

GREENSIDE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. AIM

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential as it allows pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

At Greenside Primary School, we recognise the very strong link that exists between a pupil's level of attendance and their achievement. **We therefore ask for 100% attendance, and aim for at least 96%.** Our attendance categories are listed below.

Persistent Absence	Concern	Below Average	Good	Very Good	Excellent
Less than 90%	90 – 93.99%	94 – 95.99%	96 – 97.99%	98 – 99.99%	100%

Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular attendance at school, and the Headteacher, staff and governors at our school work together with children, parents, and other agencies to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Our attendance policy and the procedures outlined apply to all children registered at this school (Nursery to Year 6) and the policy is made available to all parents on our school website. Statutory legislation applies to children in the term after they are five.

2. THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and Regulations of 2006 and 2010, parents are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children.

To gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly which means being at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for absence is authorised by the Headteacher.

The school is required to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Parents are expected to contact school to inform them of the reason for their child's absence. The school will judge whether or not the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence and mark the register accordingly.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Parents

Under education law (section 576 of the Education Act 1996), a parent is defined as:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not
- any person who, although not a natural parent, has responsibility for the care of a child or young person. This means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is considered to be a parent.

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the pupil that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

Parents should familiarise themselves with this attendance policy and work closely with school staff to overcome any problems which may affect their child's attendance.

Notification of Absence

- Parents are expected to notify the school promptly in person or by telephone number (0191 413 2186) before 9:30am on the first day of absence if their child cannot attend.
- When the child returns to school, a written note should be handed to the class teacher or the school office. The school will then decide whether or not the absence will be authorised and the letter will be placed on file. Any absence will be recorded as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is received.

Medical and Dental Appointments

- Parents are discouraged from making medical or dental appointments during school time, and are only expected to remove their child from school for the minimum period of time when this is unavoidable.
- The school office should be provided with a copy of the appointment card or letter if a school time appointment is unavoidable.
- If the child misses morning or afternoon registration as a result of such an appointment, the session has to be recorded as a medical absence (M) and this will affect the child's overall attendance.

Removal Before the End of the School Day

- Parents should not remove children from school before the expected end of the school day.
- If such a request is made, a leave of absence form must be completed stating the the reason for the removal and this will be added to the child's attendance record.
- The school closely monitors individual pupil attendance and where there are concerns about poor attendance as a result of repeated removals, the school staged response for addressing absence will be implemented (see section 9).

School

Greenside Primary School will encourage and value high levels of attendance. However, we recognise that many factors (in school and externally) can influence a pupil's attendance and will work in partnership with parents, and other relevant agencies to resolve any issues.

The school will take a proactive approach to the promotion of good attendance by defining expectations with pupils and their parents and will provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

Pupils

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly, on time, and will not leave the school without permission.

4. REGISTRATION

Registration will be carried out twice a day. It is important that pupils arrive on time for registration as late comers cause disruption both to themselves and other pupils.

Morning registration is at 8:55 (N-Y1) / 9:00 (Y2-Y6) and the registers will close at 9.30.

Afternoon registration is at 12:25 (N-Y2) / 1.15 (Y3-6) and the registers will close at 12:45 / 1.30.

The registers will be marked promptly at these times and should a pupil arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed he/she will be marked as late (L) for that session.

5. ABSENCE

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Pupil registration requirements

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

- **Present** – the pupil is on the premises at the time of registration.
- **Approved Educational Activity** – the pupil is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.
- **Authorised Absence** – an absence authorised by the school, which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate.
- **Unauthorised Absence** – an absence where the school judges that the pupil does not have good cause to be missing from school. This includes action by parents who initiate or collude with unauthorised absence by pupil. For example, shopping trips, day trips, birthdays, or absence to look after someone else.

6. PUNCTUALITY / LATENESS

Arrival before the registers have closed will result in a late mark being recorded in the register (L).

Arrival after the registers have closed without an acceptable reason will result in an unauthorised absence mark (U) and counts as an absence for that school session.

Pupils who arrive at school late must enter school via the main office and the accompanying parent must complete a late arrival form stating the reason for lateness. If a child arrives late

when walking to school unaccompanied, office staff will contact the parent to make the parent aware and establish the reason for lateness.

If a pupil is regularly late, parents will be contacted and the pupil's attendance and punctuality will be closely monitored.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed can result in the school referring the matter to the Local Authority for formal action to be taken.

7. FIRST DAY CONTACT

School office staff will carry out the first day contact. This will involve telephoning or texting all parents whose child is absent but has not contacted school with an explanation.

There will be occasions when school staff will make home visits when there are concerns about persistent, sporadic or unexplained absence.

