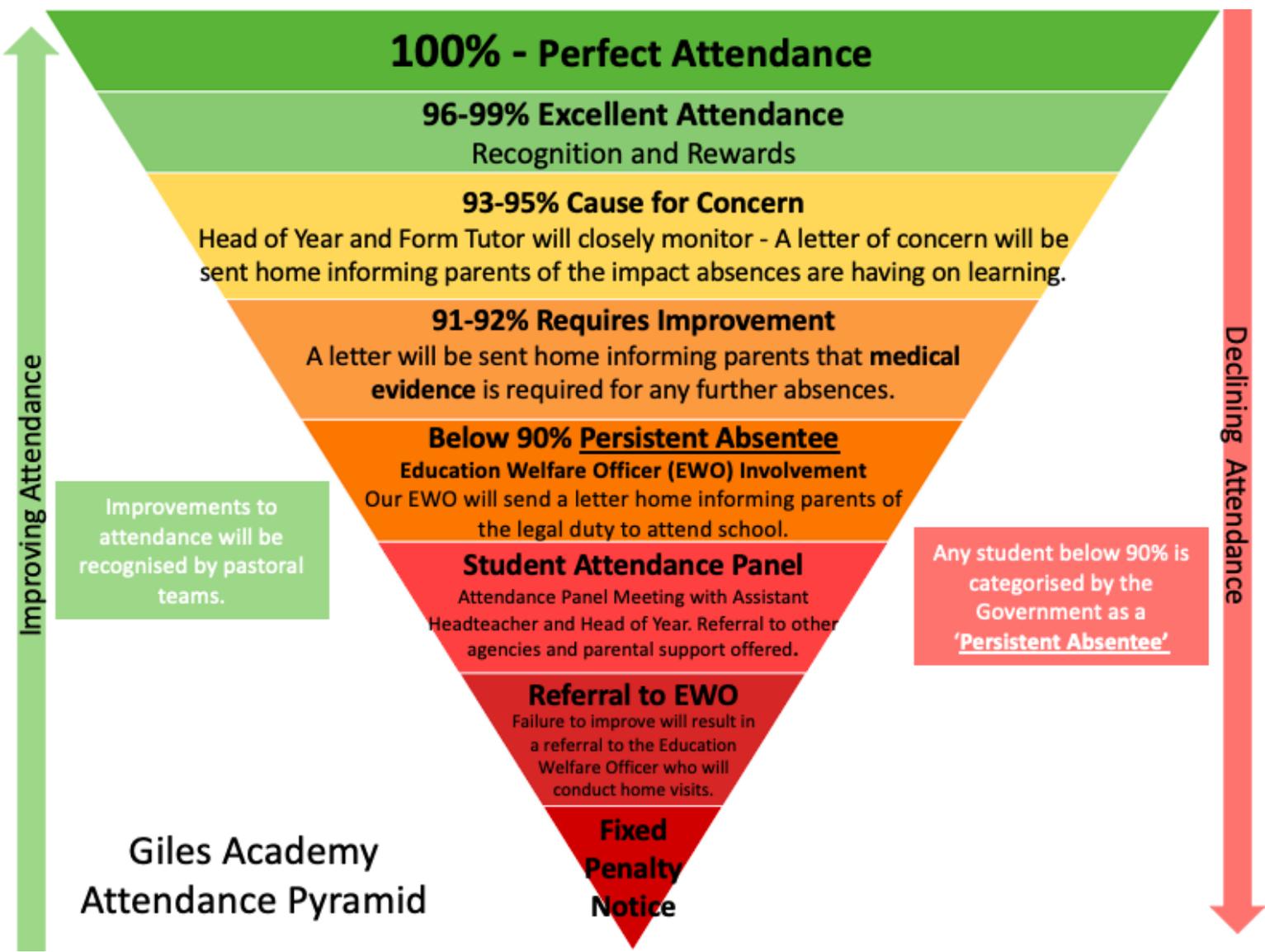
The following are examples of the methods of rewarding attendance used by the academy:

- ✓ Verbal praise
- ✓ Recognition on year group displays
- ✓ Recognition in Head of Year letter
- ✓ Priority Canteen Passes
- ✓ Attendance certificates
- ✓ Improved attendance certificates
- ✓ Recognition letters sent home
- ✓ Rewards trips
- ✓ Celebratory meeting with the Academy Headteacher

Responding to Non-Attendance

Attendance is regularly monitored by the academy. The academy will quickly and effectively respond to periods of non-attendance. Many cases of non-attendance can be resolved through effective partnerships between parents, students, staff and external agencies. However, if non-attendance cannot be resolved, or parents actively prevent, or fail to ensure that their children access education, legal sanctions will be considered.

Giles Academy use the following process to respond to attendance concerns.



***Student Attendance Panel:**

The attendance panel meeting consists of a combination of any of the following members of staff; Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Progress Co-ordinator and Head of Upper/Lower School. If the parents/carers do not attend the panel without prior explanation, then the meeting will take place in their absence. The meeting aims to identify and solve the problems that are preventing the learner from attending the academy. The parent/carer will be offered an early help assessment in addition to the attendance improvement plan to provide support to the learner. This will be monitored and reviewed after an agreed period of time. This agreement to improve attendance, and provide the support agreed on during the attendance panel meeting. If there is no improvement in attendance, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who will conduct planned and unplanned home visits. If following this, there continues to be no further improvement in attendance, the case may be referred to Lincolnshire County Council for legal proceedings to be considered and a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued.

