



# Attendance and Punctuality Policy

|   |  |
|---|--|
| Headteacher with overall responsibility for attendance:               | Larissa Thorpe<br>01724 843601   |
| Attendance Officers:  | Caroline Hempstock<br>Melanie Hubbard  |
| Designated Safeguarding Lead:<br>Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead: | Joanne Fanthorpe (Deputy Headteacher)<br>Caroline Hempstock (Pastoral Manager) |
| Attendance Governor   | Sheila Hansford  |
| Chair of Governors  | Margaret Thompson  |
| Policy Publication date   | September 2022   |

|                                      |                  |
|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Policy Agreed by Full Governing body | Autumn Term 2022 |
| Policy next review date              | Autumn Term 2023 |

## **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

### **INTRODUCTION:**

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents/carers to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality. We encourage children to attend, and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance / poor punctuality can seriously affect:-

- A child's attainment and progress in school.
- A child's relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships.
- A child's confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside and collaboratively with others.
- A child's wellbeing due to increased anxiety / embarrassment of arriving late.
- The disruption to the learning of other pupils in the classroom when a child arrives late.

The Governors, Head Teacher, and School Staff, in partnership with parents/carers, have a duty to promote full attendance at school. Parents and carers play a critical role in helping us promote good attitudes towards attendance. Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The

school shares the attendance percentage with parents/carers at each parent's meeting and more frequently where there are concerns.

**It is the parents/carers' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent using the school app. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that the child is safe.**

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:**

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement and progress by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents/carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Foundation Stage 1 and Foundation Stage 2 aged children in order to promote good habits from an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, staff and the Education Inclusion Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility and self-discipline.
- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

### **We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:**

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents/carers and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents/carers have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and stage of development.

- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents/carers, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

## **DEFINITIONS:**

### **Authorised absence:**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer telephones the school to explain the absence.

**Only a member of the SLT in school can make an absence authorised.** Parents/carers do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

### **Unauthorised absence:**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer.

## **PROCEDURES:**

Our school will undertake the following procedures to support good attendance:

- To maintain accurate registration processes.
- To maintain accurate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents/carers and pupils.
- To have consistent and systematic daily records which give detail of any absence and lateness.
- To follow up absences and persistent lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school.
- To inform parents/carers what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

- To work with parents/carers to improve individual pupils attendance and punctuality.
- Regularly review and scrutinise attendance patterns on a weekly basis.
- To refer to the Educational Inclusion Service any child whose attendance causes concern and where parents/carers have not responded to school initiatives to improve.
- To report attendance statistics to the DfE where requested.
- All staff should be aware that they must raise any attendance or punctuality concerns to the Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for monitoring attendance.

### **RESPONSIBILITIES:**

Improving attendance is “everyone's business” as detailed in “Working Together to improve school attendance” guidance (May 2022). Everyone has a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of responsibilities which individuals might have.

#### **Pastoral Manager:**

The Headteacher has overall responsibility however delegates day to day responsibility to the Pastoral Manager which includes:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging Attendance meetings to discuss any attendance issues that may be creating a barrier to the pupil accessing their education. This also includes home visits by the school if necessary.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Making referrals to the Education Inclusion Service.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Education Inclusion Service.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence and then working within The Early Help Framework to establish appropriate support plans.
- Liaise with the Designated Safeguarding Lead where there are concerns regarding a child's attendance or where safeguarding issues arise. (e.g. Child Missing in Education)
- Provides reports termly (or more often if significant concerns are highlighted) to the Head teacher and Governors' in relation to attendance.
- Promoting and celebrating good and improved attendance through school assemblies/ letters home to parents/carers, pupil voice - consultation with the school council, attendance tokens, rewards, positive praise.

### **Administration staff:**

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents/carers regarding absence.
- Contacting parents/carers of absent children where no contact has been made. (Prioritising attendance of identified vulnerable pupils within school, e.g. EHCP, Looked after children, children with a social worker, young carers.)
- Recording details of children who arrive late or go home.
- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers and reporting concerns to the Pastoral Manager.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.
- Ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the Scholar Pack attendance software.
- Regular meetings are held with the Pastoral Manager to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents/carers or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents/carers.

### **Class teacher:**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing The Pastoral Manager where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register.
- Discussing attendance issues at parents/carers meetings where necessary.

