



BE PRESENT. BE POWERFUL.



**When you come to school, you
make great things happen.**

**We're here and you should be
too.**



Gardner Public Schools

GPS Attendance Policy components
(located on website and student handbook):

- Accordingly, parents/guardians will provide a written explanation for the absence and tardiness of a child. This will be required in advance for types of justifiable absences where advance notice is possible.
- In instances of chronic or irregular absence reportedly due to illness, the school administration may request a physician's statement certifying such absences to be justifiable.
- Student Absence Notification Program Each Principal or designee will notify a student's parent/guardian **within 3 days of the student's absence in the event the parent/guardian has not informed the school of the absence.**
- Each Principal or designee shall make a reasonable effort to meet with any student, and that student's parent/guardian, who has missed **five (5) or more unexcused school days (a school day shall be equal to two (2) or more class periods in the same day) in a school year.**
- The meeting shall be to develop action steps to improve student attendance and shall be developed jointly by the Principal or designee, the student, and the student's parent/guardian. The parties may seek input from other relevant school staff and/or officials from relevant public safety, health and human service, housing, and nonprofit agencies.

Attendance FAQ

Question	Answer
What can be considered an excused absence? (must be documented)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Documented medical appointments, medical illness or quarantine ● Bereavement ● Religious holiday or observance ● Documented Legal obligations (court dates) ● Hospitalization ● College visit ● Weather so inclement as to endanger the health of the child ● Other exceptional reasons with approval from the administrator or excused under other applicable school committee policies
What can be considered unexcused absence?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Family vacation ● Relocation/Moving ● Tired, stayed up late ● Lost power ● Transportation issues ● Sick sibling or family member
What does the State consider for chronic absenteeism (i.e. state definitions for chronic absenteeism)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The state definition of chronic absenteeism: Any student who has missed 10% of the school year thus far is considered chronically absent. The only absences considered excused by the state are hospitalization.



<p>What is truancy?</p>	<p>Under state law, a school-aged child who is not excused from attendance and who "willfully" fails to attend school for more than 8 school days in a quarter is considered habitually truant.</p>
<p>How can I check and monitor my student's attendance?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Power school shows all student data, including attendance date (tardies, absences, dismissals) and will identify if they are excused or not.
<p>What are the district's legal obligations to ensure student attendance in school?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School-based planning with parent collaboration on an intervention plan or alternative education plans ● Involvement of School Resource Officer for Truancy ● CRA Filing with courts (Child Requiring Assistance) ● Educational Neglect Filing with DCF (51a) ● Failure to Cause Attendance Citation with associated Fine of \$20 for every 7 days per 6 month period
<p>What are the parent/guardian obligations for student attendance?</p>	<p><i>MGL: Section 1. Every child between the minimum and maximum ages established for school attendance by the board of education shall, subject to section fifteen, attend a public day school in the town the student resides, or some other day school approved by the school committee, during the number of days required by the board of education in each school year.</i></p> <p>Parents/guardians must:</p> <p>ensure that a child in their care attends school. G.L. c. 76, §2.</p> <p>call the school at a designated number at a designated time as established by the school committee to report a child's absence and reason for it. G.L. c. 76, §§1A, 1B.</p>

Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

A regular attendance routine is important for your child's well-being, learning and long-term success. Below are tips to keep your child healthy and avoid unnecessary absences from school.

Nutrition, Sleep and Exercise

- Ensure your child eats a good breakfast every morning or check if your school serves breakfast.
- Maintain a regular bedtime and morning routine.
- Keep screens out of the bedroom and limit use prior to bedtime.
- Encourage your child to stay active for at least 60 minutes a day.



Hygiene

- Stress hand washing, particularly before eating, and after using the restroom.
- Remind your child to brush their teeth twice a day.
- Avoid close contact with individuals who are sick. Don't share cups, utensils, hair brushes or combs.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue, or cough/sneeze into an elbow.



Safety

- Make sure your child wears a seatbelt and/or appropriate car seats during car rides, and a helmet when using a bike, skateboard or scooter.
- If your child walks to school, help them find a safe route to school and to travel with at least one friend. Have a backup plan in case of bad weather.



Keep Your Child Healthy and in School!

