



GRAYSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Church of England (Aided)

Attendance Policy

Policy Schedule	
Reviewed	Autumn 2023
Ratified by Governing Body	Autumn 2023
Next Review	Autumn 2024

Introduction

Our school, the Local Authority and the Diocese strongly believe that excellent school attendance and punctuality is essential to ensure the best possible outcomes and academic progression, and to build children's self-esteem and social skills. We expect that pupils attend 100% of the time, unless they are unwell or the absence has been authorised by the Headteacher.

Expectations

We expect that all children will:

- attend school every day
- attend school punctually
- attend school prepared for the day (having had adequate sleep, a nourishing breakfast, dressed appropriately and ready to learn)

We expect that all parents and carers will:

- be aware of the legal requirement for their child to attend school every day
- when the child is unable to attend school due to illness, inform the school by telephone on the first day of their child's absence by 9.30am and on any subsequent days
- inform the school of any contagious illnesses, and not send a child back to school for 48 hours after they have been sick to reduce the risk of passing on infections to others
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments

We expect that staff will:

- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children
- encourage good attendance
- ensure all pupils are registered accurately
- monitor all children's attendance
- contact the parents/carers of a child who is absent as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of children who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school's and the Local Authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- refer on-going, irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance, to the Inclusion Officer

Lateness

Lateness disrupts the child's learning and the learning of others in the class. Children are welcome in school from 8.30am when there will be a member of staff on duty. Children should not arrive before 8.30am unless they are attending breakfast club.

Registration

- Children in Key Stage 2 (Kingfishers, Swallows, Swifts and Kites): the bell rings at 8.35am, the register will close at 8.55am
- Children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 (Wrens, Woodpeckers and Robins): the bell rings at 8.40am, the register will close at 9am

If children arrive late (after 8.35am for KS2 and after 8.40am for EYFS and KS1), then parents should bring their child into the office and sign them in. They will then be taken to their class by a member of staff.

In Key Stage 2, if a child arrives after 8.35am but before 8:55am they will be marked 'L' (late before registers closed). If a child arrives after 8:55am they will be marked 'U' (unauthorised – late after registers closed).

In Reception and KS1, if a child arrives after 8.40am but before 9am they will be marked 'L' (late before registers closed). If a child arrives after 9am they will be marked 'U' (unauthorised – late after registers closed).

Requests for absence in term time

It is expected that families will take their holidays during the school holidays. If families plan to remove their child from class for any reason other than illness or a medical appointment, the parent/carer must complete a form provided by the school, explaining the reasons for the request. It is very unusual for permission for leave of absence in term time to be given, this only occurs in exceptional circumstances. Once a request form is received, parents/carers will receive written notification as to whether the request will be authorised. If the request is unauthorised and the child is taken out of school, the absence will be recorded with a 'G' (unauthorised holiday absence). Penalty notices may, at a future date, be issued if the number of unauthorised absence does not reduce (see below).

Authorised absence can be granted in the following circumstances:

- if the child is ill (however the school has a duty to monitor such absence to ensure that a child is not being kept away regularly for minor ailments)
- for a special day set aside for religious observance by the faith to which the child's family belong
- to attend the funeral or wedding of a close relative

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a child does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- if a child is absent without parents /carers notifying the school by 9.30am they will be contacted
- if absence is persistent or recurring a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service

Any absence will be followed up by the Head teacher. If school become concerned about the regularity of absences, we will meet with parents to discuss the reasons. We may request medical evidence in order for illnesses to be authorised.

Penalty Notices

The following is provided for information should the governors and school agree, in the future, it is necessary to issue penalty notices.

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent, per child for the whole absence period if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. This will rise to £120 per parent, per child, per week if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Circumstances when a penalty notice may be issued

The Education (Pupil registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned (e.g. through a newsletter) that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken. A reminder will be circulated to parents on a termly basis.

The issue of the Penalty Notice will also be considered where unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration, on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures). The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence. Please see Appendix 1 for information on deletion from registers.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to move their child/children to a different school that they inform school as soon as possible. A child will not be removed from our school roll until the following information has been received:

- the date the child will be leaving this school and starting the next
- the name and address of the new school
- if the child is moving home, the new address, if it is known

The child's school records will then be sent on to the new school within 14 days.

Monitoring by the LA

To help make sure that every child attends school regularly and received appropriate education, each school has an Inclusion Officer who can act on enquires from schools, other organisations, parents and members of the public. Where a child's absence from school gives cause for concern, the Inclusion Officer works with everyone involved to create an action plan supporting full-time attendance and will stay involved until this is achieved.

Monitoring and review

This Attendance policy is the Governors' responsibility and they review its effectiveness regularly.

Appendix 1

DELETIONS FROM REGISTERS

There is legislation around taking children off roll (Pupil Registration) Education Regulations 2006 and 2013.

- If a child moves schools during the year, they come off roll on the day they start the new provision.
- If the parent puts in writing that they intend to home educate, the matter should be referred to EHE (Elective Home Education) and a copy of the letter attached. If the case is open to Inclusion a copy of the letter should be provided to the Inclusion Officer. The child can only be taken off roll if the parent specifies in writing that they intend to home educate.
- If the parent advises that they are moving abroad and school have any reason to suppose that this might not be true they should refer the matter to the Inclusion Service to investigate. Otherwise, it is good practice to request this advice in writing from the parent so that this letter can be placed on the school file in explanation for taking the child off roll.

DELETIONS AFTER CONTINUOUS ABSENCE OF NOT LESS THAN 20 SCHOOL DAYS

When taking children off roll due to twenty days absence and in order to comply with the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and the Education Act 1996, guidance states that schools **must** ensure that the following applies:

That the pupil has been continuously absent from the school for a period of not less than twenty school days and

- (i) at no time was the absence during that period authorised
- (ii) the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and
- (iii) both the school **and** the local education authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

If any parts of this are not complied with, the pupil cannot be taken off roll and this may result in the school being vulnerable to legal action and having to put the pupil back on roll.

In the case of a pupil where the parent has requested a leave of absence of over twenty school days it is important that the school notifies the parent in writing that failure to return within the twenty days could result in the pupil being taken off roll. Once the absence begins, and within the twenty days, even if the school believe that the family are not at home, they must endeavour to make enquiries with the family and are advised to write to the home address stating that if the pupil does not return by a specified date, they will be taken off roll. At the same time, a referral should be made to the Inclusion Officer, as representative of the LA, for enquiries to be made.

If the pupil does not return by the specified date and enquiries have been made, the pupil can be taken off roll and the parents should be notified. It is not enough just to warn parents that the pupil may be taken off roll, enquiries must be made by school and the LA.

It is recommended that an entry is made in the School Attendance Policy to state that pupils may be at risk of losing a school place in cases of unauthorised absence.

For further information regarding when children can be taken off school's roll please contact the Inclusion Officer or the SW Inclusion Service on 01483 518187.

Non-starters

In DfE Statutory Guidance and Departmental Advice on School Attendance (August 2013) it advises that if

a school is expecting a child to arrive at the beginning of term, the child MUST be put on the Admissions and Attendance register.

In the event of the child not arriving, the child must be marked as absent and enquiries made with Admissions. If Admissions confirm that the child has started at another school, the child can be taken off roll. However, if there is no record of the child starting anywhere else, school must refer to the Inclusion Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made.