



Grateley Primary School

A school where every child becomes a lifelong learner and realises their potential.

Attendance Policy

Reviewed September 2019

Next review September 2020

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Grateley Primary School by

- ❖ Encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential.
- ❖ Providing clear procedures for involving parents relating to school attendance.

Principles

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- ❖ ***parents keeping children off school unnecessarily***
- ❖ ***truancy before or during the school day***
- ❖ ***absences which have never been properly explained***
- ❖ ***children who arrive at school too late to get a mark***

Legal Interventions Team

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the school in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, and the child has reached the threshold of **20 unauthorised absences in 100 sessions**, the school will refer the child to the Legal Interventions Team Local Education Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Procedures

It is not usually appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, travel, looking after other children, day trips etc. Leave may, however, be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time (see below).

Where possible a note should always be given for every episode of absence.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

Child not at school

If the school has not been advised of a child's absence by 10am then the school office will telephone contact parents/carers to confirm the reason for absence. Where a child is absent for more than one day the school reconfirm the whereabouts by contacting parents/carers by 10am.

Lateness

Children who are late must report to the school office and signed in. The school will monitor the number of sessions pupils are late and will contact parents if this becomes a concern. Fixed notice penalties can also be issued for persistent lateness.

Medical

If a child is absent for any reason parents must contact the school office by telephone by 9.10 on the first day of sickness and each day afterwards. If a child is likely to be off for an extended period of time i.e. through hospitalisation, then the head teacher has the discretion to ask parents to contact the school at agreed periods other than daily.

If a child is persistently absent through illness e.g. frequent days off over an extended period or general low attendance (below 90%), then school may ask for a doctor's note or proof of illness such as a prescription covering that period of time. If requested proof is not provided then the Head Teacher may consider not authorising that absence.

The school will not normally authorise absence for routine medical appointments such as routine dental check-ups. It will authorise hospital appointments, CAMHS visits etc.

Leave of Absence

The school actively discourages parents from taking children out of school during term times.

Time off school for family holidays is not a right. The Department of Education (DfE) have in their amendments to 2006 Regulations removed references to family holiday and extended leave, as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. Amendments make it clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; and that Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

The Head Teacher will look at each case individually.

The school will look at the child's overall attendance; the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of requests; whether the parent gave advance notice and the pupils attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling. They will also take into account the impact on the child's education and the potential disruption to it i.e. impact on sequences of learning, beginning of terms and school year, end of assessment periods/exam periods and lead up to them.

Leave of absence must be agreed in advance of booking and of taking the holiday and cannot be approved in retrospect.

Absence taken without permission will be a consideration for legal action. At the discretion of the Head Teacher this may include a fixed penalty notice.

Where the reason for absence has been misrepresented by a parent, such as a parent reporting their child is off for medical reasons and then taking the child on holiday or for day out, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. There will also be a consideration for legal action, which may include a fixed penalty notice. As set down by the Department for Education, Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised absence. In Hampshire, Penalty Notices are issued when a pupil has had 10 or more half-day sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence, in the last 10 school week period.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets:

The Government expectation for average attendance is: 96% overall for individual pupils and overall across the school.

At Grateley, we have set ourselves a target of 97% for individual pupils and overall across the school.

The school will send out traffic light letters the end of every term to notify parents of their child's attendance since the start of the year.

96% and above - green

95.9% - 90% - amber

90% or below – red.

Where the attendance of an individual child is causing concern the following letters will be sent to the parents by way of a warning.

When the child's absence falls at or below 93%- the Head teacher will send out a letter alerting the parents to this attendance issue.

When the child's absence falls below 90%, the Head teacher will send out a letter requesting a meeting with the parents as well as carrying out an Early Help Hub assessment.

If the child's absence persists then a penalty notice will be issued.

If the penalty notice does not improve the child's attendance, then the case will be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are the Head Teacher, The Deputy Head Teacher and the Administration Officer: Class Teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance issues and impact on a child's education or welfare to the school leadership team.

Where pupils experience long term medical issues the school will discuss attendance separately with parents.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

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Date of review: September 2020