

Greenslade Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

July 2023

Research shows that children who attend school consistently and have high rates of attendance and good punctuality make faster rates of progress, make more secure and lasting relationships, suffer with less anxiety and enjoy school and learning to a much greater degree.

This policy is a statement of our aims and strategies to ensure full and prompt attendance of pupils at Greenslade Primary School. It is reviewed and approved by The Governing Body annually.

At Greenslade, we believe that children's regular attendance greatly affects their ability to perform well in school. Children who suffer continual absence problems often have difficulties in accessing the curriculum and achievement levels can suffer. This can lead to problems with the child's self-esteem. Frequent absence and lateness can also lead to problems with their social skills, behaviour and long term friendships. Regular and punctual attendance at school develops good life habits, helps prepare children for work and builds resilience.

In line with the Department for Education's guidance, "Working Together to Improve School Attendance", we believe that attendance is everyone's business and see regular attendance and punctuality as a process of teamwork between our school, the child, parents and carers, the Attendance Advisory Service and occasionally other external agencies, ensuring each child's equality of access to the full life and work of the school.

Aims

Our aims for this policy are to ensure that:

- Children are in school regularly and on time and therefore benefit consistently from high quality learning experiences.
- Staff and parents hold the same high expectations in terms of children's attendance and punctuality.
- Absence and lateness are recorded and dealt with systematically and consistently throughout the school by all staff.
- Staff and parents are aware of each other's responsibilities in this matter and are informed and knowledgeable about the school's monitoring of attendance and punctuality.

- Children's rates of progress and levels of attainment rise because they benefit from enjoying the full flow of the learning journey and from consistently high quality teaching on a daily basis.

Principles for ensuring our aims:

How the school works towards these aims:

- Ensuring that Greenslade is a safe environment, where children learn from an engaging, inspiring curriculum supported by staff that they trust. We must ensure that children enjoy school and want to be here.
- Using prompt, pre-emptive action in all issues of non-attendance and lateness. We follow the DfE and Royal Borough of Greenwich's Guidance for Schools.
- Maintaining the class registers and recording absences using the SIMS system in the agreed manner, including the storage of letters and emails regarding attendance and the authorisation of absence.
- Recording of contact by phone, in writing and through text messages and emails to Parents and Carers about any issues related to attendance and in particular any unexplained absences and/or lateness.
- Requesting that Parents and Carers attend a pre referral meeting in school if attendance and/or punctuality becomes an issue. On most occasions that meeting will be attended by the School's Attendance Advisory Officer.
- Making this policy known to parents.

How parents support these aims:

Parents should ensure that their child attends school both regularly and punctually. Ensuring their child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school, creates an offence in law.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. If their child is absent, parents and carers must contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If we do not know where children are, how do we know they are safe?

Parents are expected to:

- Notify the school by 9:00am on the first day of absence and on subsequent days, to update us.
- Be clear about the reason for the absence.

- Provide medical evidence, if required, to the school office on the day the child returns to school.
- Inform the school of any unavoidable planned absences well in advance.
- Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- Only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Medical Evidence:

In matters related to illness we follow Government Health Security Agency Guidance.

If the school have informed a family that they are required to provide medical evidence to support any absence due to illness, in order for any absence to be authorised, the school will accept the following forms of evidence:

- ✓ A Doctors/Hospital appointment letter.
- ✓ A prescription for medicine, provided that it bears the name of the child and date dispensed thereon.
- ✓ The prescribed medicine packaging, provided it bears the name of the child and date dispensed thereon.
- ✓ A Doctor's/Dentist appointment card (emergency appointments only).

If a child is absent for more than one day, then an appointment card will not cover the whole period of absence, unless additional evidence, as described above has also been supplied.

If a child is sent home from school unwell, then the school will authorise the 1st day of absence. However, should their child be absent for more than 2 days, they may be required to provide additional medical evidence and will be informed by the school if this is the case. In cases where a child is sent home from school after an episode of vomiting or diarrhoea, the following two days' absences will be authorised.

Understanding Types of Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- ✓ Authorised absence: when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.

- ✓ Unauthorised absence: when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings, holidays.
 - absences which have not been explained.

School can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell, but on return to school there is evidence that they have been on holiday.

Lateness

As well as being absent a lot from school affecting a child's development, arriving late also has a big impact on their performance in school. We believe that the start of the day is a crucial teaching time when the lesson objectives are explained and the main points for learning are taught. If a child misses these, they can find catching up during the lesson difficult. If this is repeated over a period of time, it can seriously hinder any progress being made. Children coming into a lesson late can also be extremely disruptive for the teacher and other children in the class and it can be very embarrassing for the child who is late. Being in school, on time, with your peers to begin the day in the right way is a very important habit to form.

Our school follows the guidance set out by the Department for Education which suggests that registers should be closed a maximum of 30 minutes after the start of the school day.

