

GREENS NORTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL – ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by	Date	Due for Review
Mr Richard Owen (Chair of Governors)	July 2018	July 2020
Mrs Sue Marsh (Head Teacher)	July 2018	July 2020

PHILOSOPHY

Greens Norton Primary School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning. The school also believes that regular and punctual attendance teaches pupils valuable skills for later life.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

We will identify and address, as speedily as possible, any problems affecting attendance and adopt, at all times, a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance.

PRINCIPLES

The school works hard to ensure that all pupils feel supported and valued. The school will promote good attendance and support children experiencing problems.

Staff will be made aware of the registration process, regulations and education law.

Registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session and attendance regularly monitored.

Attendance rates will be regularly monitored by the Headteacher and reported to school governors termly.

The importance of good attendance will be highlighted each week in Celebration Assembly when certificates will be awarded to the class(es) with the highest attendance.

WORKING TOGETHER

Improving attendance is the responsibility of everyone in the school community – pupils, parents, governors and all staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PUPILS

- Attend school regularly and punctually and be ready to learn.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS/CARERS

- Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and ready to learn. Good sleep patterns, healthy eating and exercise all support good attendance and learning.



- If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, parents are requested to notify the school on the first day of absence. If this does not happen, the school office will contact parents. Therefore it is important that all personal details must be updated by parents. A pupil's absence from school will be considered unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received from the parent. Parents will be informed promptly of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance.
- Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical / dental appointments for their child during school hours. Holidays should not be taken in term time and will not be authorised.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL

- Keep parents informed regularly via termly reports of their child's current attendance percentage.
- Employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality.
- Investigate promptly all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents.
- Report poor attendance to the LA where necessary. Failure by a parent or carer to ensure regular attendance at school for a child will be considered a safeguarding matter.

Attendance is the responsibility of all staff.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF GOVERNORS

- Attendance data will be reported to the governors at least termly.
- The Headteacher will report concerns relating to attendance to the Teaching and Learning Committee who will bring this to the attention of the full Governing body.
- The Governing body is aware of the attendance profile of Greens Norton CE Primary School.
- The Governing body will monitor the patterns and trends of reasons for absence and be aware of any impact on the whole school and pupils' achievement.

WHAT IS AN ACCEPTABLE ATTENDANCE RATE?

The vast majority of our pupils achieve over 95% attendance and this is what we expect from all our pupils as a minimum. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

Attendance of below 90% is considered persistent absence and may lead to LA involvement. Parents/carers will be informed if their child's attendance falls below 90% at the end of any single term and the child's ongoing attendance will be monitored carefully by the child's class teacher and the Headteacher. If the child's attendance does not improve, parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the persistent absence and to draw up an action plan to address any issues underlying the poor attendance. (See Appendix 1)

REGISTRATION

The register will be taken at 9am and 1pm in Wrens class (the reception class), and 9am and 1:15pm for all other classes, by the class teacher. It will be returned promptly to the school office where office staff will follow up on any absences for that day.

If the school has not heard from parents/carers regarding a child's absence by 9.15am then office staff will start to call all the contact numbers that have been provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. Accurate and up to date contact details for at least two people, but preferably three are essential. If contact has not been made and therefore the safety of the child confirmed after a reasonable amount of time then

staff will endeavor to make a home visit. However, if there is no response from the home then police will be contacted, as the child will then be classed as a 'missing child'.

PROCEDURES FOR LATE ARRIVAL

The school day starts at 8.55 am and children are permitted into classes from 8.45 am. Our pedestrian gate by Cox Gardens is locked promptly at 9am. Any child arriving after that time must report to the Front Office where their lateness will be recorded. Parents are contacted by the Headteacher should lateness persist.

Parents are asked to contact the school if they know that their child will be late for school due to a medical appointment or other good reason. If the school has not been advised that a child will be late then the session will be marked as an 'unauthorised absence'.

Children arriving after the start of school but before the registers close will be coded as late and marked with an 'L' in the register. Any pupil arriving after 9.30am will be marked as late after registers close, coded with a 'U'. This is recorded as an unauthorised absence for the morning session unless the school has been notified of an acceptable reason.

Where children are absent and the school has not been notified, the school office will contact parents as soon as possible after the registers have been taken at 9am.

Parents of children who are persistently late will be contacted by the school receiving (a) a letter highlighting the school's concern and (b) a request for a meeting to explore issues and ways in which lateness can be addressed. (See Appendix 2)

RECORDING ABSENCES

The office staff will record absences, either as authorised or unauthorised, using a list of prescribed codes. Consistent criteria should be applied to decision making. If staff have reason to doubt the explanation offered about whether a particular absence is genuine, the absence should be recorded as unauthorised. Parents will be advised that it would be in their best interest to obtain medical evidence, when children are absent due to illness.

PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN A CHILD IS ILL

Children who are absent from school following sickness and/or diarrhoea need to be 48 hours clear before returning to school

If a pupil is ill, the parent/carer should notify the school by telephone or e-mail on the first day of absence as early as possible before 9am where possible, stating the reason. This will ensure that the absence is recorded as 'authorised'.

