



THE GRANGE SCHOOL

Mr V Murray – Headteacher

22 July 2026

Attendance Expectations – Please familiarise yourself with the updates

Dear Families,

As I write this message, I am looking out of my office window to see brilliant sunshine yet again, this amazing weather has stuck around for so long! Before this term is even over, I have seen the 'back to school' signs up in the supermarket! This prompts me to think about preparing for our return in September and how attendance will be operating.

In July 2026, the Department for Education (DfE) updated its statutory guidance from 2024, [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#). The guidance continues to place attendance at the heart of a child's education and reinforces the expectation that schools and families work together to secure the best outcomes for young people.

As a school, we pride ourselves on maintaining high standards of punctuality and attendance – if your child is not here, we can't teach them! High attendance will always be a school priority, but with the Department for Education's stance, including around penalty notice fines, I thought it an appropriate time to remind families of their expectations.

What has Changed?

We are no longer using the email address associated with attendance, you need to call in on 01296 390959 or use the MCAS app – link to instructions here:

While the core principles remain the same, the updated guidance strengthens the focus on:

- Early identification of attendance concerns before patterns become established.
- Working in partnership with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance.
- A more consistent approach to attendance monitoring and support across schools.
- Ensuring support is offered before legal intervention is considered, wherever appropriate.
- Particular attention being given to vulnerable groups, including pupils with SEND, mental health needs, young carers and those receiving support from social care services.

Why is attendance so important?

Regular attendance is one of the strongest indicators of academic success and wellbeing.

Every lesson matters. Missing school means missing learning, opportunities for discussion, practical activities, feedback from teachers and valuable social experiences with peers. Even occasional absences can have a significant impact over time.

The DfE highlights that attendance is vital for:

- Academic achievement and examination success.
- Positive mental health and wellbeing.
- Developing friendships and a sense of belonging.
- Building routines, resilience and independence.
- Safeguarding children and reducing vulnerability to risks outside school

Research published by the Department for Education shows that students who miss just **2 to 4 weeks of school during Year 11 have only half the chance of achieving a Grade 5 in English and Maths compared with similar pupils who attend regularly.**

How families can help

You play the most important role in supporting your child's attendance. We ask families to:

- Encourage attendance every day and establish strong routines.
- Communicate with the school promptly if your child is unable to attend.
- Avoid booking holidays during term time.
- Contact us early if your child is experiencing difficulties that may affect attendance.
- Work in partnership with us to find solutions where challenges arise.

For clarity, Students are expected to be on site at 8.20am and in registration rooms from 8.25am to 8.55am. Arrival after 8.25am but before 8.55am is considered 'late'. Arriving after 8.55, after registration has closed, is 'unauthorised absence' for that session (unless we have an acceptable, valid reason provided by the parent / carer)

Fines are something we all want to avoid. The following statements are taken from the framework:

First Offence – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued for Term Time Leave or Irregular Attendance the amount will be £160 per parent, per child, paid in 28 days, reduced to £80 per child if paid in 21 days.

Second Offence – (within 3 years) £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days

Third (and any further) Offences within 3 years - A Penalty Notice will not be issued, the case will be presented straight to the Magistrates Court where fines can be up to £2500 per parent, per child. Cases found guilty in Magistrates Court can show on the parent's future DBS Certificate due to 'failure to safeguard a child's education'.

10 sessions in 10 weeks – (A session is a morning or afternoon registration period) Penalty notices will be considered for any 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in 10 weeks, therefore 5 consecutive days of term time absence can trigger a penalty notice.

Per parent, per child – Penalty notices are issues per parent, per child. This could mean two siblings absent would result in each parent receiving 2 fines. This could amount to £640

Can I please ask all families to keep us informed **on day one** of any absence by contacting the attendance office on 01296 390959 or through the MCAS app, the email is no longer live. If you are finding it difficult to get your child in to school, please contact the attendance office for advice and guidance.

I trust you understand my need to remind all parents and carers of the expectations. I am keen to avoid any unnecessary conflict with either students or parents for non-compliance with the Department for Education guidance.

If you have any feedback about this letter, or any other comments you wish to make, please email me directly at ngolding@grange.bucks.sch.uk

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'N. Golding', is positioned above the printed name.

Nick Golding
Deputy Head Teacher