

# Garden Fields J.M.I School

Townsend Drive  
St. Albans  
Herts  
AL3 5RL  
Telephone 01727 890440



*Growing Hearts and Minds*

**Headteacher : Mr A. Farrugia**

- ◆ E-mail : [admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk](mailto:admin@gardenfields.herts.sch.uk)
- ◆ Website : [www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk](http://www.gardenfields.herts.sch.uk)

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Dear Parents,

## **Re: School Attendance and Punctuality**

Staff at Garden Fields School want our pupils to enjoy school and achieve their potential. We are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance and punctuality. Our attendance target is 97% and our aim is for our pupils/students to exceed this level, enabling them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and improve their future life chances. We would appreciate your support to ensure that all our pupils achieve this.

The Garden Fields School Attendance Policy can be found on the school's website. As part of this policy, the school would like to keep parents informed regarding attendance and will contact parents in writing where we have a concern.

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend the school at which they are registered, regularly, punctually and ready to learn. Children with attendance under 90% are classified by the Department for Education as Persistent Absentees.

If your child is absent from school, please contact us with the reason on the first day of absence. It is the Head Teacher's decision as to whether this absence is authorised or not. In most cases, absence is genuine and marked as authorised on the register

The school day consists of 2 sessions, the morning and the afternoon. Registers are taken twice daily at 8:50am and either 1pm or 1:30pm depending on the year group your child is in. In the mornings, the registers close at 9 am. Should your child arrive after the register has been closed, this will be marked as an unauthorised absence unless a reasonable explanation is provided. The school will follow up lateness, unauthorised absence and pupils with low levels of attendance. Our registers are inspected regularly by the Attendance Improvement Officer to ensure parents fulfil their legal responsibility of making sure their child(ren) attend school regularly and punctually.

Ongoing poor attendance and/or punctuality may result in the school making a request to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice (explanation attached) or a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer when court proceedings may be considered.

## **Re: Leave of Absence**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that 'Head Teachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances', outlining the conditions under which leave of absence may be granted. Should parents/carers need to request leave of absence



during term time for exceptional circumstances, please contact the school office for the relevant form and return it to me no less than 3 weeks before the date you want the period of absence to start. I will inform you of my decision in writing and may request an appointment with you.

May I remind you that the school operates Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence of 15 or more sessions across the current and/or previous term. Leave of absence will be unauthorised:

1. should a request for leave of absence be declined but the time taken
2. if a parent/carer takes a child out of school for leave of absence without requesting permission
3. when a child fails to return to school following authorised leave of absence for exceptional circumstances on the agreed date.

Unauthorised leave of absence of 15 or more sessions may lead to a Penalty Notice being initiated. Further information can be found in the school's Attendance Policy on our website.

The aim of the staff is to work with our pupils and their parents so that the above courses of action are not necessary. Staff will praise good attendance, punctuality and improved attendance (and have an awards scheme to recognise this).

Please contact the school office if you would like a copy of the Attendance Policy.

We look forward to working together with you. Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Mr A Farrugia  
Headteacher

### **Penalty Notices**

If a pupil has at least 15 sessions (half day = 1 session) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term, including leave of absence where permission has not been requested or requested and denied, the Head Teacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. The amount payable is £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. Separate notices are sent to each parent for each child. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Should the fine not be paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider prosecution.

