



**Race Leys**  
Junior School

## Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Review Due: September 2026

Reviewed Annually

At Race Leys, we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils, to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin Schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Regular and punctual attendance provides the means for children to take advantage of all educational opportunities. It ensures continuity, promotes responsibility and a purpose which can be carried into adult life. A pupil who is late or absent, misses the introduction to a lesson or a new concept, causes disruption to others and is likely to have missed the instructions to the lesson, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage.

The purpose of this policy is to clearly state what our expectations are and that attendance and punctuality can only be achieved when home and school work together.

## Rationale: The Legal Framework

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend regularly.

- Regular attendance is an essential pre-requisite of effective schooling.
- The law requires that all children aged 5 to 16 years of age are required to attend full time education unless alternative provision is agreed for them.
- The state schooling system of which Race Leys Junior School is part requires attendance at school on 190 days.
- For children who are attending nursery, who are not of compulsory school age (i.e. the term after the child's fifth birthday and onwards), the expectation is that they attend every day on time. This sets out to establish a routine and patterns of attendance that is part of school life as the child progresses at Race Leys.

Race Leys Junior School will support parents to improve attendance where it is of concern.

## Registration

The governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present or absent at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. The school follows the Department for Education (DfE) guidance when coding attendance for Nursery children.

## Regular Attendance

Parents/guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise, as outlined in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996:

**'Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.**

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.’

A “parent” of a child:

“includes any person—

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him.” (Education Act 1996, s. 576)

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday.

## Prosecution

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.” (Education Act 1996, s.444)

The local authority may use legal enforcement, where it is necessary, to ensure that parents ensure their children attend school regularly.

## Penalty Notice

Local Education Authorities, Head Teachers and Police are able to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school and will do so in accordance with the local authority code of conduct relating to the issuing of penalty notices.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure a pupil’s attendance at school.

## Absence

Categories of Absence:

There are two categories of absence:

- (i) Authorised (approved)  
i.e. when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been advised by the parents of this reason
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)  
i.e. when a child is away from school without permission of the school (even if the parent has authorised the absence)  
A child arriving after the close of registers without good reason or truancy will also be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Absences can only be authorised by the Head Teacher (or designated member of staff)- parents do not have this authority.

A form which should be completed by parents to request authorisation for a school absence can be found in the appendices.

### Reporting an Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, the parent/carer (not family friends or siblings) should inform the school before 8.55am on each day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return and reason for absence.

This should be followed up in the form of a written note on return to school outlining the reasons for absence and duration of absence. Any absences for which the school have received

no explanation or when the school has reason to doubt the offered explanation will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments such as dental or medical, outside of school time and/or in school holidays. The school requests confirmation of medical appointments during school hours. Evidence may include an appointment card, letter, prescription or prescribed medication.

## Punctuality:

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, which can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability and can contribute to their feelings of discomfort.

Punctuality is a vitally important life skill that reaches into employment in later life. Pupils who are persistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. 10 minutes of lateness a day is equal to 31 hours of education being lost per academic year.

	AM Session	PM Session
Registration	8.55 am	1.00 pm
Close of Register (unauthorised late)	9.10 am	1.15 pm

The bell will be rang by SLT at 8.45am. Children are expected to line up in their classes. Teachers will collect their classes from the playground at 8.45 am. The school day officially starts at 8.55am, when the register is taken. If a child arrives after the start of registration but before the close of registers, they will be marked as late, and receive an 'L' code. If a child arrives in school after registers have closed, the child will receive a 'U' code, which is an unauthorised absence mark.

At 8.50am doors to all buildings will be closed and locked. Pupils who arrive late must enter the school via the doors to the School Reception, where the reasons for lateness will be recorded and the child will be escorted to their class by a member of staff.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a Punctuality Letter will be sent to notify a child's parents / carers of the lateness and offering them the opportunity to discuss this. If punctuality remains of concern, the child / parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss this, to enable the reasons for lateness to be understood. If appropriate, a Punctuality Action Plan will be put in place.

Where the total attendance of a child whose punctuality is of concern falls below the whole school attendance target, the Staged Approach of this policy will have precedence.

## Persistent Absences:

The government uses the term Persistent Absence to refer to absence of 10% or more, whether authorised or unauthorised.

There are good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless lessons missed cannot be repeated and 'catching up' on work is never as good as the original learning experience. Pupils who do not have persistent absence are more likely to attain their full potential at school, to stay in education after leaving school, and to enjoy other positive outcomes.

We think that everyone in our school community has a part to play in school attendance.

