



GRAYSWOOD PRIMARY SCHOOL
Church of England (Aided)

Attendance Policy

| Policy Schedule | |
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| Reviewed | Summer 2024 |
| Ratified by Governing Body | Summer 2024 |
| Next Review | Summer 2025 |

Version History

| Date | Section | Changes made | Changes made by |
|-------------|---|--|------------------------|
| 9/7/24 | Introduction | New statutory guidance referred to | Hannah Cole |
| 9/7/24 | All sections | New wording- Inclusion Officer changed to Attendance Officer and Inclusion Service changed to Attendance Service | Hannah Cole |
| 9/7/24 | Definition of good school attendance | New section added to policy | Hannah Cole |
| 9/7/24 | Responding to non-attendance and lateness | Change of time for closing registers Procedures for when no contact is received added Steps the school will take to follow up on school non-attendance added | Hannah Cole |
| 9/7/24 | Penalty notices | New information added to policy in line with DfE guidance | Hannah Cole |
| 9/7/24 | Changing schools | Information on procedure for elected home education added | Hannah Cole |

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. At Grayswood CE Primary School we will do all we can to encourage parents and guardians to ensure that the children in their care achieve the maximum possible school attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted upon. This Policy has been shared with the school's Surrey Attendance Advice Officer for approval as well as with Governors.

This Attendance Policy has been written in accordance with the latest DfE guidance: **Working together to improve school attendance: Statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities Published: 29th February 2024**. This document states that all maintained schools must have an Attendance Policy within their school, which should be made available to parents via the school website or in hard copies, if requested. This Policy also links to **The Equality Act 2010** and as a school the following equalities objectives have been published to show how we are committed to ensuring a fully inclusive working and learning environment for all:

- Provide all children with appropriate access to learning experiences at our school and not disadvantage any child from taking part on the grounds of their gender, ethnicity, background or culture, Special Educational Need or Disability, or any other discriminatory factor.
- Provide a secure and supportive environment that empowers people to challenge discrimination should they encounter it.
- Ensure that any person visiting or working within our school environment does not suffer discrimination.
- Ensure prospective employees are treated fairly and do not suffer any form of discrimination in line with fair recruitment purposes.
- Promote and celebrate diversity of children and adults who visit or work within our school and promote equality through our actions and communications.
- Provide systems of monitoring to facilitate continuous improvement, learning and sharing of existing good practice, as overseen by the Governing Body and Local Authority.
- Work with all stakeholders or other local schools to develop cohesive communities with shared values that encompass equal opportunities.

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/carers/persons who have day-to-day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Be aware of the legal requirement for their child to attend school every day
- Encourage regular school attendance
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school 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

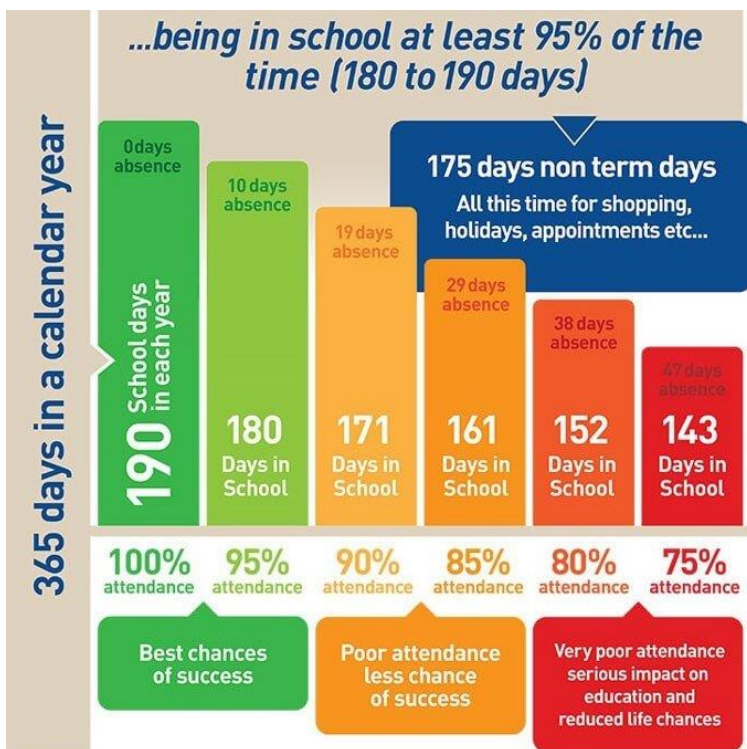
We expect that staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe and inclusive learning environment
- Use a range of strategies to encourage good attendance
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, twice daily
- Regularly monitor every pupil'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
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain the reasons why a child has been absent
- 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
- Listen compassionately to any parent or carer's views and provide early help and advice
- Refer on-going, irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance, to Surrey Attendance Service

