



# GREAT BALLARD

## Attendance Policy

Date Approved		Autumn 2025
Date of review		Autumn 2025
Date of next review		Autumn 2026
Policy Manager		Senior Deputy
Review Cycle		Annually (but revised whenever required throughout the year)
Signed	Mrs. Alice Hardwick Senior Deputy	
	Mr. M King Headmaster	

## Introduction

At Great Ballard, we believe that regular attendance is crucial for students' academic success and personal development. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly. Your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

This Policy sets out how together we will achieve great attendance. This policy outlines our approach to managing attendance in alignment with guidelines provided by West Sussex County Council and current government guidance – Working Together to improve School Attendance [here](#)

The school's attendance champion is **Dan Joseph** contactable on [d.joseph@greatballard.co.uk](mailto:d.joseph@greatballard.co.uk), and on 01243 814236.

The attendance champion's role is to promote and support student attendance. They also have oversight of absence data, and when patterns and trends in student absence develop, the champion and wider team are there to support students and families.

## 1. Aims and Objectives

Every school is required by law to maintain an Attendance Register and pupils must be registered twice a day: once at the beginning of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. The school uses an electronic registration system and the Department for Education national codes to record attendance and absence are used. School attendance registers are carefully monitored to identify any trends.

Our aims are;

- 1.1. To maintain compliant and completed school registers.
- 1.2. Ensure all students attend school regularly and punctually.
- 1.3. Promote a supportive learning environment.
- 1.4. Establish clear procedures for handling absences.

## 2. Attendance Expectations

2.1. Students are expected to:

- 2.1.1. Attend school every day during term time.
- 2.1.2. Arrive on time and be prepared for lessons.

2.2. Punctuality

- 2.2.1. Students must arrive between 08:00-08:15 and be registered by their tutors before heading to lessons for 08:35.
- 2.2.2. Late arrivals must sign in at the school reception and provide a reason.

2.3. Signing In and Out

- 2.3.1. In the Pre-prep School, all students leaving the school site because of a medical appointment or an approved absence are required to be signed out by parents.
- 2.3.2. Students in the Prep and Senior Schools must sign out in Reception, and sign in again if they return to school that same day.

#### 2.4. Illness During School Hours

- 2.4.1. In the Pre-prep school, if a student feels ill during the day they should notify a member of staff, or, if in the Prep/ Senior School, they should report to reception to be assessed.
- 2.4.2. If a student is too ill to remain at school the parent or guardian will be contacted by the school nurse. Students must not contact their parents directly and ask to be taken home. This information will be communicated to the relevant teaching staff.

## 4. Absence Procedures for Parent/Carers

### 3. If your child is absent, it is your responsibility to:

- 3.1.1. Contact the school before 8:30am on the first day of absence.
- 3.1.2. Use the online form on My School Portal (preferred) or Phone – 01243 814236
- 3.1.3. Provide written evidence to the school office explaining the absence is preferred.
- 3.1.4. For extended absences, a GP's certification may be required.

### 3.2. If your child is absent, we will:

- 3.2.1. We'll attempt to contact you on the first day of absence.
- 3.2.2. If absences persist, your child's tutor will reach out to discuss.
- 3.2.3. If attendance falls below 90% (excluding authorized absences), we'll notify you.
- 3.2.4. Continued concerns may lead to a meeting with the tutor, deputy head, or welfare team member.

## 4. Authorised Absences

- 4.1. Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other reasons the school deems to be unavoidable. Students will not be allowed to leave school for medical appointments without providing evidence as per absence procedure.
- 4.2. You must get permission from the Headteacher if you are planning to take your child out of school during term time. Your child may be allowed to miss school for:
  - 4.2.1. Family events, such as funerals, weddings, etc.
  - 4.2.2. Pre-approved educational activities.
- 4.3. If you do not get permission and you take your child out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

## 5. Unauthorised Absences

- 5.1. Unauthorised absences are when a pupil has been marked in the school attendance register as being absent from school without authority. It is only a headteacher who can authorise absence for any reason from school. Unauthorised absences are marked in the register with 'O' or 'N' codes. These might include:
  - 5.1.1. Persistent late arrival at school after the register has been taken.
  - 5.1.2. Non-essential appointments or activities during school hours.
  - 5.1.3. A holiday in term time, which has not been authorised by the headteacher. The Government has directed that headteachers may now only grant leave for a holiday in term time where there are exceptional circumstances.
  - 5.1.4. Truancy.
- 5.2. When a child is recorded as absent from school without authority their parent(s) can be held accountable for an offence under S.444 of the Education Act 1996. When unauthorised absence occurs, the school has the option to refer it to the local authority to consider intervention, dependent on the length and the reason for the absence. This can be by one of two pathways:
  - 5.2.1. A request for the use of a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)
  - 5.2.2. A request for the allocation of an Investigating Officer.
- 5.3. Referrals are reviewed and acted upon by Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PE:I), who finalise which pathway of intervention is to be taken. All cases referred to PE:I are considered on an individual, case-by-case basis, reviewing the submission made by the school. PE:I must be satisfied that an offence under the Education Act 1996 has occurred and then decide the form of intervention to be instigated, if any.