- The Governing Body gives strategic direction to attendance. This includes: developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance, setting any targets, planning, monitoring and reviewing attendance, and appointing a member with responsibility for attendance.  
The School has set an attendance target of 96%, and a persistent absence target of 90%.
- The Head and Senior Leaders ensure that the School's attendance is effectively managed. This includes: ensuring that accurate records are kept in line with Government guidance; evaluating whole school attendance data and individual cases where attendance is of concern; planning appropriate interventions; reporting to the Governing Body; and appointing a member of staff to lead on attendance.
- School Staff promote the school's ethos and set an example of attendance and punctuality; enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance; and work in partnership with parents to enable children to attend regularly.
- Parents are expected to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. If a child's attendance is 90% or below, he/she is regarded by the government to be a 'persistent absentee'.
- Children are expected to be on-time for lessons and ready to learn.

## Leave of Absence

· The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

### Expectations

· A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. Permission for a Leave of Absence from a school may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an authorised person).

· Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

· Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

· Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.

· When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify the parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.

· It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is their responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

· The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e the parent with whom the child normally resides.

- Where applications for Leave of Absences are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an “unauthorised” absence. Where a leave of absence is requested but additional days take either prior to or after the request, they may be considered as part of the leave of absence.
- Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as ‘unauthorised’.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council’s Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

#### Leave of Absence taken in the academic year 2024-25

The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).

- First Leave of Absence Offence: The amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
- Second Leave of Absence Offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice). A Penalty Notice will not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

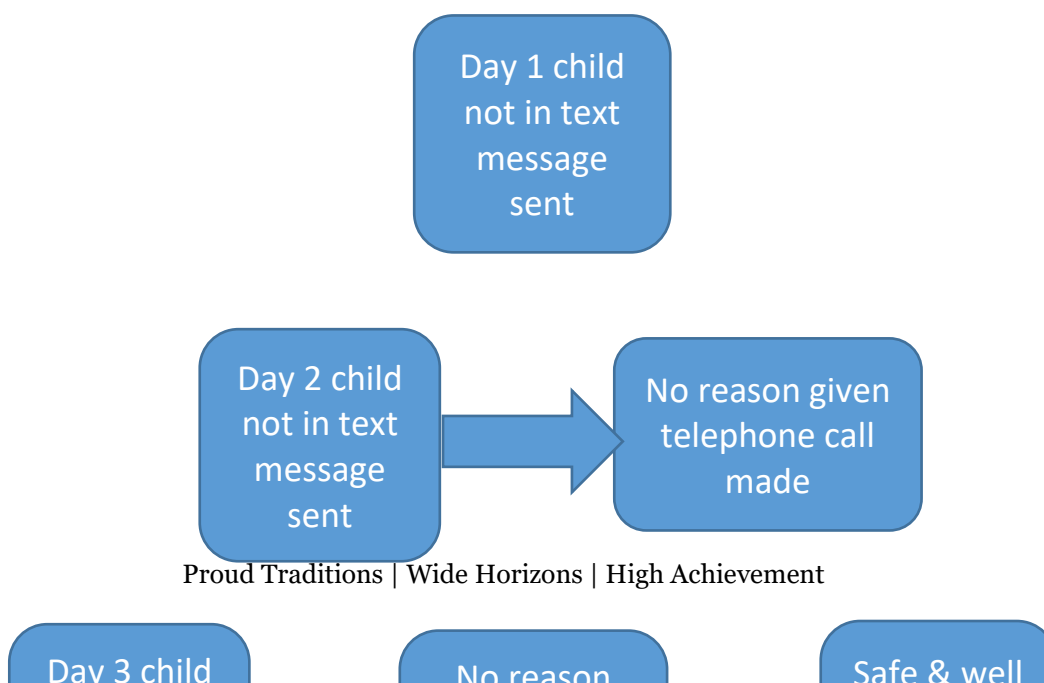
## Monitoring and Responding to Absence

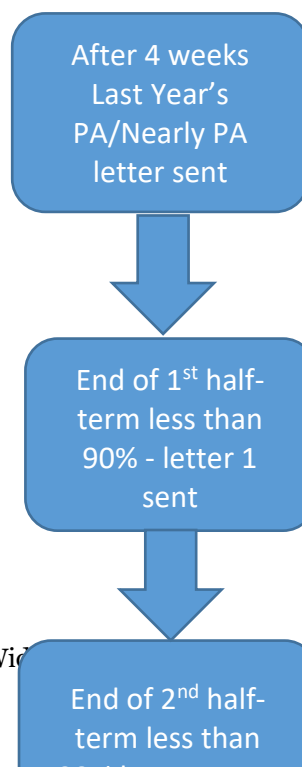
- The school is committed to the well-being and development of pupils. It would wish to consider a family’s needs and offer additional support where possible to enable children to attend regularly. Parents should approach the class teacher to arrange time to discuss attendance with the most appropriate member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties.
- A First Day text system is used to follow up pupil absence; this is followed by subsequent texts. After a period of 3 days absence, without notification, a verbal referral is made to the Inclusion Manager who makes a telephone call.
- If no notification is received following a child’s return to school, a letter is sent to Parents/Carers and they are given 5 days in which to explain a child’s absence before the absence is recorded as unauthorised. These letters are posted to the home address by Royal Mail.

