

Attendance

Dear Parents and carers,

We are grateful for the support we receive from parents and good attendance will ensure that your child can reach their full potential. To achieve this, your child needs to attend school every day. Every school in Sandwell strives to achieve a minimum target of 96% attendance. Evidence shows there is a clear link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement. The Government has stated that once a child's attendance figure reaches 90% they are classed as persistently absent.

All schools must have an identified attendance lead. At Great Bridge, the attendance lead is myself.

- Miss H Hale - Attendance Lead
- Mrs J Williams – Attendance admin support
- Mrs L Evans – Parent Support Advisor

How to report an absence

Parents can use our email address GB.Enquiry@greatbridge.sandwell.sch.uk, telephone school on 0121 557 7436 or text via parent mail 0121 285 1263

If your child does not attend school and we have not received an explanation, a member of the team will phone home to make some enquiries. If we are unable to establish response or contact we may make a home visit as a matter of safeguarding.

Monitoring and early identification are essential in addressing poor school attendance. At Great Bridge we will use standard letters that inform parents of their child's current attendance. The team meet regularly to review attendance and letters are issued at set times during each school term.

How we manage attendance

Our minimum expectation for attendance is 96%. Details on how we manage attendance that falls below this level is outlined below.

Letter 1 - 95% and below letter is an informative letter advising parents that attendance has fallen below school/national expected average. It visually explains the impact of poor attendance.

Letter 2 - 93% and below letter is a follow up letter, which identifies that there has been further deterioration and informs parents that it is a matter of urgency to improve attendance. Further unauthorised absence may be referred to the LA for consideration of a Fixed Penalty Notice or legal proceedings. (In line with LA referral criteria and government expectations).

Letter 3 - 90% and below letter is a letter that identifies the student is persistently absent and that the matter could be passed to the Local Authority for enforcement proceedings. This letter also asks parents to come in and discuss any barrier to their child's attendance.

If we have **serious concerns** about your child's attendance, this includes lateness, you will be asked to come in and discuss any barriers.

Please be assured that we will always strive to ensure your child receives the help and support they need to ensure a successful year. In order for this to happen, it is important for you to play your part by maintaining good communication between school and home and we would like therefore to remind you of the following:

- Please report any changes to personal information including address or contact numbers.
- Please remember to report any medical issues including medication.
- If your child has ongoing medical conditions or has a medical appointment, medical evidence is needed so that we are in a position to authorise absence and support your child.
- Please ensure your child attends regularly, on time each day.

Holidays in term time

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. Leave of absence shall not be granted unless the parents can prove 'exceptional circumstances'. All applications must be made in writing at least 20 school days prior to the requested leave date. Please remember that taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence.

If a leave of absence/holiday has not been received, our procedure will be to attempt contact through your child's emergency details. If we are unable to make contact with you or you have claimed that your child is absent through illness and we believe you may have taken leave without prior consent, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The matter will then be referred to the LA for consideration of a fixed penalty fine or legal proceedings.

Safeguarding

It is important we know children and their parents are safe and well. In the past where schools have not chased up the reasons as to why children are off school, it has then transpired that there have been tragic circumstances around these absences, eg illness of a parent and a child unable to seek help.

No response or clear reason for absence can lead to schools safeguarding procedures where we will contact all emergency numbers, undertake a home visit and if no contact is made we may contact the Police and Children's Services.

Is my child too ill for school?

It can be tricky deciding whether or not to keep your child off school when they're unwell. But there are [government guidelines](#) for schools and nurseries that say when children should be kept off school and when they shouldn't. The symptoms for covid are very similar to a cold so we would recommend your child takes a lateral flow test to rule out covid and return to school if the test is negative and if they are feeling well enough to attend.

If your child has tested positive for covid, they must follow current guidelines, which at the moment is to self isolate for 10 days. Since September 2021, a child's absence due to covid will be recorded as 'I' for illness. Therefore, this will be included in their absence data. We want parents to follow Government guidelines but self-isolation will affect children's absent percentage. This is out of the schools control.

If you do keep your child at home, please contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and every day thereafter until your child is well enough to return to school, either by sending us an email to GB.Enquiry@greatbridge.sandwell.sch.uk, telephone the school office on 01215571526 or text 0121 285 1263. If your child is well enough to go to school but has an infection that could be passed on, such as a cold sore or head lice, let their teacher know.