Definition of good school attendance

Good attendance is considered to be at least 96%. We categorise children who regularly miss school as either persistently absent (where attendance is below 90%) or severely absent (where attendance is below 50%).

It is important that parents and carers understand that illness, holidays, unauthorised absence all count towards their child's overall % attendance. If a child's attendance at the start of the year is low, this can be improved, as the % attendance will rise the more days they attend school. Ultimately school attendance dramatically impacts on the development of a child:



Responding to Non-attendance and lateness

Lateness disrupts the child's learning and the learning of others in the class. Children are welcome in school from 8.20am when there will be a member of staff on duty. Children should not arrive before 8.20am unless they are attending breakfast club.

- 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).

Parents/carers should contact the school explaining every absence a child has, on the first day of absence, as soon as possible and no later than 9:30am. Parents should contact the school on every day of absence, until the child returns to school. Parents can contact the school by email or phone.

When we receive no contact, the following procedures may be followed:

- Members of the School Office will follow up with an email or phone call
- Alternative contacts provided by the parent / carer will be phoned / emailed
- We may contact another school/nursery where a sibling attends to ascertain the reason for the absence
- DSLs may make a home visit to check on the child
- DSLs will contact either the Police, Children's Services or the Surrey Attendance Service where they believe a child's location is unclear and there is a safeguarding concern

If no message is received it is considered to be an 'unauthorised absence' and the total of such absences have to be published by law. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child is repeatedly late or absent from school without authorisation, the parent could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice. Please contact the School Office or the Home School Link Worker: Sarah De Marcos, if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Lateness also applies to pick-up times. If a parent/carers knows that they will be late to collect their child, the parent/carers should phone the school office. If a parent/carers is persistently late, a meeting with the Headteacher will be requested. If no improvement, a request for support may be made to Children's Services.

Failure to attend school on a regular basis, or persistent failure to collect your child on time, will be considered a safeguarding issue

Steps the school will take to follow up on school non-attendance:

1. Letter will be sent to the parent to alert them to an attendance concern or an informal discussion will be had
2. Parent will be invited to attend a meeting with the HSLW, DSL or Headteacher
3. Parent will be required to provide medical evidence to support further absences, so they can be authorised
4. Parent will be invited to come to an Attendance Panel meeting with the Headteacher and Surrey Attendance Advice Officer
5. Parent will be referred to the Surrey Attendance Advice Officer

Penalty Notices

The Surrey Attendance 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 require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued:

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher 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 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, 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 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.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school 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.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There

will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.

3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.)

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 pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service.

If a parent exercises their right to home educate their child, we will require this in writing, with the date they wish their child to be removed from roll, before this can be accepted by the Headteacher. It is our expectation that parents will meet with the Headteacher to discuss their decision to electively home educate their child. Pupils who are withdrawn from school will be referred to the Surrey Attendance Service who will be in touch to arrange a home visit.

We will inform a child's new school were a penalty notice has been served previously.

Monitoring and review

In order for school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

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

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 the Attendance Service a copy of the letter should be provided to the Attendance 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 Attendance 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 Attendance 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 Attendance Service.

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 Attendance Service for a visit to be made and appropriate action can be taken to enforce attendance or establish what provision is being made.