



# Grateley Primary School

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

## Attendance Policy

Signed Chair of Governors:

Developed: September 2024

Reviewed:

Next review: September 2027

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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The Governing Board**

The Governing Board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **3.2 The Head Teacher**

The Head Teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

#### **3.3 The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance**

The Designated Senior Leader is the Head Teacher, Gemma Hill, they are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for attendance is Gemma Hill and can be contacted via 01264 889240 or [headteacher@grateley.hants.sch.uk](mailto:headteacher@grateley.hants.sch.uk)

#### **3.4 The Attendance Team**

The school Attendance Team are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff where appropriate and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance

- Working with external agencies to tackle persistent absence
- Advising when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance team are Gemma Hill and Sarah Kitching and they can be contacted on 01264 889240 or at adminoffice@grateley.hants.sch.uk

### 3.5 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.05am and 1.05pm each day.

### 3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents and carers to the Headteacher in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### 3.7 Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time, their child should be in class for registration by 9:00am
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

#### What to do if my child is absent:

First Day Absence

A child not attending school is considered to be a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence - Messages can be left at any time on the school answerphone and can be reported through email.
- Or, you can call into school and report the absence directly to office staff.
- If no contact is made then this will be recorded on the school attendance system.

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you if we have not heard from you. This is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels if unauthorised absence causes attendance to fall below 90%

Second Day Absence If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers on the second day of absence the school will contact other adults named by you on their Emergency Contact Form. If your child's welfare is still in question we will attempt a home visit. We will then undertake a Risk Assessment and contact emergency

services accordingly. This is a 'Safeguarding First' approach recommended by the Multi-Agency Review.

**Third Day Absence** If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parent/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a 'child missing in education' procedure, as set down by Hampshire County Council Guidance. We will make all reasonable enquires to establish contact with parents and the child.

**Tenth Day Absence** We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupils who is absent without a satisfactory explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the Local Authority is notified that the child is 'at risk of missing'. Children's Services Staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. We ask parents to support us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date contact number.

**Continued or Ongoing Absence** If your child misses 10% or 3 weeks or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason they are defined as persistent absentees. Where this absence is authorised the school will:

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality of each of these children during the following academic year and speak with parents at parent consultations if individual attendance has fallen below 90% or lateness to school has had a detrimental impact on the child or the child's class.
- Send follow up letters where attendance and punctuality do not show signs of improvement.
- Arrange face to face meetings with parents when the attendance continues to be below the 90% expectation. We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and support you to take steps to improve this ongoing situation.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the start of the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Authorised absence
- Late
- Medical
- Unauthorised

See Appendix 1 for the DfE Attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8:55am and will be kept open until 9.00am. The register for the second session will be taken on return from lunchtime.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am by calling the school office and leaving a message on the absence line or by sending an email to [adminoffice@grateley.hants.sch.uk](mailto:adminoffice@grateley.hants.sch.uk)

The parent/carer can leave a message on the absence line or can speak directly with a member of the office staff.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness, a reason for the illness must be recorded, **'unwell'** is not an acceptable reason.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified.

## 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as an authorised absence as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment by providing us with evidence from the medical organisation e.g., appointment letter, email, text message etc.

Parents can email the admin box, with details about their child's medical appointments.

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

## 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- After the register has closed, will be marked as late, using the appropriate code

We monitor the minute's late report and if persistently late, the pupil's parents are sent a letter. If the lateness continues, a second letter is sent. This will state that there has been no improvement, and if this still continues, the late arrivals will go down as unauthorised. Ongoing and continued lateness is considered an **unauthorised absence and is subject to legal action.**

Parents of children who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem. Support may be offered as appropriate. If the support offered is declined or not taken seriously and a child has 10 or more sessions (equivalent to 5 days) of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a penalty notice in accordance with Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices for non-attendance.

#### 4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning by approximately 10am. This is to ascertain the reason for absence.
- If there has been no contact an email will be sent.
- If there is still no contact a second telephone call will be made by lunchtime
- Emergency contacts will be called the following day if no reason for absence has been ascertained. This is due to safeguarding the child.
- If no reason for absence is given a letter will be sent to parents this will be emailed and posted.

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will inform parents half termly about their child's attendance and absence levels if there are any concerns.

A summary of each child's attendance is included in their annual report.

Parents will receive attendance information if their child's attendance is below 90%.

### 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

The Head Teacher can, if needed change an authorised absence into an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

#### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. Where possible, this should be submitted at least 6 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with the leave of absence form. These are available from the school office, electronic or hard copies are available. The Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from a religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveler pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travelers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travelers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveler family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- For flexi-schooling requests parents are asked to contact the Head Teacher to discuss.

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

In Education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

### Legal Measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered through a referral by our school to Hampshire's Attendance Legal Panels where:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures are for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

### Legal Measures for absence taken when the head teacher has declined parent/carers request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

1. Non approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
2. A holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence is for 10 or more sessions (5 days) in any 100 possible school sessions then a penalty notice for nonattendance will be issued

Where a child has unauthorised absence our school must enforce Hampshire's Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices or follow its guidance on other Legal Measures for Non-Attendance. The Code of Conduct is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from <http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.htm>

The code of conduct states that:

Schools or Hampshire Local Authority will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:



- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded U) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded L), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code O), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
2. 1 or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

Parents and Carers will be warned of the likelihood of a penalty notice being issued for unauthorised absence either via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the schools attendance policy and website.

The penalty notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued.

For each case of unauthorised absence, Hampshire County Council will decide whether a penalty notice is issued to one or more parent/carers for each child. N.B This could mean four penalty notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday i.e. one penalty notice for each child to each parent

Each penalty notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid, Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the nonattendance.

Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves.

Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of Penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

For further information parents/carers should visit Hampshire County Councils website at:

<http://www3.hants.gov.uk/education/has/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties.htm>

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between school, parents and the child. To help with this we will:

- Continually raise awareness of importance of good attendance
- Promote a welcoming & positive atmosphere, where a child feels safe and that attendance is valued

- Enable parents to feel that their support of this policy is recognised by school as a vital contribution to their child's education
- Create attitudes towards high standards of punctuality and attendance, which children should retain throughout life
- Ensure that attendance is maintained effectively and absences are followed up promptly by our Admin, Attendance Team and DSLs
- Meet legal requirements, with particular reference to identifying authorised absence
- Monitor register data on a daily basis in order to identify patterns of absence and lateness, if they are occurring through our daily attendance protocol
- If absence/punctuality become a matter for concern, our pastoral family lead will, in discussion with the Leadership Team, use strategies devised in order to raise parental awareness of the importance of attendance and punctuality, so that they will make more effort to ensure that their child attends school punctually and regularly
- Refer to other agencies when appropriate
- Ensure all staff deal consistently with absence and punctuality in accordance with school protocol
- Ensure information on attendance is presented to Governors
- Ensure good liaison regarding shared families across other schools
- Ensure good liaison when a change of school occurs

Class attendance certificates are awarded in assembly and if classes have 100% attendance then the children receive a small reward. We talk to parent/carers about, 'every minute counts' in school and the impact of missing school.

Where attendance has improved an 'improvement letter' may be appropriate to share with parents.

## **7. Attendance monitoring**

### **7.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse weekly reports
- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level (may be monitored daily)
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- A fortnightly meeting to review attendance is held by the attendance team.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### **7.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will also:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families

- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Any child 50% or below will be monitored weekly and appropriate next steps taken
- Persistent absence letters are sent home

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every three years by Gemma Hill, Head Teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy
- Positive Behavior Approach policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due

		to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day