- In line with Child Missing from Education procedures, absences in excess of 10 days are referred to Child Missing from Education (CME), as appropriate.
- **Weekly Monitoring:** Attendance data for all pupils is collated on a Friday afternoon of each week using the SIMs Attendance module. From this:
  - Unexplained absence letters are sent home by Royal Mail
- **Half-Termly Monitoring:** The school’s Inclusion Manager will review attendance data half-termly. Data may be evaluated against the school’s target, past performance, and in relation to specific groups and individuals. From this:
  - The Inclusion Manager will identify children whose is attendance is of concern and consider appropriate intervention in accordance with the staged approach below.
  - The Inclusion Manager will share whole school attendance data with senior leaders to enable further evaluation, planning and reporting.
- **Annual Monitoring:**
  - The Governing Body considers the annual whole school attendance alongside attendance of previous years and national statistics, to determining a challenging but realistic whole school attendance target.
  - An electronic attendance report is created for each class close to the end of the Summer Term.
  - Attendance for individual pupils for the academic year is reported to parents via the child’s annual report. It includes attendance and absence, including any unauthorised absence.

## Promoting Attendance

Excellent attendance is promoted through the consistent messages delivered in assemblies, school newsletters, PSHE lessons, pupil rewards, posters, letters home, parent information sessions, parent consultations and school reports. Attendance is everyone’s responsibility and we use every opportunity to communicate this.







**RACE LEYS JUNIOR SCHOOL**  
Barton Road, Bedworth, Warwickshire, CV12 8HG  
02476 490644  
[admin2615@welearn365.com](mailto:admin2615@welearn365.com)



27<sup>th</sup> September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer

**RE: «Child Name Percentage» %**

As we start the new school year I would like to take this opportunity to remind you of your statutory duty to ensure **your child/insert name** attends school regularly. We understand that sometimes children are genuinely unwell, however I wanted to pre warn you that this academic year school attendance remains a priority, and we need your support to improve attendance.

The Government made changes to guidelines in August of this year and these changes will see prosecution and referrals happen far quicker than in the past. Some of these changes will mean that if your child has **5 school days (10 sessions) unauthorised in 10 week period then we are obliged to consider penalty note referrals**. These do not need to be consecutive days so can be spread across the 10 weeks. Fines are £160 per parent for every pupil. (£80 if paid within 28 days)

These additional guidelines have come into place and although your child achieved over 90%, and avoided being classified as persistently absent (PA) «heshe» still achieved below the National average for attendance.

Due to this, «ChildName3» will be closely monitored for «hisorher» attendance throughout this year. However, September is a new year and we start again a fresh with our percentages. Therefore, I hope to see an improvement this year.

Every hour in school counts, every moment matters and when your child is absent it affects their learning. Inevitably they will miss information, opportunities and events. Let's make it a target to get above the National Average this year.

Please book medical appointments outside of school time. If your child has an ongoing medical condition, it is important that you contact school, so we can appropriately support your child. Where possible provide any medical evidence so school can authorise the absence.

Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. There have been several occasions where parents have taken holiday without notifying school or said their child is off due to illness. We politely request parents are honest with school as this causes a large amount of time wasted, undertaking calls, home visits and even referrals to children missing education. Holidays will not be authorised and will count towards those 5 days in 10 week threshold making fines almost certain by the authority.

We would rather work through issues together than go down a statutory route via referral to the Local Authority, as this can lead to a fixed penalty notice issued to each parent or further court action if attendance does not improve.

Therefore, as always, we urge you to work with us if there are other barriers to attendance or you have any concerns or issues that are having an impact on your child's attendance, please contact school immediately. Please remember your child's class teacher, school counsellor, our pastoral team and SLT are always on hand to chat about any worries you have. We are here to support. We are here to help because ATTENDANCE MATTERS.

Kind Regards

Sue Spencer

Inclusion Manager & Senior Attendance Champion



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Dear Parents/Carers

As we enter week 4 of the new school year I am writing to you as your child was persistently absent last academic year (government classify this as 90% and below). We understand that sometimes children are genuinely unwell, however I wanted to pre warn you that this academic year school attendance remains a priority, and we need your support to improve attendance.

The Government made changes to guidelines in August of this year and these changes will see prosecution and referrals happen far quicker than in the past. Some of these changes will mean

that if your child has **5 school days (10 sessions) unauthorised in 10 week period then we are obliged to consider penalty note referrals**. These do not need to be consecutive so can be spread across the 10 weeks. Fines are £160 per parent for every pupil. (£80 if paid within 28 days)

Last academic year our child missed **«Hours»** hours of lessons & learning. **Please, work with us to ensure that they are in school on time every day this year.**

During this academic year parents of any child who has below 96% attendance may be contacted by other support services that we offer. These will include a home visit, invitation into a meeting, a parenting contract, referral to the Local Authority due to unauthorised absence and Early Help. Attendance matters and we are here to support you and your family with attendance.

