



Attendance Policy

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1 INTRODUCTION

At Grange Farm Primary School we want to ensure that our pupils are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer.

We want every pupil to attend school every day that they can and we hold the view that regular attendance is essential to ensure the best possible learning outcomes for all of our pupils.

This attendance policy sets out what is expected so that this may be achieved.

Our aims are to raise attendance and improve punctuality by:

- Ensuring that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to maximise learning
- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Promoting opportunities to celebrate and reward pupils' successes and achievements
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absence are recorded promptly and consistently
- Making parents/ carers aware of their legal responsibilities

Parents and carers have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend school regularly. Parents should also ensure that children arrive on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and in a fit state to benefit from the education offered to them.

2 SCHOOL TIMES

The official start of the school day is 8:55am and all children should be in their classroom by this point ready for morning registration. The school gates open at 8:45am and from this point children are able to enter their classrooms.



The school day ends at 3:30pm. Children should be collected promptly unless they are attending an after school activity. In the very unlikely event that a child is not collected at the end of the school day and that we are unable to contact parents/carers or emergency contacts after a sustained effort, the Children and Families First services would be contacted for support.

3 REGISTRATION

As per statutory guidelines, the school keeps attendance registers for all pupils on the school roll. Class teachers take the register twice a day and every pupil will be marked as present, absent or engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site.

The school must record, by the use of approved codes, whether the absence is authorised or not.

Legally, absence has to be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised. Only school can decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised and does not have to accept the reasons given by a parent or carer.

4 PUNCTUALITY

Children must be in school by 8:55am when the register will be taken. Children arriving after this point should enter school through the main entrance and will be issued with a late mark in the register which becomes a part of their official attendance record.

Children arriving after 9:30am are recorded as officially absent from the morning session and this will be recorded as unauthorised absence unless the Headteacher accepts that there is an acceptable reason.

5 ABSENCE PROCEDURES

When a child is absent, parents should do at least one of the following:

- Notify the school by telephone as early as possible on the first day of absence, ideally by 9am



- Call into school and report to office staff or leave a clear message on the school answer phone
- Email adminstaff@grangefarm.coventry.sch.uk

If parents fail to contact the school, for safeguarding reasons, the school will try to contact the parent or carer to establish that the child is safe and the reason for the absence.

If school has not been notified of a satisfactory reason for a child's absence, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. The ultimate responsibility to authorise or not rests with the Headteacher. The school expects regular attendance but also wishes to be supportive where families need it. In cases of illness, the school has a right to request further information.

School encourages parents and carers to make dental and medical appointments out of school hours. Where such an appointment is unavoidably set during the school day, school should be notified in advance.

6 INTERVENTION AND SUPPORT

Grange Farm Primary School takes the attendance and punctuality of children very seriously.

Where attendance and punctuality falls below (or is in danger of falling below) acceptable standards, we follow a set procedure to intervene and support families to rapidly improve this.

We identify concerns with attendance and punctuality in one of two ways:

- Parents and carers approaching us with concerns or issues that they would like our support with – where parents and carers have concerns, or are aware that their children have, we would always encourage them to approach us as early as possible so that we can work in partnership to address these
- At the end of each half-term, the attendance and punctuality rates of all children in school are analysed by the Headteacher and Learning Mentor with actions then put into place as described below.



School process for intervention on high levels of absence:

Issue	Attendance Rates	Action
Risk of persistent absence over a short period	Attendance between 90% and 95% for a half-term period	Class teacher will talk with parent/carer to highlight issue and support from Learning Mentor if appropriate
Risk of persistent absence over a longer period	Attendance between 90% and 95% for one term	Letter from Learning Mentor advising of need for improvement and offering support – meeting if appropriate
	Attendance between 90% and 95% for longer than one term	Meeting with Learning Mentor to discuss strategies for improvement – possible intervention from the Local Authority Attendance team
Persistent absence over a short period	Attendance below 90% for one half-term	Meeting with Learning Mentor to discuss reasons for low attendance and to agree a plan and target for rapid improvement with school to provide support as appropriate
Persistent absence over a longer period	Attendance below 90% for one term or more	Meetings with Learning Mentor, other staff as appropriate and intervention from the Local Authority Attendance Team. Support strategies will be put in place but parents/carers must be aware that targets for rapid improvement will be set and must be met