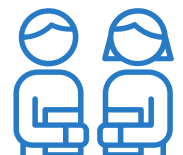
Wellness

- Ensure your child visits their health care provider for:
 - A physical once a year.
 - All recommended Immunizations, including Flu and COVID-19.
 - Chronic health issues such as asthma or diabetes.
- Visit the dentist twice a year.
- Try to schedule non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours.
- If your child doesn't have health or dental insurance, reach out to your school's nurse or social worker or other staff member to help connect you with resources.
- Complete your school's annual health form.
- Agree to allow your child to participate in health and vision screenings offered at school.
- If your child has a chronic health issue such as asthma, make sure that your child's health care provider completes appropriate school forms that allow your child to keep/carry any necessary medications at school.
- If your child has a disability, work closely with the school and your child's health care provider to ensure appropriate supports and services.
- If your child has a compromised immune system or is at high risk for complications from common illnesses, please talk to your school (school nurse if available) about developing a plan with you and your child's health-care provider to keep your child healthy and safe while attending school.
- If you are concerned that your child may have a contagious illness (including COVID-19), call your child's health care provider or school nurse for advice.
- If your child needs to stay home for a prolonged period due to illness, talk to your child's teacher to find out about resources they can use at home to keep learning once they feel well enough.



Engagement

- Make sure your child feels safe and connected at school. Involve them in afterschool activities.
- If you are worried that your child may be suffering from anxiety, talk with your teacher, the school nurse, social worker or other school staff to discuss the challenge and identify what can help your child. If your child is missing class because of challenges with behavioral issues, contact the school and/or your child's health care provider for support and resources.
- Ask the school about health-related policies including about COVID-19.
- Monitor your child's attendance and academic progress and seek support when needed.



Is your child missing school due to anxiety?



Definition of anxiety: feeling of fear and uneasiness about everyday situations.

If your child is suffering from anxiety, you are not alone. The good news is that in most situations, anxiety is normal and temporary. Anxiety becomes a concern if it persists — it can affect relationships with family, peers and teachers, contribute to academic challenges, and lead to school avoidance/refusal. Addressing anxiety is important for a child's overall well-being, not just attendance.

In addition, if your child starts to complain of symptoms like a headache or stomachache, it is important to **quickly determine** whether this is related to anxiety or a physical illness that might require missing school. If the challenge is anxiety, staying home may worsen the situation.



What are the symptoms of anxiety?

Persistent anxiety can present in many ways, making it difficult to recognize.

Symptoms may vary depending on the age of the child, and some children may keep worries to themselves or have difficulty explaining their feelings making it hard to identify symptoms. Anxiety symptoms can include, but aren't limited to, the following:

- Feeling tired, irritable or easily tearful
- Having trouble separating from parents
- Experiencing difficulty sleeping or frequent nightmares
- Having trouble getting out of bed or dressed for school
- Lacking appetite
- Having trouble concentrating, which may lead to difficulty starting tasks, problems with homework and falling behind in school
- Experiencing physical symptoms, including stomachaches and headaches
- Avoiding activities they previously enjoyed
- Having negative or continuous thoughts that something bad is going to happen

What can families do?

Here are some tips that you can use to help your child get through these challenges, by intervening as quickly as possible, and return to school:

- Do not punish your child for refusing to go to school, as this can worsen things.
- If possible, avoid letting your child stay home. Though staying home from school may provide short-term relief for your child, continued absence from school will lead to the feeling of being disconnected from classmates and teachers, cause your child to fall behind academically and only make it harder to return.
- Speak with your child. Try to understand what's bothering them and why they are avoiding school. If you are feeling a similar anxiety, it may help to share this with your child and to explain what you are doing to get through it.
- Make it clear that you are there to help your child and that you believe they can face their fears and get through this problem.



Take advantage of school resources.

Working through your child's anxiety issues can be difficult and scary, and you shouldn't have to do it alone. Take advantage of the resources at your child's school:

- Talk with the school nurse, counselor, social worker and/or psychologist to discuss the student's challenges, identify what can help your child and develop a return-to-school plan.
- For some students, this may need to happen gradually (one or two classes initially and eventually a full day).
- In certain situations, a 504 plan or Individualized Education Program may be needed to ensure your child receives appropriate support and resources.

If symptoms persist or are very severe, your child's anxiety may be due to an underlying behavioral health disorder (i.e., anxiety disorder, panic disorder), an undiagnosed learning disability or the result of a physical or chronic health condition and should be evaluated by your child's medical provider.

Finally, remember to take care of your own physical and emotional well-being!

