



## Attendance & Punctuality Policy

**In school, on time, every single day!**

Garden City Academy is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children and Garden City Academy as a whole. There is a clear link between high levels of attendance and high levels of progress. We believe that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The minimum expected attendance (good) at Garden City Academy is 96% or better.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-95.9%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-94.9%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

Garden City Academy expects to work closely together in partnership with parents and carers in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all children

### Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. From September 2015 all 16 year olds will be required to continue in education or training until their 18th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, expect schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the student was present or absent. Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

### Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers whose children are registered at Garden City Academy are responsible by law for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents and Carers should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn;

- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;
- Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct and Behaviour Policy;
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings;
- Work in partnership with Garden City Academy to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- Notify Garden City Academy if their child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible on the first day of absence providing an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed – preferably in writing – when the child returns to school;
- Provide medical evidence when absence is due to sickness;
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours;
- Not book holidays during term time.

## **Children**

As part of our whole-academy approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that children:

- Ensure they are punctual, and regular attendance is maintained at above 96%.
- Attend all their lessons on time and be ready to learn.
- On those occasions that they return to school from an absence they should preferably bring a written explanation to their class teacher.
- Inform their class teacher if they are experiencing difficulties with their attendance in the first instance.

## **Responsibilities - Garden City Academy**

Garden City Academy is responsible for supporting the attendance of their children and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance. We believe early intervention is essential in dealing with issues of attendance and punctuality.

### **Garden City Academy will:**

- Work actively to maximise attendance rates – both in relation to individual children and for all children as a whole consistently applying this attendance policy across the school;
- Support parents in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of children and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance;
- Doors open at 8.45 a.m. (children should not arrive earlier than 8.30 a.m. except for Breakfast club which is from 8.00 a.m. or in Year 5 and 6 where lessons start at 8.30 a.m.);
- Complete attendance registers at the start of the school day and at the start of the afternoon session recording whether children are present or absent;
- Close registers at 9:15a.m. and 1.30 p.m. each day; children who arrive late to school will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence;
- Differentiate in the registers between absence that is authorised and absence that is unauthorised (see below);
- Reward good and improving attendance and punctuality with praise, attendance certificates and the class rewards scheme. Good attendance is currently considered to be above 96%;
- Work with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our children received all the support available to achieve good attendance and will demonstrate a full commitment to integrated working by:
  - Using the Family First Assessment
  - Working with the County Attendance Team
  - Sharing information
  - Working with other agencies and being part of 'teams around the family'.

*See Appendix A for Governor and Staff responsibilities relating to the management of attendance*

## **Understanding Types of Absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised.

### **Authorised Absence**

There may be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- The child is absent with leave as authorised by the Headteacher;
- The child is ill and medical evidence has been recorded;
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child parent belongs;
- Garden City Academy at which the child is registered is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority for any of the following:
  - The child's transport to and from school
  - Boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school
  - Enabling the child to become a registered child at a school nearer to his/her home;
- Is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return;
- There is a family bereavement (up to a maximum of 2 days).

### **Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. The academy will then require medical evidence such as an appointment card or a prescription paper.

If a child has had sickness or diarrhea they may come back to school 48 hours after the last episode if parents/carers think they are well enough.

Additionally, the academy may wish to refer to the school nursing service where there are health concerns or if there is a view that illness is being used to cover other reasons for absence. The academy may also wish to seek the advice of the family GP, having first discussed the matter with parents/carers to seek their permission to do this.

### **Medical or dental appointments**

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of the appointment day as possible.

### **Religious observance**

Garden City Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parent/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping, birthdays
- Looking after other younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Truancy
- Haircut

- To get new shoes or uniform

### **Persistent Absence**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' at Garden City Academy when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason but will be tracked from 4% absence (below 96%). Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's full support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given for absence, thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

### **Term Time Leave of Absence**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that term time and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing using the appropriate form – ask at school office, to the Headteacher (at least 4 weeks in advance of the leave being taken).

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The Headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher's decision is final on whether the request and the length of absence is approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the Headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

We will not agree any absence during term time under the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods
- When a child's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

### **Child Missing in Education (CME)**

Although we will follow the flow chart of attendance first response (Appendix C), If a child is missing from Garden City Academy for 5 days or more with no explanation CME tracking will begin. Garden City Academy has a safeguarding duty of care to ensure the safety of its children. If a child is missing with no explanation for 10 days a Child Missing in Education referral will be made to Children's Services.

### **Following up Absence and Improving Attendance**

Good attendance and punctuality will form part of celebration assemblies and will be promoted by class teachers throughout Garden City Academy on a daily basis. High attendance is celebrated for children through the use of half termly certificates along with a raffle draw at the end of the week for those pupils on time each day. Half termly rewards for the classes with the highest attendance across the school will be given.

A percentage showing the term's attendance for each child will be sent home to parents/carers via reporting procedures. Attendance will also be discussed with parents/carers at each parents evening and whenever there is a cause for concern raised from the monitoring of attendance (below 96% attendance).