School process for intervention on high levels of lateness:

Issue	Action
Short-term issue with lateness (e.g. up to two to three weeks)	Class teacher will talk with parent/carer to highlight issue and support from Learning Mentor if appropriate
Medium-term issue with lateness (e.g. up to half-a-term)	Letter from Learning Mentor advising of need for improvement and offering support – meeting if appropriate
Long-term issue with lateness (e.g. over half-a-term)	Meetings with Learning Mentor, other staff as appropriate and intervention from the Local Authority Attendance Team. Support strategies will be put in place but parents/carers must be aware that targets for rapid improvement will be set and must be met

Where the school is aware of legitimate reasons that have affected attendance and punctuality over a period (e.g. illness), actions are likely to be different because school/home communication will already be taking place with appropriate support being offered.

7 SCHOOL ABSENCE TARGETS

The school takes absence very seriously and, as such, we set targets to aspire to improve to in order to maximise our pupil population's time at school.

Using previous trends of absence rates across school, our targets for absence are:

Absence – 2% or less (attendance rate of 98% or more)
 Persistent Absence – 0.5% of the school population

Persistent absence is defined by an attendance rate of lower than 90%.



8 APPLICATIONS FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

As of September 2013 Government Regulations state that schools cannot authorise holidays during term time. The Government's guidance states that only under special circumstances may the school consider giving permission for a child to be absent from school for a maximum of 10 days in any one school year.

Grange Farm Primary School will not therefore authorise leave in term time unless it is for exceptional circumstances. All such applications will need to be on the school application form, which is available from the school office. Applications must be received at least 4 school weeks before the requested absence and include the reason for the request along with any appropriate and relevant supporting evidence. A meeting between the Headteacher and the parent/carer may be requested by either party to discuss the reasons for the absence.

Ultimately it is the Headteacher who has the responsibility for authorising any leave of absence. However, at Grange Farm Primary School we have a "Leave of Absence Panel", consisting of the Headteacher, the Learning Mentor and two governors (not parent governors) who agree decisions together in order to ensure consistency over time.

In line with national and local guidance, the following factors will play a key role in the panel deciding whether a request for a leave of absence will be authorised:

- Whether a pupil is within a "settling in" transition period having just joined the school
- Whether the absence would impact on the child's completion of national assessments (e.g. Year 1 Phonics Screening, Year 2 and 6 national assessment tests)
- The child's attendance within the current school year and in previous years (attendance below 95% falls into the category of either persistent absence or at risk of persistent absence and it would be extremely unusual for leave of absence to be authorised in these circumstances)
- The child's previous record of unauthorised absence
- Whether the child has had any previous leave of absences authorised (particularly similar instances which would call into question the nature of the "exceptional" circumstances)



The school will reply in writing to the parent/carer within 5 working days with reasons for the decision.

If parents wish to submit a request for a period of authorised absence from school on religious grounds, they should use the same process to do so. The school may authorise such requests but will make a considered judgement about the length of absence requested in proportion to the religious event or occasion and the travelling time required.

Pupils who fail to return within 10 school days of any agreed return date, or after 20 days of unauthorised absence if exceptional leave of absence has not been granted, can be deleted from the school register.

9 PENALTY NOTICES

Section 444(A) of the Education Act 1996 empowers the Local Authority to issue Penalty Notices for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Where the school is aware that a parent of carer has taken their child out of school without authorisation, they have a duty to inform the Local Authority. Parents or carers who take their children out of school in term time without the school's permission or are late returning from an exceptional leave of absence, may receive a Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child, which must be paid within 28 days.

If payment is made after 28 days the penalty is increased to £120. Where a fine remains unpaid the Local Authority will consider submitting the case for prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Please note that Penalty Notices can be issued after 10 unauthorised absences in a 12 week period – this is 10 registration periods (i.e. 5 days). Children who are late without good reason after 9:30am also receive an unauthorised absence mark unless there is an acceptable reason for lateness.