

02 September 2026

Dear Parent/Carer,

RE: Updated Attendance Expectations and Statutory Guidance

At Grace Academy Solihull, we are committed to providing a high-quality education and supporting our students to achieve their full potential. To ensure every student gets the most out of their school experience, we are writing to outline our attendance expectations, which are aligned with the latest Department for Education (DfE) and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (MBC) guidance.

Attendance Targets and Resilience

Students are required to attend school for 190 days out of 365 each year; therefore, the attendance target for each student is at least 98%.

While we understand it can be difficult at times to decide whether to send your child to school, our guidance can help with these decisions. We would expect students to attend school when experiencing mild illnesses, such as a sore throat, headache, tiredness, period pains, or a minor injury. We are fully equipped to accommodate students with mild discomfort or feeling slightly unwell:

- **Pastoral Support:** Our dedicated pastoral team will keep an eye on your child throughout the day to ensure they are well.
- **Medication:** Medicines can be administered at home before and after school to manage symptoms or you can bring the medication into school and fill the form in reception - our medical TA can administer medications as needed.
- **Health Checks:** We are happy to conduct a check on your child when they arrive to ensure they are safe and well in school.

Please note: If a student is kept home for these mild illnesses, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. If you want a medical or pastoral check in for your child, please email gas-attendance@graceacademy.org.uk.

Medical and Dental Appointments

While we understand that medical issues arise, we expect parents and carers to minimise the disruption to their child's education when booking appointments.

- **Routine Appointments:** Routine dental, optician, and non-urgent medical appointments must be booked outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- **Evidence Required:** For any medical appointment during the school day to be authorised, formal evidence (such as an appointment card, text confirmation, or hospital letter) should be provided to the attendance team at school gas-attendance@graceacademy.org.uk.
- **Maximising Attendance:** Where an appointment during the school day is unavoidable, students are expected to attend school before the appointment and return to school immediately afterward. A medical appointment should not result in a whole day's absence; this will be noted as unauthorised.

Leave of Absence and Holidays

With 175 days already marked out as 'non-school days' (which account for weekends, half-term breaks, and end-of-term holidays), you should have an exceptional reason to withdraw your child from school. At Grace Academy, we have a unique extra week during the half-term break in October, which provides all parents access to a quieter and cheaper holiday period.

Moving forward, the following are NOT considered legitimate reasons for absence and requests will be unauthorised and fined in accordance with DFE guidance:

- Trips and visits to family/friends.
- Your child's birthday.
- Cheaper family holidays.
- Tickets to sports/cultural events.
- Quieter holiday times due to a SEND need (as we provide a quieter week in October)

This policy applies to all students, including those with SEND, as we maintain high attendance ambitions for every pupil to ensure their long-term attainment and wellbeing.

Only one day will be authorised for a religious observance, except in exceptional circumstances.

Weddings and Funerals will be reviewed individually but as a rule only one day will be authorised and for close family members only.

You must complete a leave of absence request form, at least 4 weeks prior to your holiday, for this to be processed and returned to you in time. The form is available on the website, or you can collect a copy from reception. Scheduled school holidays would not count as sufficient notice and requests made during school holidays will not be authorised.

New National Framework for Penalty Notices

Where a leave of absence is taken without authorisation, the school will request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice (PNC). In accordance with the DfE National Framework, the fine amounts are as follows:

Offence	Penalty Details
First Offence	£160 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
Second Offence	If issued to the same parent for the same child within a three-year rolling period, it is charged at a flat rate of £160 with no reduction for early payment.
Third Offence	A third notice cannot be issued within a three-year period. Instead, alternative action, such as prosecution, will be considered.

As stated in the Solihull MBC policy, *"head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances,"* and failure to ensure regular attendance can lead to prosecution.

We thank you for your continued support in fostering resilience and ensuring your child attends school every day to achieve a successful future.

Yours sincerely,

Grace Academy Solihull's Leadership Team