



The Giles Nursery and Infants' School

# Supporting Your Family with School Attendance

Miss Hill, Deputy Headteacher and Miss Stanton, Family Support Worker



# Agenda

- ▶ The importance of good attendance
- ▶ Illness guidance
- ▶ Practical strategies to reduce school anxiety
- ▶ Approaches to find the reason behind anxiety
- ▶ What school can do to support you and your child
- ▶ Signposts to external support

# The importance of good attendance

- ▶ Regular school attendance helps children to:
  - ▶ Achieve stronger academic outcomes.
  - ▶ Build friendships and develop social skills.
  - ▶ Strengthen emotional wellbeing and resilience.
  - ▶ Establish positive habits for future education and employment.
  - ▶ Engage fully in school life and activities.

Children attending school over 95% are almost twice as likely to meet the expected standard in reading, writing and mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2.

Year 1 ranks first of all school years for impact of persistent absence on GCSE grades.

Acting early is critical; disparities emerge early and widen throughout childhood and into adulthood, feeding through to lower earnings.

# Illness guidance

- ▶ We understand that children get poorly, especially in the wintertime.
- ▶ Please refer to the Public Health Agency guidance for advice on when to keep your child at home.
- ▶ Minor ailments can usually be treated with children's paracetamol. Unless your child has a fever, we recommend bringing them to school, as they often brighten up during the day.
- ▶ School staff are happy to administer medicine if needed and will always contact you if we believe your child is too unwell to be in school.

## Do I need to keep my child off school?



<b>Chicken Pox</b> Until all spots have crusted over	<b>Conjunctivitis</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Diarrhoea &amp; Vomiting</b> 48 hours from last episode	<b>Glandular Fever</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Hand, foot &amp; mouth</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Impetigo</b> Until lesions are crusted & healed or 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
<b>Measles or German Measles</b> 4 days from onset of rash	<b>Mumps</b> 5 days from onset of swelling	<b>Scabies</b> Until after first treatment	<b>Scarlet Fever</b> 24 hours after commencing antibiotics	<b>Slapped Cheek</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Whooping Cough</b> 48 Hours after commencing antibiotics
	<b>Flu</b> Until recovered	<b>Head Lice</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Threadworms</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	<b>Tonsillitis</b> No need to stay off but school or nursery should be informed	

*If your child is too unwell to attend school, please call or email the school office before 8.45am on each day they will be absent.*

# Practical strategies to reduce school anxiety

- ▶ Develop clear routines for school.
- ▶ Build resilience through small challenges.
- ▶ Limit verbal reassurance and praise – once is enough.
- ▶ Seek to understand their worries.
- ▶ Work on calming strategies.
- ▶ Role play.
- ▶ Transitional object.
- ▶ Stay calm and keep your own emotions in check – not easy!

**Tips for families: How to help children with routines for school**

**Sleep**  
It is recommended that children aged between 5 and 12 get 10-11 hours sleep a night. Think about your night time routine and how we help children to get the sleep they need for a good day in school.

**Planning**  
Plan for going to school by setting out uniform the night before and pack what you need in your bag. Plan what time you will wake up and set a time to be ready to leave to be there for 8.40am.

**Share excitement**  
Talk about things that are coming up the next day or this week and be excited together. Ask questions about lessons they might be looking forward to and set time aside to talk about their day.

**Calm**  
**Slow, low, low**  
Always try to communicate calmly about getting ready for school, even if you don't feel calm. Good advice is **SLOW, LOW, LOW**  
Slow down  
Lower volume  
Lower tone.

**Validate feelings**  
Validate feelings by accepting them and showing you are listening. You might want to try asking questions such as 'What might be making you feel like this?' and showing understanding with phrases like 'I understand you feel...'

YOUR FEELINGS ARE VALID

# Approaches to find the reason behind anxiety

Children generally avoid school for one of these four reasons:

Avoiding difficult feelings	The child needs help to cope with difficult feelings. These are very often anxiety related or sensory overload.
Avoiding people or situations	Social interactions, academic pressures.
Separation anxiety	The child needs to be taught how to make the transition into school.
Prefer being at home	Home needs to be boring during the day; school needs to be exciting.



# Approaches to find the reason behind anxiety

Delving deeper...

Sensory factors	Fabric of school uniform, noise, bright light, smells, being too close to others.
Relationships	Tricky friendships, specific children or adults, crowds.
School work	Too easy, too hard, following the rules, specific lessons.
Home	Changes in the family, sleep, mum/dad at home.



# Approaches to find the reason behind anxiety

## All About Me

- ▶ Avoid 'why...?' questions.
- ▶ Try giving statements - thumbs up, thumbs down.
  - ▶ "I enjoy playtime."
  - ▶ "I know who to ask for help."
  - ▶ "My classroom is too noisy."
- ▶ Three / four statements at a time - don't overload.
- ▶ "Can you tell me more about that?"



# Approaches to find the reason behind anxiety



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## All About Me

Name:	Class:
Date of birth:	Date:

Read each statement to your child and ask for "thumbs up", "thumbs down" or "not sure". Highlight their response.

Try three / four statements at a time – don't overload.

If your child responds very positively or negatively, ask, "Can you tell me more about that?"

My school uniform is comfortable to wear	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's too noisy in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
School smells funny sometimes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The lights in the classroom are too bright.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My classroom is too cold.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like who I sit with on the carpet.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like who I sit with on my table.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
The adults in my classroom make me happy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I always have someone to play with.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy spending time outside.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes find my work tricky.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like talking in front of my class.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy going to assembly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like PE lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes feel tired at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I like writing.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes feel hungry at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy maths lessons.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I sometimes feel thirsty at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
It's easy for me to follow the rules.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Other children annoy me sometimes.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I'd rather be at home than at school.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like how the adults at school talk to me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like working with a partner.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I like working in a group.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Sometimes lining up frustrates me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I enjoy helping in the classroom.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Additional comments:

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Please return to your child's class teacher.  
Thank you.

## What school can do to support you and your child

Soft start to the day

Alternative drop off point

Visual timetable

Supported activities

'Help' card

Social stories

Reward chart

Position of responsibility

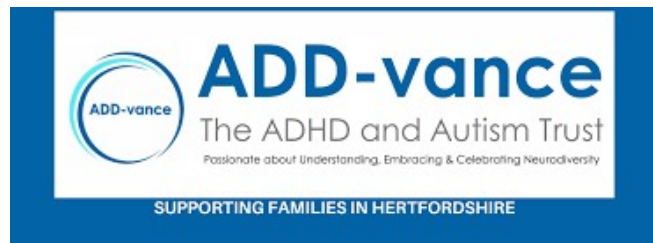
Key adult

Calming strategies

Safe space / low trigger area

You can speak to your child's class teacher, Miss Hill or Miss Stanton so we can work together to find the best support for your child.

# External support / workshops



Children's wellbeing practitioners