Parents and Carers of children arriving after 9.05am **must** ensure that their child reports to the school office to obtain their mark in the register.

Pupils who arrive between 9.05am and 9.30am, will receive a late mark, with the number of minutes late being recorded.

Pupils who arrive after 9.30am, will receive an unauthorised late mark. This equates to a half day of absence. However, in the event that their child arrives after 9.30am, and that this is due to an unavoidable medical or dental appointment, as long as parents and carers provide evidence to support this, their child will receive an M code, which is an authorised absence.

Parents and carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and will be managed in the same way as poor attendance.

Lateness = Lost Learning (Figures below are calculated over a school year)	
5 mins late each day	3 days lost
10 mins late each day	6.5 days lost
15 mins late each day	10 days lost
20 mins late each day	13 days lost
30 mins late each day	19 days lost

Leave of Absence (Holiday/Exceptional circumstance) during term time

Holidays

Children are not entitled to any holidays during term time, unless the Headteacher has deemed this as an exceptional circumstance.

If a pupil takes an extended period of absence for 10 days or more (20 sessions +) which has not been authorised by the Headteacher, in line with school policy' he/she will be referred to the Attendance Advisory Service. The parent of any pupil who is becomes a referral to the AAS due to this reason, is at risk of receiving a £120 Penalty Notice (per parent, per child), or legal action. If a child is absent from school on holiday for an extended period they may be taken off our roll and parents / carers would have to reapply through the normal admissions procedures.

Exceptional Circumstances

There are some occasions where the Headteacher may grant a leave of absence during term time, if the reasons for the absence are deemed as exceptional. If they have to take their child out of school during term time, parents/carers must put an application in writing to the Headteacher prior to the leave being taken, as failure to do so, will result in any absence not being authorised.

N.B – Holidays generally are not considered as an exceptional circumstance. Any applications made in writing, will be responded to in writing by the Head teacher.

Guidance for completion of Registers at Greenslade

Registers are legal documents and may be used in court. Therefore, they must be:

Manual Registers

- ✓ Kept in a locked fire proof cabinet.
- ✓ Completed twice per day, at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session, and returned to the office.

- ✓ Completed in ink: red / for present and black 0 for absent.

Registers are also confidential and should not be made available to anyone except school staff.

Computerised Registers

- All manual registers will be transferred to computerised system daily.
- All coding used in the register will be in accordance with Local Authority guidance.

Computerised registers are also confidential and should not be made available to anyone except school staff.

All registers are taken at 9.05am and 1.35pm. In the morning, any child arriving after this time will be marked late. The registers close at 9.30am and any child arriving after this time will be marked absent for the whole session. (This is recorded as an unauthorised absence and will be recorded in our attendance figures)

Parents of children arriving after 9.05am must ensure that their child reports to the school office to obtain their mark in the register.

If a child misses 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as a persistent absentee. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in their learning. Research shows that these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the Local Authority and the Department for Education.

We are fully aware that some of our children may have health conditions which, despite the best efforts of parents and carers, lead to significant ongoing periods of absence. We will work closely with parents to ensure we develop support systems that enable each child to attend school as often as physically possible.

Every School Day Counts

The local authority's aim is that children have an attendance of at least 95%. Although being absent cannot always be helped, as we all do become ill from time to time, the table below shows exactly how much school is missed when attendance percentages drop.

365 days in a year	190 school days in total	Absence
100% attendance	190 Days	0
95% attendance	180 Days	2 Weeks
90% attendance	171 Days	4 Weeks
85% attendance	161 Days	6 Weeks
80% attendance	152 Days	More than half a term
75% attendance	143 Days	9+ weeks

Attendance and Punctuality in the Early Years

Establishing good habits from the start will help children to settle more quickly and build good habits for later life. Coming to school on time, every day helps to develop confidence. Research has shown that, even at the earliest age, children with poor attendance and punctuality are at a disadvantage later in life. They generally find it harder to make and maintain friendships, they achieve less and they often suffer from poor self-esteem. Even if a child only has a part time Nursery place, regular attendance is vitally important.

Leavers

If their child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to:

- Give the attendance officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move, their new address and telephone numbers, their child's new school and the start date when known.
- If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then the child is considered to be a "child missing in education". This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate the child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.
- If a child fails to return after a period of 20 days unauthorised absence they will be reported to the local authority as a child missing in education, likely resulting in them being removed from the school roll.

Elective Home Education

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from school in favour of home education. Parents must inform the school of their decision to home educate, in writing. Once the school receives this notification, they will then inform the local authority and take the child off of their roll. It is important that the decision to home educate is discussed and considered carefully. Parents and carers are asked to talk to the school about any difficulties their child may be having; once a child has been taken off roll, their place will be allocated and may not be available to their child if parents/carers change their mind at a later date.

This Policy will be reviewed in the Autumn Term of 2024.