Resources where you can find more information on anxiety and school avoidance

[Separation Anxiety in Babies, Toddlers and School-Aged Children: Causes, Signs and What to Do](#)
[Anxiety and Depression CDC](#)
[Understanding Anxiety in Children](#)

[School Avoidance Alliance: School Avoidance 101](#)
[School Refusal: When a Child Won't Go to School](#)
[Parent Anxiety Handout – EPIC](#)
[The Ultimate Guide to Working With Your School](#)

MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE SUCCESS PLAN



Gardner Public Schools

POSSIBLE STRATEGIES TO REACH MY CHILD'S ATTENDANCE GOALS

- I will talk to my child about how going to school every day will help my child do well in school and achieve my child's hopes and dreams.
- I will keep an attendance chart at home to track absences. Consider using the attached calendar.
- At the end of the week, I will recognize my child for attending school every day with _____ (i.e. a visit to the park, a new book, a break from doing chores, a special treat, etc.).
- I will make sure my child is in bed by _____ p.m. and the alarm clock is set for _____ a.m.
- I will find a relative, friend or neighbor who can take my child to or from school if I can't. I can list who can help on the attached Help Bank.
- I will set up medical and dental appointments for weekdays after school.
- If my child has a slight stomachache, headache or allergies, and doesn't have a contagious illness including Covid-19, I will send my child to school. I will call the school or a health provider for advice if my child complains regularly.
- If my child cannot avoid missing school, I will contact the teacher for tips and resources to keep my child learning.

To improve my child's attendance, I commit to the following:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

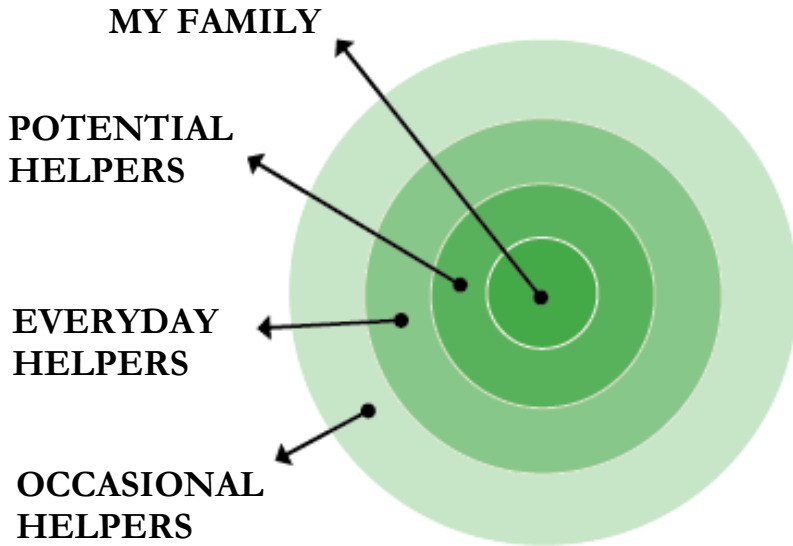
We will review progress to meet this goal in two months.

Family Signature: _____ Date: _____

Teacher Signature: _____ Date: _____

MY FAMILY'S HELP BANK

CREATE BACKUP PLANS FOR GETTING TO SCHOOL



1. **My Family:** List who lives in your house.
2. **Everyday Helpers:** Identify who you can call on to help drop your child off, or who can pick your child up when you cannot. These are people like friends, neighbors and relatives who can help regularly.
3. **Occasional Helpers:** Identify people who probably cannot help every day, but can help in a pinch. Maybe it's a godparent, a relative or a friend who lives outside your neighborhood but can be there for short stints.
4. **Potential Helpers:** Identify people who are part of your school community, place of worship or neighborhood who are able to help—if you ask.

1. **My Family:**
2. **Everyday Helpers:**
3. **Occasional Helpers:**
4. **Potential Helpers:**

If I need help getting my child to and from school, I will ask the following people to be our back-up:

Name: _____

Best Contact Number: _____

Name: _____

Best Contact Number: _____

Name: _____

Best Contact Number: _____



CHRONIC ABSENCE = 18 absences
(10% of school year)

Warning Signs = 10 to 17 absences

Satisfactory Attendance = 9 or fewer absences

- My child was present _____ days
- My child was absent _____ days
- My goal is to improve my child's attendance.
I will ensure that my child misses no more than _____ days for the rest of the year.