Garden City Academy will, on the first day of absence of any child (where parents/carers have not already contacted the school) contact parents/carers to ask for the reason their child is not at school, following the flow charts in Appendix C.

No absence will be authorised for sickness without medical evidence unless sent home by the school.

Only the Headteacher can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent/carer has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to act upon it.

Holidays will in most cases not be authorised.

Garden City Academy will work with the attendance improvement officers to schools to enforce regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents/carers to meet their respective responsibilities.

Garden City Academy is required by the Local Authority, Hertfordshire County Council, to alert the Attendance Improvement Officer of any child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly.

Where Garden City Academy has identified a pattern of poor attendance (either authorised or unauthorised) and/or punctuality that is causing concern, Garden City Academy will ask the Attendance Improvement Officer to intervene and assist both the school and parents/carers to improve attendance and/or punctuality.

If a child who is registered at Garden City Academy, fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that child's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action.

In addition, Garden City Academy will make use of Fixed penalty notices for unauthorised absences which are above 10 days across 1.5 terms:

- The Penalty notice will be issued via the Local Authority on the advice of and at the discretion of the Headteacher;
- The Fixed Penalty Fine will be **£60** per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. This will rise to **£120** per parent, per child if paid between 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid the Local Authority may prosecute at a fine of **£1,000**.
- The Attendance Improvement Team sees Fixed Penalty Notices as an effective part of Garden City Academy's plan to improve attendance and reduce unauthorised absences.

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### **Punctuality**

Persistent lateness disadvantages children, as they miss out on valuable teaching and learning time; lateness is also disruptive to the children already involved in lessons.

Gates open at **8.30 a.m** and school starts at **8:45 a.m**.

If children arrive after **8:50 a.m**, they are late.

Parents/Carers must:

- Go to the office and sign in their child/ren. A note will be made of the time and reason for lateness.

If a child arrives after the close of registers (9:20 a.m) they are given a mark "U" for health and safety reasons, but are regarded by law as being absent, unless an authorised reason is provided. If a child persistently arrives after the close of register the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

## Appendix A

### Governing Body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff;
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance;
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff;
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year;
- Take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site;
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff;
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

### School Leadership Team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to children and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that children are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues;
- Ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job;
- Report to the governing body *each term* and the lead governor for attendance *half-termly* on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively;
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend;
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

### Attendance Lead

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school has a designated Attendance Lead who has responsibility for the monitoring of children's absences. The Attendance Lead will:

- Contribute to raising achievement at Garden City Academy by improving school attendance.

- Oversee the school's attendance procedures, ensuring that official registers are accurately maintained and attendance trends monitored.
- In conjunction with the Headteacher, regularly monitor attendance patterns. Children causing concern are identified, discussed and strategies for improving attendance are employed.
- Promote positive attitudes for children and families towards education and to ensure that parent/carers are made fully aware of their statutory responsibilities.
- Make contact and where necessary meet with families to assess the reasons impacting on the attendance of individual children, facilitating their return or access to regular full time education provision.
- Reduce levels of unauthorised absence, persistent absence and poor punctuality and reflect the policies and values of Garden City Academy.

### **Administration staff**

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information using the correct codes.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.
- Ensuring the Absence/Late Book is completed.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made, using the first response flow charts
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers and reporting concerns to the Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

### **Education Welfare Officer**

The school has a designated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who is responsible for working with the school to ensure that all children are attending school regularly and on time. The EWO will:

- Have regular meetings with Senior Leaders. These meetings are set at the start of each term.
- Liaise with the school regarding concerns about attendance percentages.
- Follow up all referrals made by the school by contacting the families concerned.
- Make home visits where necessary.
- Report back any action taken.
- Collate evidence of continued absences or lateness.
- Follow the Local Authority policy in monitoring attendance and punctuality.

This policy should be reviewed annually.