It is a legal responsibility where a parent has registered a child in school that they attend school every day the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances. Failing to attend school on a regular basis will be considered a safeguarding matter. If your child is absent, you are expected to contact school each morning. If school cannot get hold of a parent or emergency contact, a home visit may be undertaken.

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Dear Parent/Carer

**RE: «Child Name current attendance\*\*\* %. This has dropped from \*\*\*%**

Due to the decline in attendance we will now require medical evidence to support all absences. If this is not provided this could lead to a meeting with Myself and Mrs Lamb. As you know, to achieve their full potential a pupil must have regular high attendance and punctuality – our school attendance target being a minimum 96%. We regularly monitor these figures in line with our school's attendance policy.

The Government made changes to guidelines in August of this year and these changes will see prosecution and referrals happen far quicker than in the past. Some of these changes will mean that if your child has **5 school days (10 sessions) unauthorised in 10 week period then we are obliged to consider penalty note referrals**. These do not need to be consecutive days so can be spread across the 10 weeks. Fines are £160 per parent for every pupil. (£80 if paid within 28 days)

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Dear Parent/Carer

**RE: «Child Name current attendance\*\*\* %. This has dropped from \*\*\*%**

Due to the decline in attendance we would like you to attend a meeting with Myself and Mrs Lamb at \*\*\* on \*\*\*.

As you know, to achieve their full potential a pupil must have regular high attendance and punctuality – our school attendance target being a minimum 96%. We regularly monitor these figures in line with our school's attendance policy.

The Government made changes to guidelines in August of this year and these changes will see prosecution and referrals happen far quicker than in the past. Some of these changes will mean that if your child has **5 school days (10 sessions) unauthorised in 10 week period then we are obliged to consider penalty note referrals**. These do not need to be consecutive days so can be spread across the 10 weeks. Fines are £160 per parent for every pupil. (£80 if paid within 28 days)

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Dear Parent/Carer

**RE: Child Name Congratulations. Current attendance\*\*\* %. This has improved from \*\*\*%.**

As you know, to achieve their full potential a pupil must have regular high attendance and punctuality – our school attendance target being a minimum 96%. We regularly monitor these figures in line with our school's attendance policy.

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Appendix

## LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME UPDATED INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

The Supreme Court has clarified the law on unauthorised leave, including holidays, during term time (*Platt v Isle of Wright 2017*). The Supreme Court has made clear that attending school ‘regularly’ means that the children must attend school on every day that they are required to do so. As such, the parents of any child who is absent from school without authorisation for any length of time are likely to be considered as committing an offence under s444 of the Education Act 1996.

The law states a leave of absence may only be granted by a school if an application is made in advance and if it considers there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.

Schools must judge each application individually considering the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind each request.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school’s discretion. Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation would not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent from school.

When making an application for Leave of Absence parents are advised to give sufficient information and time to allow the Head teacher the opportunity to consider all the exceptional circumstances and to notify parents of their decision. The school may also request further information on the application and supporting documentation where appropriate.

It is advised that if the resident parent has not received notification or a response regarding the leave of absence application, it is the parents’ responsibility to ascertain if the leave is authorised prior to the start of the leave.

The school can only consider Leave of Absence requests which are made by the ‘resident’ parent ie the parent with whom the child normally resides.

Where applications for leave of absence are made in advance and refused, the child is expected to be in school on the dates set out in the application. If the child is absent during that period, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Where a leave of absence is requested, but additional days taken either prior to or after the request may be considered as part of the leave of absence.

Leave of Absences which are not made in advance cannot be authorised in line with legislation. This will result in the absence being recorded as ‘unauthorised’.

All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service, part of Warwickshire County Council. Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Warwickshire County Council’s Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices and in the first instance, as an alternative to prosecution proceedings.

**The law relating to Penalty Notices changed with effect from 19 August 2024. Therefore, Penalty Notices issued for Leave of Absence taken from September 2024 will be issued in accordance with the updated legislation.**

- Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices – 4 in total).
  - First Leave of Absence offence: The Penalty Notice amount of £160 to be paid within 28 days, this is reduced to £80 each child if paid within 21 days.
  - Second Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): The amount of £160 paid within 28 days. No reduced amount.
- Payment plans will not be offered and/or payments received outside of the 28 day period will not be accepted. Where a penalty notice expires unpaid the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider criminal prosecution.
- Third Leave of Absence offence within a 3 year period (from the date of issue of the first penalty notice): A penalty notices will be not be issued and the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

**Your child’s progress academically as well as socially is our shared priority.**