PowerSchool Attendance Access

Public Portal:

1. Login into PowerSchool through the public portal like normal.
gardnerk.powerschool.com/public
2. From the public portal the Parent/Guardian will select "Attendance Monitor" from the left navigation menu (scroll all the way down)
3. The Parent/Guardian will then select the "Report Attendance" tab
4. The Parent/Guardian will then click the "Report New Attendance" button
5. The Parent/Guardian will enter the Absence Date (leaving the second date blank to report for today only)
6. The Parent/Guardian will select from the "What is the reason for the absence" drop-down
7. The Parent/Guardian will select "Yes" or "No" in the Is this absence for the whole day drop-down
 - a. If "No" is selected the user will be prompted to enter the Time Range
8. The Parent/Guardian will enter an explanation in the "Explanation" text box
9. The Parent/Guardian will click "Submit"

NOTE: Reporting attendance for previous dates is not allowed.

HOW TO REPORT AN ABSENCE: MBA Attendance Monitor

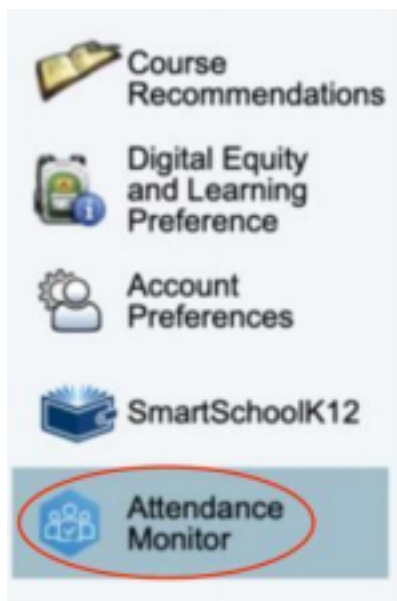
Gardner Public school students can now report their absence through the PowerSchool Parent portal.

You will need to first log in to your PowerSchool Parent Portal account using a web browser such as Safari or Chrome.

**The Attendance Monitor feature is not available in the PowerSchool Mobile App
PowerSchool website: gardnerk.powerschool.com/public

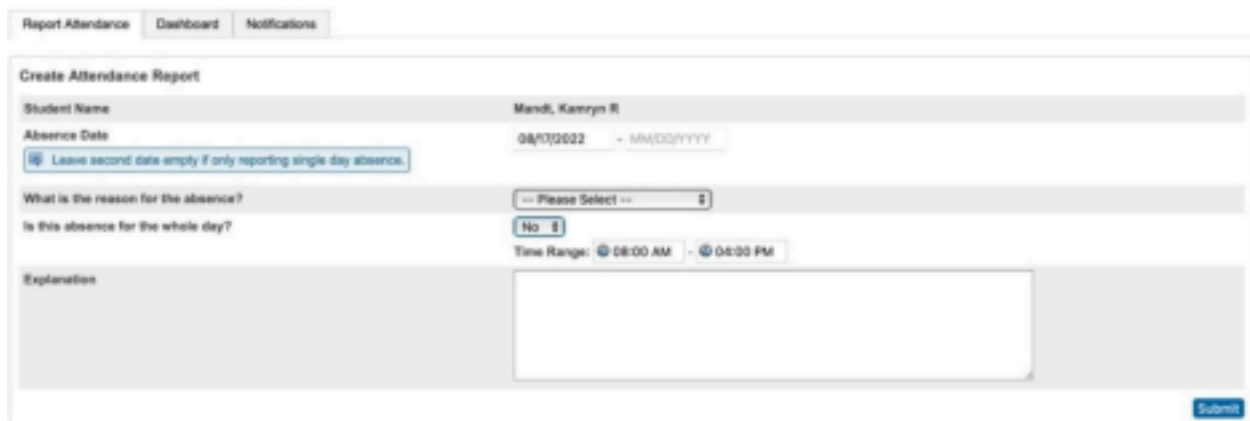
For information on how to log into your PowerSchool Parent Portal, see Parent Portal instructions

1. After signing into your account, click on the Attendance Monitor option in the sidebar at the left:



2. Next, click Report New Attendance and follow the steps below:

Attendance Monitor

A screenshot of the 'Create Attendance Report' form in the PowerSchool Parent Portal. The form has a header with 'Report Attendance', 'Dashboard', and 'Notifications' tabs. Below the header, there is a 'Create Attendance Report' section. The form fields are: Student Name (Mandl, Karmyn R), Absence Date (08/10/2022 - MM/DD/YYYY), What is the reason for the absence? (Please Select), Is this absence for the whole day? (No), and Time Range (08:00 AM - 04:00 PM). There is a large text area for 'Explanation' and a 'Submit' button at the bottom right.