Reviewed by: Rachael Stevenson

Headteacher

Date: 19<sup>th</sup> November 2021

Ratified by Governors: 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021

Review date: by End of 2022



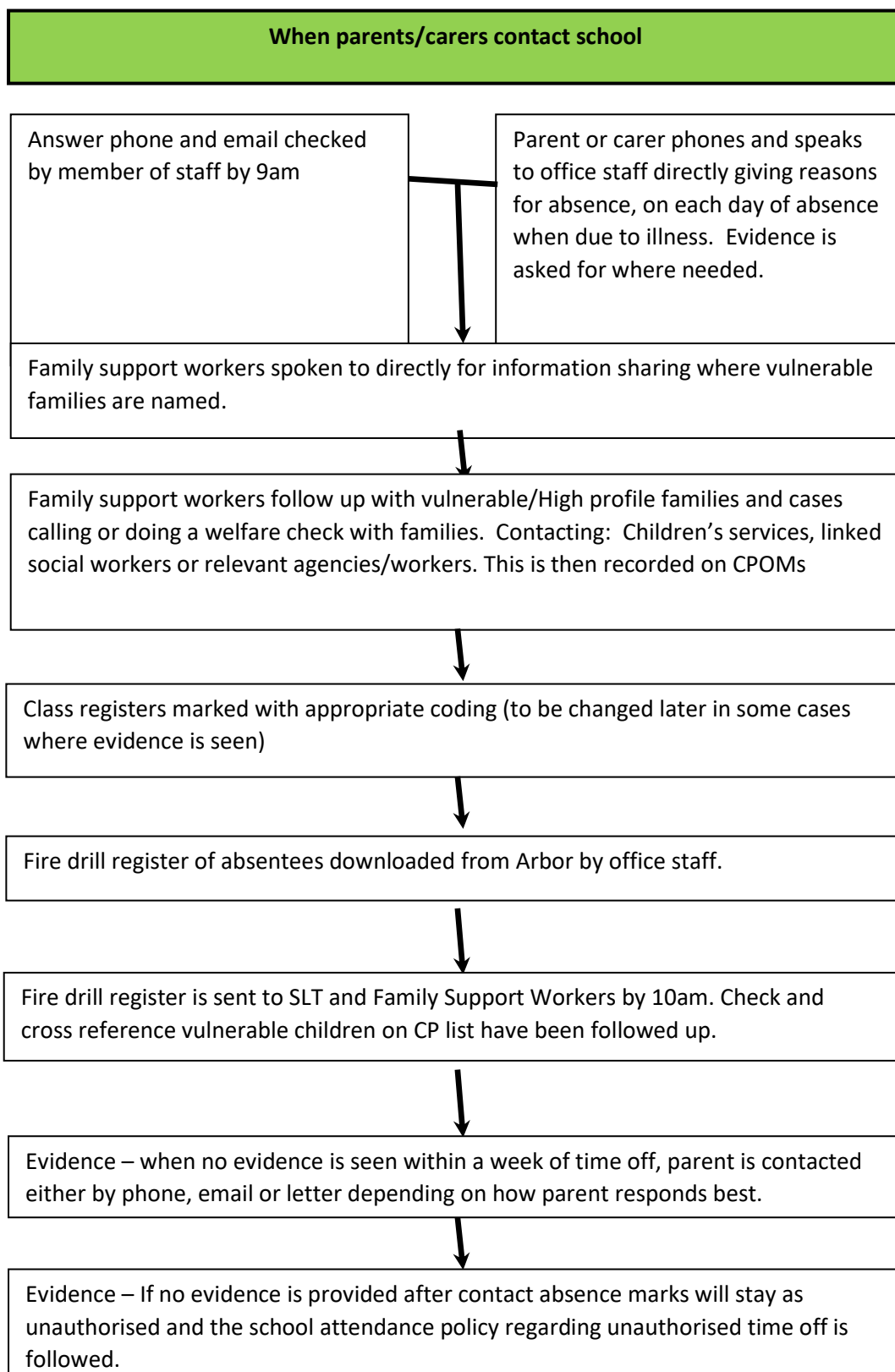
<b>Key to Codes</b>	
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
<b>C</b>	Other authorised circumstances
<b>D</b>	Dual registration
<b>E</b>	Excluded
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (not agreed)
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)
<b>I01</b>	Illness
<b>I02</b>	Confirmed case of COVID
<b>J</b>	Interview
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised Abs
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip
<b>W</b>	Work experience
<b>#</b>	Planned whole or partial school closure
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
<b>x/x01</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence or other COVID related absences
<b>x02</b>	COVID Symptoms
<b>Z</b>	Child not on roll
<b>-</b>	All should attend / No mark recorded

## Appendix B

### Attendance Register Codes

## Appendix C

### Attendance first response



#### **Contact by parents can be made by:**

- 1/ Phone – a voice message can be left at any time
- 2/ Admin email address
- 3/ Arbor

## Child absent with no parental contact

Class teachers register children by 9am

Fire drill register of absentees downloaded from Arbor by office staff by 9.30am.

Office staff, take the fire drill register to each class to double check for absentees in case any mistakes on registers have been made

Registers are amended by office staff if required, especially where children come in after this time.

An Arbor message is sent to parents of absentees. With the exception of vulnerable families in some cases phone calls will be made by family support workers instead.

Where no contact from parent's/carers has been made by 10am the office phones the families to find out where children are and ask them to bring in evidence where appropriate.

Where the 1<sup>st</sup> contact cannot be contacted additional emergency contacts are called.

If nobody can be contacted and especially in the case of our vulnerable families, a welfare check would be made on the same day. In some instances Children's services or the police maybe contacted especially where additional safeguarding concerns are present. Communication to be recorded on CPOMs. For all other families a welfare check will be requested on day 3 of absence with no contact.

Where a child is missing for 5 consecutive days families are continued to be contacted daily and Hertfordshire CME procedures are followed. Garden City Academy CME tracking sheet to be completed.