If a pupil is ill for a second day then the parent/carer needs to contact the school again.

If the parent/carer knows the pupil will be absent for several days, the school should be informed of the time-period and no further calls will be needed.

If a pupil is ill beyond the time-period given, the school should be contacted otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Statutory guidance released by the DfE in August 2013 states that ‘Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances’. The regulations do allow headteachers to sanction absence in ‘exceptional circumstances’, but this is wholly at the discretion of the Headteacher and is based on the principle that term times are for education and ‘exceptional circumstances’ should be rare, significant, unavoidable and short. Parents will be asked to complete a request form if they intend to take their child out of school during term time (See Appendix 3). Requested absence will be looked at on an individual basis and will be at the discretion of the Headteacher, however ‘exceptional circumstances’ will include;

- Family bereavement or close friend bereavement
- Other compassionate grounds, e.g. to visit a seriously ill relative
- Immediate family wedding taking part on school day – not travelling to a wedding unless it is abroad in which case one day either side of the wedding will be authorised
- Family crisis
- Examinations off site
- Attendance at an event at the request of a public organisation
- Where parents request leave of absence for religious observance, this would normally be granted for the day of the celebration
- Visit to new school – only if family is relocating

Where parents take children out of school without authorisation the absence will be coded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absences of five or more days may result in a fixed penalty notice for parents from the Local Authority.

APPENDIX 1

First Letter to be sent when a child's attendance falls below 90%

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance

As stated in the school's Attendance policy, Greens Norton Primary School is committed to maximising attendance for all pupils to enable them to benefit fully from their education. We believe that regular attendance is vital for effective learning. The school also believes that regular and punctual attendance teaches pupils valuable skills for later life. We aim to give a high priority to conveying the importance of regular and punctual attendance to parents and pupils. We recognise the importance of establishing strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance.

To this end I am writing to inform you that _____'s attendance for the current academic year now stands at ____%. This is well below the expected 95% that the majority of our pupils achieve. Whilst I recognise that the absences have been related to illness, it is important that every effort is made to ensure that _____ does not miss any more school.

If we can be of any further help in supporting your child's attendance in school, or if you have any questions with regards to this, please do get in touch.

Thank you for your support.

Yours sincerely

Sue Marsh

Second letter to be sent when a child's attendance shows no significant improvement following the first letter

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance

Following the letter sent to you on _____ regarding your child's attendance which had fallen below 90%, I am writing to you with continuing concerns.

Your child's attendance for this current academic year now stands at ____%.

Please make an appointment within the next two weeks to meet with me to discuss how we can work together to improve this situation for your child.

I look forward to hearing from you as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

Sue Marsh

APPENDIX 2

Letter to be sent following persistent lateness

Dear Parent/Carer

----- has been late for school on ----- occasions so far this year.

Children are expected to arrive in class between 8.45 and 8.55 am; the register is taken promptly at 9.00 am. Arrival between 9.00 and 9.30 am is coded as late. Arrival after the registers close at 9.30 am is coded as an unauthorised absence.

..... has had lates and unauthorised absences due to extreme lateness this year. Not only is your child missing out on valuable learning experiences if they are late, but it is also very disruptive for them and for others if they arrive after the lesson has begun.

Government regulations are that all children should attend school regularly, and on time. The school recognises that on the very odd occasion, maybe one day a year, there are some circumstances when late arrival at school is unavoidable. However regular late attendance is not acceptable.

----- attendance is now being monitored carefully, and if he / she continues to be late you will be asked to make an appointment to discuss the issues surrounding your child's lateness. Please make an appointment if you would like to discuss any difficulties that are causing your child(ren) to be late attending school.

Yours sincerely

Sue Marsh

APPENDIX 3

Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term Time

Dear Parents / Carers,

Due to changes in legislation, we are no longer able to authorise a leave of absence during term time, except in exceptional circumstances; please see the school's Attendance Policy on the website for further details. A holiday during term time is not classified as exceptional circumstances and will therefore be unauthorised.

If you would like to take your child out of school during term time then you must complete the form overleaf informing us of the dates when your child (ren) will be absent. This ensures that safeguarding procedures are met and all children are accounted for every day.

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for subsequent lessons that build on this learning after their return. This poses a risk of under achievement which we must seek to avoid.

We appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours sincerely,

On behalf of the school's governing body.

Request for Exceptional Leave of Absence during Term Time

To the Headteacher,

I hereby request leave of absence to be granted to:

..... Class

..... Class

..... Class

The first day of absence to be

The last day of absence to be

Total number of school days to be missed

Reasons why leave of absence is requested during term time:

.....

.....

Signature: (person with parental responsibility) Date:

REPLY SLIP

Child's name: % attendance this year

Child's name: % attendance this year

Child's name: % attendance this year

Leave of absence has been authorised for days.

I am unable to authorise the leave of absence.

Signed: Headteacher of Greens Norton CE Primary School

