



Glastonbury Thorn School

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Dear Families,

In place of my weekly blog this week, I wanted to highlight the importance of attendance. Attendance and punctuality are both currently a national focus and the UK Government are putting in tough legal measures to ensure that children attend school regularly.

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

I am writing to every GTS family to give you guidance on new advice and measures that are in place and to help you avoid formal attendance meetings and possible legal action.

Face-to-face education is important in helping children to fulfil their potential. During school time, we believe children should be in class with their teachers and peers and enjoying all the benefits that brings. Parents or carers of a child have a legal responsibility to ensure their child receives a suitable education. This is usually achieved through regular attendance at school.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Being in school every day that it is open, is important to your child's achievement, wellbeing, and their wider development. Pupils with higher attainment at KS1 and KS2, had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared to those with lower attainment. This proves that absence from school, even the odd days, impacts heavily on children's attainment. However it is not just attainment that is effected, the well-being and confidence of a child can be greatly impacted too. This can lead to lack of friendships, low self-esteem because the work is too difficult and a child not enjoying school.

When can my child be absent from school?

When you register your child at school, you have a legal duty to ensure your child attends that school regularly.

This means that your child must attend every day that the school is open, unless:

- Your child is too ill to attend that day.
- You have asked in advance and been given permission by the school for your child to be absent on that day due to exceptional circumstances.
- Your child cannot attend school on that day because it is a day you are taking part in religious observance (only 1 day permitted each academic year)
- When directed by the school e.g. Snow Day(s)



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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. If you do keep your child at home, it's important to phone the school on the first day. Let them know that your child won't be in and give them the reason. 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.

Follow this advice for other illnesses: *(please click on the links for more information)*

- **Coughs and colds**

It's fine to send your child to school with a minor [cough](#) or [common cold](#). But if they have a fever, keep them off school until the fever goes.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues and to wash their hands regularly.

- **High temperature**

If your child has a [high temperature](#), keep them off school until it goes away.

- **Chickenpox**

If your child has [chickenpox](#), keep them off school until all the spots have crusted over. This is usually about 5 days after the spots first appeared.

- **Cold sores**

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have a [cold sore](#).

Encourage them not to touch the blister or kiss anyone while they have the cold sore, or to share things like cups and towels.

- **Conjunctivitis**

You don't need to keep your child away from school if they have [conjunctivitis](#).

Do get advice from your pharmacist. Encourage your child not to rub their eyes and to wash their hands regularly.

- **COVID-19**

If your child has mild symptoms, such as a runny nose, sore throat, or slight cough, and feels well enough, they can go to school.

Your child should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people if they have [symptoms of COVID-19](#) and they either:

- have a high temperature
- do not feel well enough to go to school or do their normal activities

WHAT TO DO IF YOUR CHILD HAS TESTED POSITIVE

Your child is no longer required to do a COVID-19 rapid lateral flow test if they have symptoms. But if your child has tested positive for COVID-19, they should try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for 3 days after the day they took the test.

- **Ear infection**

If your child has an [ear infection](#) and a high temperature or severe earache, keep them off school until they're feeling better or their high temperature goes away.

- **Hand, foot and mouth disease**

If your child has [hand, foot and mouth disease](#) but seems well enough to go to school, there's no need to keep them off.

Encourage your child to throw away any used tissues straight away and to wash their hands regularly.

- **Head lice and nits**

There's no need to keep your child off school if they have head lice.

You can treat [head lice and nits](#) without seeing a GP.

- **Impetigo**

If your child has [impetigo](#), they'll need treatment from a GP, often with antibiotics.

Keep them off school until all the sores have crusted over and healed, or for 48 hours after they start antibiotic treatment.

Encourage your child to wash their hands regularly and not to share things like towels and cups with other children at school.

- **Ringworm**

If your child has [ringworm](#), see your pharmacist unless it's on their scalp, in which case you should see a GP.

It's fine for your child to go to school once they have started treatment.

- **Scarlet fever**

If your child has [scarlet fever](#), they'll need treatment with antibiotics from a GP.

Otherwise they'll be infectious for 2 to 3 weeks.

Your child can go back to school 24 hours after starting antibiotics.

- **Slapped cheek syndrome (fifth disease)**

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [slapped cheek syndrome](#) because, once the rash appears, they're no longer infectious.

But let the school or teacher know if you think your child has slapped cheek syndrome.

- **Sore throat**

You can still send your child to school if they have a [sore throat](#). But if they also have a high temperature, they should stay at home until it goes away.

A sore throat and a high temperature can be symptoms of [tonsillitis](#).

- **Threadworms**

You don't need to keep your child off school if they have [threadworms](#).

Speak to your pharmacist, who can recommend a treatment.

- **Vomiting and diarrhoea**

Children with [diarrhoea or vomiting](#) should stay away from school until they have not been sick or had diarrhoea for at least 2 days (48 hours).



This academic year, I am receiving an increased number of requests to take children out of school. Hopefully you know well enough by now to know that I will always support you in ensuring that your child has the best education possible and that I tirelessly work to support all of our families too. It is important to know that there are procedures and responsibilities that I must adhere to which are external to the school and your support and understanding is always gratefully received.



I must state again that **I cannot authorise any term time holidays or excursions** because of my statutory responsibility as the Headteacher of your child.



To conclude, I hope that you feel supported at GTS and see that we are an 'open school' where you can talk openly to all staff including the Senior Leadership team. We will continue to work hard to ensure that you and your family are fully supported.

However, as highlighted earlier, it is important to know that you could face a legal sanction if you fail to ensure that your child attends school regularly and punctually. This is not anything driven by the school and our own expectations; this is law.

Section 7 of The Education Act, 1996 states that, as a parent, you have a legal duty to ensure that your child regularly attends school; therefore, if your child's attendance is low and of increasing concern, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority who will commence legal proceedings. As Headteacher, I have a statutory duty to follow the procedures regardless of the context.

Legal proceedings could mean, under the terms of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act, 2003, a Fixed Penalty Notice could be issued to you and a fine of £60 will become payable,

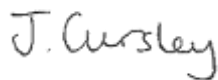
which could also rise to £120. This is per adult and child. You may also be asked to attend an attendance interview by the Local Authority.

If there is no or little improvement in attendance or punctuality, legal sanctions could commence and the Local Authority would invite you to a PACE interview. This may lead to a formal caution interview as required by the PACE Act (*Police and Criminal Evidence Act*) 1984, which would lead to a prosecution in the magistrates' court under Section 444 (1) or Section 444 (1a) Education Act, 1996: if convicted you would receive a fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment for an "aggravated" offence or a fine of up to £1000 and a criminal record for a Level 3 offence.

The majority of children at Glastonbury Thorn School have good attendance and are thriving in their learning opportunities. Positive well-being is also high and children enjoy coming to school – I don't think I've ever seen children running into school laughing everyday before!

Please continue to work with us to ensure that your child(ren) receive the best possible education and experience at school – their experiences now last a lifetime...

Kind regards,



Jonathan Cursley
Headteacher



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