

GREASBY JUNIOR SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

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. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children although in the interests of fairness to the children, we do not provide rewards for high attendance – children who are genuinely ill cannot and should not come to school.

Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the Governing Body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised. At Greasby Junior School registration is done electronically, and an Administrative Assistant is employed to record and account for absences.

2. Definitions and Procedures

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 carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note and/or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

NB: Amendments made to the Education Regulations 2006, taking effect from 1st September 2013, provide Headteachers with the discretion to consider authorising an absence during term time, only in 'exceptional circumstances'.

The Governing Bodies of both Greasby Junior School and Greasby Infant School have agreed the following criteria for such circumstances:

Exceptional Circumstances under which absences during term time may be authorised:

If parents are limited in the time that they can take their holidays due to factors such as:

- A factory shutdown
- One/both parents work in the Armed Forces

Other factors will be considered by the Governing Body in light of the amendments to the Education Regulations 2006.

Parents wishing to apply for their child to be absent during term time must complete a 'Request for Absence Form' available on the school website (or from the School Office).

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.
- Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.
- If the school does not consider the circumstances to be 'exceptional' and the parent takes the child out of school during term time anyway, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
- The Education Welfare Services will be notified of the absence taken and a Penalty Notice will be issued if the child's attendance has fallen below 90%.

3. School Procedure if a child is absent

- When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. If the child's parent/carer has not contacted the school to explain the absence, the Administrative Assistant (based in the school office) will make contact and record the reason for the absence.
- When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent/carer explaining the absence.
- If no written reason is forthcoming, a letter reminding the parent/carer of the procedure is sent home.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence. For example, if a child has a medical appointment.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher will notify the school office immediately using the school's internal telephone system. The Administrative Assistant or the Administrative Manager will contact the child's parent/carer in order to check on the safety of the child. If contact with a responsible adult cannot be made and the child's whereabouts are unknown, the police will be contacted.

If parents know in advance of an absence, for a dentist/doctor's appointment etc. authorized passes can be obtained from the school office. Truancy officers may request proof of absence from parents at certain times of the year.

4. Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work if they are capable of working.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, support services will be contacted so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

5. Repeated unauthorised absences

The school will contact the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will contact their Educational Social Welfare Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents/carers understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

6. Rewards for good attendance

It is the view of the school and of the Governing Body that children who are genuinely ill should not miss out on a reward that they were unable to achieve. Instead, rewards are given to those who show the school's main principles of care, courtesy and consideration whilst they are at the school.

7. Attendance targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

8. Reporting to parents

Parents are given a detailed breakdown of their child's absence record in the form of a registration certificate, included in the child's annual report.

9. Monitoring and review

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will receive regular updates on attendance from the headteacher. The Governing Body

also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a concern about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents/carers.

This policy will be regularly reviewed by the Governing Body.

Policy written by Adrian Martin - Headteacher