## 6. Requesting Leave

- 6.1. Headteachers have been directed by the Government not to authorise any absence from school unless there is an 'exceptional' circumstance. You must get permission from the Headteacher or Deputy Heads of school if you want to take your child out of school for a holiday in term time.
- 6.2. All parents considering making a request for a holiday or absence for recreational reasons in term time are asked to consider the following points:
  - 6.2.1. The school year generally has between 170 and 180 days. Term dates are published sufficiently in advance to allow parents to make use of remaining days in the calendar year for holiday purposes
  - 6.2.2. Missed lessons place pupils at an academic disadvantage and may have unsettling effects, both socially and academically. Other pupils may be disadvantaged due to the disruption caused by absence and it is always the responsibility of the pupil to catch up with any work that is missed.
  - 6.2.3. If the request is not authorised then the period of absence will be recorded as unauthorised in the school register and the pupil's report. In most circumstances the
  - 6.2.4. School may ask to meet with parents to discuss any unaccounted periods of absence.

- 6.3. The school understands that on occasions there are extenuating reasons that a student may need to be away from school and the Headteacher or Deputy Heads of school will provide authorisation where there are compassionate grounds. Parents are asked to provide as much advance notification and detail so that each request can be considered carefully
- 6.4. Parents must submit their leave request at least two weeks in advance.
- 6.5. The Headteacher with support from the SLT will evaluate requests based on the student's attendance record and educational impact. Whilst it is preferred that absence in term time is avoided, each request will be considered individually and decisions made based on a number of criteria including:
  - 6.5.1. The stage the pupil has reached in their educational career
  - 6.5.2. The pupil's academic record
  - 6.5.3. The unique nature of the absence
  - 6.5.4. The amount of education that will be missed
  - 6.5.5. If the request is to participate in a co-curricular activity such as sport or drama, the level of representation will be considered.

## 7. Monitoring and Managing Attendance

- 7.1. Attendance is monitored daily. Great Ballard school will undertake regular data analysis to:
  - 7.1.1. Both identify and provide immediate additional support to students and / or student cohorts that need it.
  - 7.1.2. Look at historic and emerging patterns and trends across the school and develop strategies to address them.
- 7.2. We will carry out the following analyses.
  - 7.2.1. Monitoring and analysing weekly attendance/ punctuality patterns and trends, including whether there are particular issues for some students on certain days.
  - 7.2.2. Patterns of attendance within sessions, to ensure that all pupils are attending all timetabled lessons.
  - 7.2.3. Half-termly, termly and full-year data analysis of patterns and trends, including analysis of pupils and cohorts, identifying patterns in use of certain codes, days where attendance is typically poor and subjects with low lesson attendance.
  - 7.2.4. Benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against Trust local, regional and national data.
- 7.3. Persistent absenteeism will be addressed through meetings with parents and, if necessary, referrals to local authority services.
- 7.4. The school nurse alongside attendance champion Mr Joseph has oversight of this absence data. Where student absence is persistent, the school will hold formal conversations with parents and students to ensure that everything is being done to support the return to school of the child.

## 8. Intervention and Support

8.1. Great Ballard School recognizes that some pupils may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These barriers can include:

- 8.1.1. Long-term medical conditions
- 8.1.2. Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)
- 8.1.3. Mental health challenges, including Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

8.2. Understanding Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

- 8.2.1.1. At Great Ballard, we take a **supportive and proactive** approach to EBSA, ensuring that affected pupils receive appropriate interventions rather than punitive measures.
- 8.2.1.2. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) is a term referring to reduced or non-attendance at school by a child or young person. Rather than the term 'school refusal', the term EBSA recognises that this avoidance has its source in emotional, mental health or wellbeing issues.
- 8.2.1.3. A growing body of analysis suggests that EBSA should not be thought of as a deliberate act of defiance, but instead as a complex issue inextricably linked with mental health and wellbeing.

8.3. Early Intervention Strategies

- 8.3.1. Early intervention strategies will be employed for students with attendance issues.
- 8.3.2. Support may include counselling, academic assistance, home visits and collaboration with external agencies.

8.4. Available Support

- 8.4.1. The school provides a **range of support options** to assist pupils struggling with attendance, including:
- 8.4.2. Counselling and wellbeing support through school-based pastoral care
- 8.4.3. Academic adjustments to reduce stress-related barriers
- 8.4.4. Home visits and check-ins for pupils experiencing severe anxiety
- 8.4.5. Collaboration with external agencies, including local authority services, educational psychologists, and healthcare professionals
- 8.4.6. Our aim is to **reintegrate pupils into school in a sustainable and compassionate way**, ensuring they feel safe, supported, and able to thrive.

## 9. Legal Responsibilities

Under UK law, school attendance is compulsory. Parents/carers have a **legal duty** to ensure their child attends school regularly unless there is a valid reason for absence.

Failure to comply with attendance requirements may lead to:

- **Formal warnings**
- **Fines and penalty notices** issued by the local authority
- **Legal proceedings** if persistent non-attendance is not addressed

For further guidance, please refer to **West Sussex County Council's School Absence Guidelines:**

[West Sussex School Absences](#)

This policy will be **reviewed annually** to ensure it reflects **current legislation** and the needs of our school community.

## 10. Notes and Links

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

<https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/education-children-and-families/schools-and-colleges/school-attendance-and-behaviour/school-absences/>

<https://www.chs->

[tkat.org/351/attendancepunctuality#:~:text=Attendance%20that%20drops%20below%2095%25%20will%20be%20monitored.](https://www.chs-tkat.org/351/attendancepunctuality#:~:text=Attendance%20that%20drops%20below%2095%25%20will%20be%20monitored.)

<https://www.theregisschool.co.uk/portals/0/policies/Attendance%20Policy%20The%20Regis%20School%202023%202024.pdf>