1. Enter the Absence Date(s) that your student will be gone
2. Choose a Reason for the absence from the dropdown menu
3. Choose whether or not your student will be absent for the whole day, or part of the day from the dropdown menu. If they will only be absent for a partial day, you will need to fill in the time range

4. Type in your Explanation for their absence.
 - ****This is a required field that will not allow you to submit the absence until the explanation is given.**
5. Click the Submit button and you are done

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

You will also notice the tabs at the top of your Attendance Monitor screen. Any absences you have created in the Parent Portal will all show up under the "Report Attendance" tab. The "Dashboard" tab contains detailed graphs regarding your student's excused and unexcused absences. The "Notifications" tab is any school notifications that have been sent to you regarding your student's attendance.

You cannot delete any reported attendance once you have created them. You would need to contact the school directly for assistance. You can, however, edit a future absence if you know your child will be out longer than expected, or will be returning to school sooner than expected, etc.

For example, if you reported your student would be gone on a family vacation from September 7th through September 12th, but your vacation was cut short, you could log back into the portal, click on "Attendance Monitor", and click on "Edit" next to the entry you wish to make changes to. You would then click on the calendar to edit the date in which your student will be gone until, edit your explanation stating your student will be back one day sooner, etc. and click "Submit".

***IMPORTANT* YOU ARE ONLY ABLE TO REPORT ATTENDANCE FOR THE ACTUAL DAY OR FUTURE DATES. YOU CANNOT GO IN A DAY LATE AND TRY TO CREATE IT IN THE ATTENDANCE MONITOR AFTER THE FACT. YOU WOULD NEED TO CALL THE SCHOOL.**

All absences reported will be coded as unexcused until required documentation is submitted to the Main Office and approved by an administrator. (ex: Doctor's note, etc.)

Students are responsible for providing documentation for absences within ten (10) days of an absence.

GARDNER PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICT 2025-2026 SCHOOL CALENDAR

AUGUST 2025

19-20 Administrative Council
Retreat Days
21 Teacher Leader Training Day
25-28 Full Day, Professional
Development for Faculty and Staff

AUGUST 2025						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

FEBRUARY 2026 (15)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28

FEBRUARY 2026

6 Half Day, Professional
Development
16 No School, Presidents' Day
Observed
17-20 No School, February
Vacation

SEPTEMBER 2025

1 Labor Day Holiday Observed
2 First Day of School for Students
26 Half Day, Professional
Development for Faculty and Staff

SEPTEMBER 2025 (21)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

MARCH 2026 (22)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

MARCH 2026

6 Half Day, Professional
Development
20 Half Day, Professional
Development

OCTOBER 2025

10 Half Day
13 No School, Columbus
Day/Indigenous Peoples Day
Observed
31 Half Day, Professional
Development for Faculty and Staff

OCTOBER 2025 (22)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL 2026 (17)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30		

APRIL 2026

20 No School, Patriots' Day
Observed
21-24 No School, April
Vacation

NOVEMBER 2025

11 No School, Veterans' Day
Holiday Observed
24-25 Half Day, Teachers'
Conferences
26 Half Day, Thanksgiving
Holiday
27-28 No School, Thanksgiving
Holiday

NOVEMBER 2025 (17)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

MAY 2026 (20)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

MAY 2026

8 Half Day, Professional
Development
22 Half Day
25 No School, Memorial Day
Holiday Observed
30 GHS Commencement

DECEMBER 2025

23 Half Day, December Vacation
24-31 No School, December
Vacation

DECEMBER 2025 (17)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30	31			

JUNE 2026 (10)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
	1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
28	29	30				

JUNE 2026

12 Half Day, 180th Day
15-22 181st - 185th Day
19 No School, Juneteenth Day
Observed

JANUARY 2026

1 -2 No School, New Year's Day
Observed
5 Classes Resume
19 No School, Martin Luther
King Day Observed

JANUARY 2026 (19)						
S	M	T	W	Th	F	S
				1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Superintendent's Office:

978 632-1000
Gardner High School:
978-632-1600 7:35am - 2:35pm
Gardner Academy:
978-632-1673 7:35am - 2:45pm
Gardner Middle School:
978-632-1603 7:00am - 1:55pm
Gardner Elementary:
978-991-0900 9:00am - 3:15pm
Pupil Services:
978-632-4076

Early Release Times:

GHS 10:35am
GALT 10:35am
GMS 10:00am
GES 11:30am

Adopted on: February 10, 2025