

Greenvale Primary School



Attendance Policy

Policy Date	September 2023
Signed by Head Teacher	Mrs A Allnutt
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Approved by Governing Body		
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Chair of Governors	Print Name	Date

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1. Introduction

At Greenvale Primary School we aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to strive for excellence. For a child to reach their full potential and experience every opportunity the school has to offer, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers, the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

The senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance is Mrs Allnutt, Headteacher.

The member of the school staff that parents/carers should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Miss S Hatt, Office Administrator
01634 409521 or office@greenvale.medway.sch.uk

The member of staff that parents/carers should contact for more individual support is:

Mrs M Harris, Family Support and Parenting Practitioner
01634 409521, office@greenvale.medway.sch.uk

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

3. 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](#)
- It also refers to:
- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring their child regularly attends school is the parents/carers legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality and promote this to their child.
- Ensure their child arrives on time to their class by 8.45am.
- Inform the school if they are going to be late e.g. a car breaks down, an urgent appointment is made.
- Inform the school via telephone or email 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 1 emergency contact number for their child and update all contact numbers when required.
- Ensure that, where possible, non- urgent appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. If an appointment must be taken in school time, evidence of that appointment must be shown to the school office.

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day on time, unless they are too ill to do so.

School Office Administrator/Office Staff

School admin/office staff will:

- Ensure registers have been completed correctly
- Complete daily attendance checks for absence and lateness follow up in accordance with this policy
- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on SIMS.
- Report the absence of Looked After Children to Social Services.

- Transfer calls from parents/carers to the Mrs Harris, Family Support and Parenting Practitioner in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Headteacher (senior leader in charge of attendance)
- Working with education AASSA (Attendance Advisory Service to Schools and Academies) to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance twice daily via SIMS and communicating concerns with attendance and punctuality to the attendance officer.

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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The governor overseeing attendance is Mrs J Reid.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementing 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

The Attendance Lead

The Attendance Lead is 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
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The Attendance Lead responsible for attendance is Mrs Allnutt, Headteacher.

5. Recording Attendance

Schools are legally required to keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register. The register will be marked twice a day: at the start of the school day (morning session) and after lunchtime ends (afternoon session).

Every half-day absence from school must be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. The school uses the DfE attendance codes to record attendance (see Appendix 1), this is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

All information held on the attendance register is kept for 3 years after the date the entry was made.

6. Lateness and punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world. Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital learning and important messages from their class teacher. Every minute a child is late to school can add up to a lot of learning time over the year!

The school day at Greenvale Primary School:

Class doors are open from 8.30am – 8.45am

The first register is taken at 8.45am

The second register is taken at 12.45pm

The end of the school day is 3.15pm

How we manage lateness

- The school register is taken at 8.45am. Your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in class by that time.
- Children arriving after 8.45am are required to come in to school via the school office. They must be accompanied by an adult to confirm the reason for lateness which will be recorded.
- The registers will close at 9.15am. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site 'U', but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.
- Repeated, unexplained or persistent lateness will be referred to the AAP (Attendance Advisory Practitioner)
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness.
- From time to time, the AAP will undertake a 'Late Gate' check, greeting late arrivals at the main gate.

7. Absence Procedures

First day of absence

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If a child is absent, parents/carers must contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence.

If a child is absent the school will:

- Telephone or email the parent/carer on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them – this is because we have a duty to ensure the child's safety as well as their regular school attendance

- Invite parents/carers in to discuss the situation if absences persist and this is deemed appropriate
- Refer the matter to the AAP if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%
- If the child is subject to a child protection plan the procedures set out for day two unexplained absence will be implemented immediately

Second day of absence

If a child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers on the second day of absence, we will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact. This will include making enquiries to known friends, wider family and undertaking home visits. Where the school is unable to undertake a home visit, we will contact the police to request they undertake a welfare check. This action will be taken on day one if the child has complex needs or is subject to a child protection plan.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an 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. This is known as a Child Missing in Education.

8. Persistent absence

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents/carers to resolve this. Projected PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system. All our PA children and their parents/carers are subject to an Intervention Plan. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Attendance Advisory Officer and some cases may lead to legal action being initiated. Some children may have acute health conditions which, despite the best efforts of parents and carers, lead to significant ongoing periods of absence. We will work closely with parents/carers to ensure we develop support systems which enable each child to attend school as often as physically possible. Children should never be excluded from school or activities on medical grounds unless they are acutely unwell or hospitalised. If acutely unwell, children will access hospital schools supported by their home school as appropriate. We will maintain close links with children and their families during any sustained periods of absence to ensure continuity of relationships and provision. Children in recovery can be supported by a flexible return to schooling which is manageable for them. Families of children with acute physical and medical conditions that lead to pervasive absence will not follow the same systems and procedures laid out in this policy.

9. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason, such as:

- Illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised)
- Medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause)
- 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 the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller 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.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes the following; however, this list is not exhaustive:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- Their own or family birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher - may result in school applying to the local authority to issue a penalty notice or if you have previously been issued a penalty notice, the school may request a direct prosecution by the local authority
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

10. Penalty notices

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.

The local authority will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and improvements are not being made. Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a penalty notice, each parent the child resides with must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken.

11. Requests for leaves of absence during term time

As of 1st September 2013, there has been a change to The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations Act 2006. Headteacher's may no longer grant a 'Leave of Absence' in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, any such absences not deemed as exceptional circumstances will be unauthorised. Holidays or overseas trip absences in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking students away in school time.

All pupils are encouraged to attend school every day of the 190 days that school is open. That leaves 175 days for family holidays, shopping trips and other needs. As a school we prioritise teaching and learning, therefore, in accordance with the local and National guidelines, Greenvale Primary School does not authorise holidays during term time. Permission, however, may be granted only in exceptional circumstances when the benefit of the absence far outweighs the benefit of school attendance.

When requesting leave of absence during term time, may you be reminded that 10 days of absence equates to 20 sessions of schooling missed, which is equivalent to 5.2% absence. Please note: any child who has taken term time holiday will be required to provide medical evidence for any further absences during the remainder of the academic year.

Any absences due to ill health before or after a school holiday will need to provide medical evidence in order for the school to authorise the absence.

In the case of all unauthorised leave of absences incurring 10 or more unauthorised sessions (5 days), an application for a Fixed Penalty Notice will be made to the Local Authority.

If a Parent/Carer request for a term time holiday is refused, but the holiday is taken, it will be classified an unauthorised absence and may be subject to a penalty notice being served to each parent/carers that resides with the child by Medway's Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA).

A formal application must be made in writing, in ADVANCE and returned to the Attendance Lead (Headteacher).

Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted.

If the parent/carers removes a pupil from their education for the purpose of a suspected holiday, without advising the school, this will be referred to the AAP. On the third day of absence, a letter will be sent requesting that the parent/carers contacts the school within 2 days to confirm the reason for absence. No response will assume to be a holiday absence and a penalty notice(s) may be issued.

There is no automatic right to term time leave of absence and your request is likely to be declined except in the most exceptional circumstances. Each application will be considered on its own merit and the attendance record(s) of the child/ren concerned will be taken into account when making a decision.

12. Understanding barriers to attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance is best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain, however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss

reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

13. Strategies to promote and maintain high standards of attendance and punctuality

At Greenvale Primary we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The school will:

- Ensure that all new parents are introduced to the Attendance Policy and information on attendance will be included in the school welcome pack.
- Use the weekly newsletter to update the school community about the week's attendance and promote good attendance.
- Approach individual parents where there is concern about their child's attendance or punctuality.
- Maintain and promote a set of class rules which refer to punctuality and readiness for learning.
- Reward the class/es with the highest attendance each week and celebrate in assembly.
- Maintain and update records within SIMS and CPOMS.
- Liaise with the Attendance Advisory Practitioner (AAP) during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns.

14. Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data every 2 weeks with the AAP across the school and at an individual basis
- Provide an attendance report at each Governor meeting
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- 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.

15. 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

16. Further information

Home Education

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from school in favour of home education. Parents must inform the school of their decision to home educate in writing. Once the school receives this notification, they will then inform the local authority and take the child off their roll. It is important that the decision to home educate is discussed and considered carefully. Parents should talk to the school about any difficulties their child may be having; once their child has been taken off roll their place will be allocated and may not be available to their child if they change their mind at a later date.

Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviews with the child and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being.

17. Monitoring Arrangements

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body to monitor overall attendance. They request a termly report from the Headteacher. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The Governing Body will, therefore, examine closely information provided for them and seek to ensure that attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school keeps accurate attendance records through a computerised registration system (SIMS).

18. Links with other policies

Safeguarding and Child Protection
Behaviour for Learning
Equality Information and Objectives

Appendix 1 – DfE Attendance codes and meaning

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Present at afternoon registration
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	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
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed)	Pupil is on holiday that was not approved by the school
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Pupil has been authorised holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
L	Late (before registers closed)	Pupil arrives after class door has closed but before registers close
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason. This code should be amended when the reason is given or if no reason given, replaced with an O code.
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity

D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending another establishment)	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed due to severe weather, local/national emergency
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	School closed to pupils – planned	Whole school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day