Fixed Penalty Notice

A Fixed Penalty Notice is a strategy used by schools to address the unacceptable levels of attendance of children at their school under the following legislation:

- **Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 places upon parents a duty to ensure that their child receives efficient full-time education either by regular attendance at school or otherwise**
- **Where a child is a registered learner at school and the parent fails to ensure that child's regular attendance at school the parent is liable to be prosecuted for a criminal offence under Section 444 of the Education Act**
- **In cases where this duty is not being fulfilled, Section 444B of the Education Act empowers the Local Authority to issue a Fixed Penalty of either £60.00 or £120.00**

Please note: A Fixed Penalty Notice can also be issued if your child is seen in a public place within the first 5 days of an exclusion from school. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 makes it a duty for parents in relation to learner's subject to a fixed period or permanent exclusion to ensure that their child is not present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification, during the first five days of any such exclusion. If a child is present in a public place during this period of time, the parent may be guilty of an offence for which they can be prosecuted by the Local Authority before a magistrate's court or issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice.

Where a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child at a school at which they are a registered pupil or other educational provision made for them, then the parent may be guilty of an offence under **Section 444 of the Education Act 1996**. A penalty notice can be issued in cases of **unauthorised** absence. A penalty notice will be issued to **each parent*** liable for the offence or offences.

*For the purposes of this attendance policy a 'parent' means all natural parents whether they are married or not; and includes any person having parental responsibility for a child (a person under 18 years of age) who, although not the child's natural parent, has care of that child.

The following criteria could apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued:

- At least 10 sessions lost to unauthorised absence by the student in any six week period, and where there are further unauthorised absences following the issue of the formal warning letter.
- Late arrival after the close of registration, on 10 occasions in any six week period
- Unauthorised leave of absence in term time

In the case where a fixed penalty notice is appropriate, you will receive a formal written warning from the academy and local authority informing you of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued. In the same letter, a period of 15 school days will be set within which the pupil must have **no unauthorised** absence. A penalty notice will be issued if full-time attendance has not been achieved in this time.

Holidays During Term Time

Following amendments to The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, removing references to 'holiday' from school and extended leave of absence as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days (i.e. the previous arrangement whereby schools could grant up to 10 days authorised absence). As a result, no parent or carer has a right to withdraw a student from the Academy to go on holiday during term-time without the sole permission of the Academy Headteacher and Governing Body. Only in '**circumstances deemed exceptional**', will absences of any length of time (up to a maximum of 10 days) will be granted. **Please ensure that you are granted Leave of Absence by the Headteacher in writing before booking your holiday.**

The aim of the Academy is to work with parents and carers to ensure our students achieve their potential. We would, therefore, ask for your support in improving Academy attendance by ensuring that such requests for holidays in term-time are made only in **exceptional circumstances**.

The process for requesting a Leave of Absence is as follows:

1. The parent or carer **must provide a written letter** to the Headteacher, giving the Academy at least two full weeks' notice (prior to the start date of the requested leave of absence). The letter must include:
 - a. Start-Date
 - b. End-Date
 - c. Date the student will be returning to school
 - d. Explanation of the **exceptional circumstances**.
2. The Academy considers the request, checking legislation and government guidance, including what constitutes 'exceptional circumstances', and reasons for authorising/not authorising Leave of Absence.
3. The Academy may contact the parent/carer if additional information is necessary.
4. After consideration, if the circumstances are thought to meet the requirements of 'exceptional', then the Leave of Absence will be granted. If the circumstances are not deemed to be 'exceptional', then the Headteacher will deny the request.
5. The Academy will provide a written response to the parent/carer, outlining the reasons for authorisation or refusal. All paperwork will be copied and held on file.
6. As usual, the Academy will continue to monitor the students' attendance to school.
7. The Academy will inform the Education Welfare Officer of any related unauthorised absence during the period concerned.
8. The Academy and our Education Welfare Officer will liaise to determine any necessary further course of action, which may include action towards Penalty Notice.

If a parent/carer chooses to take their child out of school during term time and it is **not** deemed to be exceptional circumstances and/or has not been approved by the School, then this will be coded as an **unauthorised absence** and a **Fixed Penalty Notice** will be issued for the period of absence. Failure to pay the Fixed Penalty will result in further legal action being taken.

Payment

If a parent pays the penalty notice within 21 days from the date it is served the sum due from the parent to discharge the penalty notice is £60. The parent can still pay the notice after 21 days, but the payment increases to £120 and this must be paid before 28 days have passed from the date of service. If a parent pays the amount due within the times set out above, then no further action will be taken against that parent for the offence on the date(s) set out in the penalty notice.

For more information about fixed penalty notices, visit www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/parents/schools/welfare/

Appendix 1 – Attendance Coding

All absence codes highlighted in red will impact on students' attendance percentage.

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Actual Meaning
/	Present (AM)	Present	In for whole session
\	Present (PM)	Present	In for whole session
B	Educated off site	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
D	Dual registration	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed)	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Out for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Approved Educational Activity	Out for whole session
#	Planned whole or partial school closure	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required	Out for whole session
Z	Pupil not on roll	Attendance not required	Out for whole session