



Attendance Policy

Date of Policy: September 2018

Date of Review: September 2019

Responsibility of: The Governing Body of Grangefield Primary School

The policy was reviewed by: Mrs Lewis (Head Teacher) in consultation with members of the Governing Body and the Children and Family Support Worker

The policy was approved by the Governing Body on: December 2017

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to meet their full potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

1. attainment in school
2. relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships
3. confidence to attempt new work and work alongside each other.

At Grangefield Primary School, we have the expectation of 100% attendance from every pupil.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding which intervention strategy to apply.

It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance:

1. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening
2. Prior to the engagement of external attendance support services, the school may issue letters to parents clearly defining the concerns within school regarding a pupil's absence. It is hoped that a quick response and change in levels of absence will prevent the need for further involvement.

Parental responsibility

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' represents one parent/both parents/guardian or carer with whom the child resides.

1. It is the duty for parents to ensure their child receives a suitable "efficient full-time education" as set out in section 7 of the Education Act 1996.
2. Parents whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and registered at school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If parents don't do this, they may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Parents are informed of their responsibility to ensure their children attend regularly in the school A-Z.
3. Attendance may be discussed with parents during consultation evenings.
4. Parents have a legal obligation to ensure their children receive a full time education.
5. Punctuality is also stressed as lateness impacts on learning not only for individual, but the class as a whole.

Arrival and Registration

At Grangefield School we have the expectation of no recorded lates for every pupil.

1. All children should be in the school ready to register at 9.00am.
2. Children are entitled to enter the school gate from 8.45am.
3. The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.
4. Morning registration ends at 9.05.
5. If a child arrives after the morning registration period, he/she must report to the school office and will be marked as 'Late'.
6. Arrival after 9.15am is recorded as an unauthorised late mark.

Illness and Medical/Dental Appointments

Illness

1. When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school before 9.15am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.
2. When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the Family Support Worker will endeavour to contact the parent/carers and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reasons for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

3. If your child is absent due to vomiting then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

Medical/Dental appointments

1. Every effort should be made to arrange medical and dental appointments outside school hours.
2. An appointment card or verification document by the doctors/dentist/hospital may be required.
3. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should return to school directly after the appointment.

School Responsibility – THE LAW and School Attendance

All schools are required by law to have an admissions register and attendance register. Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 the governing body is responsible for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated, each regulation applies to all schools in England.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 restricts authorised leave of absence to be for families with exceptional circumstances. The decision rests with the school and all applications for absence requests must be made in advance by the parent the pupil normally resides with.

The Education (School Attendance Targets) (England) Regulations 2007 require governing bodies of all maintained schools to set overall absence targets, and for some governing bodies to set “focused absence targets” as required by the Secretary of State. School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that will be collected every term through the School Census.

The Senior Leadership Team and all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. The Head Teacher holds responsibility for attendance matters, supported by the Attendance Administration staff.

Attendance is recorded and data stored and analysed using the SIMS Attendance module.

It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers; these are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court. Class Teachers are legally responsible for marking their class register twice per day at the start of each session.

The Head Teacher, not parents, authorises absence; Grangefield Primary adhere to the DfE guidelines in authorising absence. Absence for any reason during term time is discouraged.

Absence known to be for the following reasons would be authorised:

1. Illness
2. Religious observance
3. Attendance at medical appointments which cannot be made outside school hours

The local authority has full responsibility for prosecuting parents where absence continues to be problematic.

Family Holidays/Absence during Term Time

The Governors recognise that pupil absence during term time can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning. Parents are therefore strongly urged to avoid booking a family holiday in term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils from school for a holiday and in law, have to apply for permission in advance. The right of the Head Teacher to authorise absence for this reason has been taken away, except in exceptional circumstances.

When an application is made for authorised absence during term time the Head Teacher will give consideration to the following:

1. Nature of the proposed absence/is this an exceptional circumstance
2. The age of the child
3. The timing of the absence
4. The attendance pattern in the present and previous academic years. Absence will not be authorised where attendance is lower than 95% or where the absence would take attendance below 95%.
5. The child's progress

Examples of what may constitute exceptional circumstances:

1. To have a short absence to attend a family wedding, or an exceptional family celebration (e.g. an 80th birthday of a grandparent); or to attend a special family reunion; for specific religious observance.
2. If a parent, due to nature of the work, cannot possibly take time off during the regular school holidays. This would need to be evidenced by a letter from the employer. Factors indicated above will still be taken in to account.

Please note to have a week's winter or summer holiday in school time, because the cost is cheaper during term time, does not constitute an exceptional circumstance. The date and time of the request will be looked into when considering the exceptional circumstances listed above.

Children who are persistently absent or late miss a significant amount of learning.

Pupils with persistent absenteeism will be identified (pupils with more than 10% absence rate) and, where needed, an action plan will be put in place to address the underlying reasons for the absence level. If actions do not lead to improved attendance, a meeting will be arranged with the Children and Families Support worker, head teacher or TDP Attendance Officer. Persistent absence can lead to a penalty notice.

Definitions of Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

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 or by telephone.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian.

For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only a school can make an absence authorised.

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without permission of the Head Teacher.

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

1. Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
2. Truancy before or during the school day
3. Absences that have never been properly explained
4. Holidays not agreed

Penalty notices

If a child of compulsory education age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered or at alternative provision made for them then the parent may be guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The Penalty notice would be issued by the Local Authority.

Payment of a Penalty Notice fine

Arrangements for the payment are detailed on the Penalty Notice and are as follows:

- If paid within 21 days, the penalty is £60 per responsible parent, per child
- If paid after 21 days, but within 28 days, the penalty is £120, per responsible parent, per child.

Example:

In a one child family where both parents have equal responsibility, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £120 if paid within 21 days and £240 if paid after 21 days.

In a two child family, where both parents have equal responsibility and both children have been absent from school, the Fixed Penalty Notice would be £240 if paid within 21days and £480 if paid after 21days. The LA will not accept payment after 28 days and will, proceed to prosecution.

How we encourage pupil attendance at Grangefield through positive reward and recognition

The prime benefit derived from regular attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

A star is awarded at the end of each week in super achiever assembly for the class with the highest percentage attendance that week. The classes are working at getting as many stars over the year. They are displayed on the outside of their doors.

Other means of celebrating individual attendance will be given at various points during the year including an end of year picnic with the head teacher for children with 100% attendance.

MONITORING AND REVIEW

This policy will be subject to regular review in light of changes made to legislation or the publication of new advice.