8. LEAVE OF ABSENCE AND TERM-TIME HOLIDAYS

Amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

A leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Decisions made in relation to whether a leave of absence request is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) will be applied consistently and equitably.

The Headteacher must be satisfied that the exceptional circumstances justify an authorised absence and it is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information and evidence in order to establish this fact.

Making a Leave of Absence Request

Parents should seek permission for a leave of absence during term time prior to the leave using the request for leave of absence form (available from the school office), fully explaining the reasons for the request. Each request will be judged on a case by case basis by the Headteacher. Parents are reminded that the absence will have an absence on their child's education as the child will miss elements of the curriculum, causing gaps in learning.

- The request for an authorised leave of absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the Headteacher may invite the parent into school to discuss the request before a decision is made, especially when the reasons given are unclear.
- School will reply to all application in writing stating whether or not the absence has been granted.
- If leave is not granted, the reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated, as well as the possible consequences of disregarding the refusal.

- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated, including the date the child is expected back in school and the possible consequences if the child fails to return on that date.
- If a parent removes their child from school without requesting a leave of absence or without authorisation from the Headteacher, the parents will be informed in writing that a referral is being made to the local authority requesting a penalty notice be issued.

Implications when a Leave of Absence is Not Authorised

If the request for a leave of absence (holiday or other circumstances) is refused and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Headteacher may refer the matter to the local authority requesting that a penalty notice be issued against the parent. **Parents should consider the full implications of this before deciding to remove their child for a holiday in term time.**

The local authority will issue a penalty notice (or in the first instance a penalty notice warning letter) in response to requests made by school provided that the following conditions have been met:

- a leave of absence has been taken without the permission of the Headteacher (unauthorised absence);
- a leave of absence has been agreed and the pupil returns to school after the agreed date without explanation;
- no application for leave has been made;
- the child has been removed from school for 10 or more sessions;
- the local authority is satisfied that the parent had full knowledge of the procedures and the possible consequences.

A penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the local authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Penalties are collected by the local authority; school does not receive this money.

Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a penalty notice in respect of each child.

9. PROCEDURES FOR ADDRESSING ABSENCE AND LATENESS

The school closely monitors individual pupil attendance and where there are concerns about poor attendance the school staged response will be implemented.

The staged response includes:

- First day contact.
- Discussion about attendance with the pupil (if age appropriate).
- Contact with the parent in person, by telephone or letter to ensure they are aware of the attendance concerns.

- An invitation for the parent to meet with the Headteacher / senior member of staff to discuss attendance concerns.
- A home visit by attendance or senior members of staff.
- A request for medical information from parents advising them that further absences will not be authorised without such information.
- Attendance at a school governor panel.
- Completion of a CAF (Common Assessment Framework) to identify additional support needed.
- Referral to outside agencies where appropriate.

10. ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

Once all school strategies have been tried but there is no improvement in the pupil's attendance, the school may decide to refer the matter to the local authority for formal legal action. This can result in the issue of a penalty notice or prosecution in magistrates' court.

The fixed penalty fine is £60 if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid between 21 and 28 days and if the fixed penalty is not paid, the case may proceed to the magistrates' court for the original offence of failure to ensure your child's regular school attendance.

Prosecution in the magistrates' court can result in a fine of up to £2500, a parenting order, a community order, or imprisonment.

11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY

Greenside Primary School implements a number of rewards and incentives, both on a class and individual basis including:-

- Rewards for the class with the highest weekly attendance
- Class-based incentives where a particular need arises
- Half termly certificates for excellent attendance in the celebration assembly
- Certificates for good or better attendance for an academic year
- Gift vouchers for pupils achieving 100% attendance for an academic year
- Levels of attendance are posted on the celebration board and the school website
- Whole school and class attendance levels are included in newsletters to parents

12. ATTENDANCE DATA

A range of attendance data will be collected and analysed each half term in order to identify individual pupils or groups of pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern:

- whole school attendance rates
- numbers and proportion of persistent absentee pupils
- rates of unauthorised absence
- attendance/absence rates for particular cohorts and groups (year groups, gender, SEN, pupil premium)

Attendance data will be used to set a range of attendance targets for the whole school, for identified cohorts and for individual pupils.

Attendance data is also collected by the local authority and the government. Pupil group information is published as part of school accountability measures.

13. COMMUNICATION

Greenside Primary School's Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- the school website
- regular newsletter items
- guidance and advice in the staff handbook

14. EVALUATION AND REVIEW

This policy will be evaluated and reviewed on an annual basis by the governing body.

Policy Reviewed: July 2023

Review: July 2024