### **Headteacher and Governors:**

- The Headteacher and Governors will monitor attendance termly and review all strategies being used.

### **Parents/Carers:**

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence using the school app or via telephone to update the reason for absence.
- Attempting to make appointments out of school hours.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence school requires evidence from the doctor or dentist (appointment card/letter).
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

## **REGISTRATION**

All the school doors open at **8.40am until 8.50am**. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into their classrooms.

Each class teacher has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any pupil who is absent must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The attendance register must be completed by the class teacher by 9.00am and by 1.00pm.

All attendance records are documented using Scholar Pack software, which is supported by the Local Authority. Attendance registers are legal documents and these must be kept secure and preserved for a period of six years after the date they were last used. The register is not only a legal document, but it also provides evidence that pupils have arrived in school and are safe.

## **ABSENCES**

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence before 8:50am. When parents/carers notify us of their child's absence it is important that they provide us with details of the reason for their absence and the date they expect the child to return to school.

It is important that we receive accurate information from parents with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used by the Senior Leadership Team to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence then a text message is sent requesting these details to parents/carers to complete. (Attendance Code O)

### **FIRST DAY CONTACT**

When a child is absent from school and we have not received any verbal or written communication from the parent, then we initiate a first day contact process. Office staff check all of the registers from 9.00am to 9.30am on a daily basis, to identify those pupils who are absent. There are occasions when we are unaware why the child is absent and we will contact the parent/carer to check the reasons for the child's absence.

### **ILLNESS**

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school long term, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services and seek advice on next steps.

Where over the course of an academic year, a child has repeated periods of illness, the school will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription. We may seek written permission from you for the school to make their own enquiries.

### **PUNCTUALITY / LATENESS**

Pupils are expected to arrive **between 8.40am and 8.50am** and must go straight into their classrooms. Classroom doors are closed promptly at 8.50am and the only way to get into school after this time is via the school office. This is to prevent any disruption to the learning of children already in school.

All children who arrive after 8.50am, must report to the school office.

Children who arrive **after 8:50am and before 9:00am** will be marked as **late** (Attendance Code L) in the attendance record and parents/pupils must record the reason for lateness to office staff. Children who arrive late will make up the minutes of lost learning time during their break time on that day.



Any child who arrives for school later than **9:00am** will be marked as having an **unauthorised absence** for the morning. (Attendance code U).

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school later than 9.00am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning time, often the most important aspect, at the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve.

Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

The school day ends at 3pm.

### **ADDRESSING ATTENDANCE CONCERNS.**

It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their Primary School career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly.

If attendance falls below 90% then the child will be classed as persistently absent. Persistent Absence is a serious problem for children, as much of the work children miss when they are off school is never made up, leaving them at a considerable disadvantage. The school will endeavour to work with parents to help remove any barriers to children accessing their education. An attendance meeting will be held and the parents or carers and the child (if appropriate) will be invited to attend.

An action plan will be drawn up at this meeting and following a monitoring period a review will be held. It is vital that parents and school work together and communicate to ensure attendance does not continue to decline. The Pastoral Manager can offer support via Attendance Plans, Early Helps and signposting to agencies for additional support. If attendance continues to decline then a referral to the Education Inclusion Service will be made. This could be due to:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year,
- one of instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission

- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

The Education Inclusion Officer may issue fixed penalty notices to parents/carers, referral to the Magistrates Court for prosecution where there has been a referral to the Education Inclusion Service from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

### **PARENTAL REQUEST FOR ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR HOLIDAY**

With effect from September 2013 the government abolished the right of head teachers to authorise absence specifically for holidays of up to 10 days per year if special circumstances exist. Instead, headteachers will only be allowed to grant leave of absence for any reason if they are satisfied exceptional circumstances exist. The school will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion and is not a parental right. In accordance with Government guidelines, the application must be made 12 days in advance by writing to the Headteacher. The form can be collected from the school office.

### **CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION (CME)**

Child Missing in Education (CME) Children who have failed to take up a school place or who have been unexpectedly absent from school for 5 or more consecutive school days without any contact are potential Children Missing from Education. In order to safeguard these children and ensure that they are able to access education, we must investigate the whereabouts of these children.

Investigations include attempts to make telephone contact with all family members, home visits and liaison with partner agencies. If contact is established with the family and they are still residing in the local area then the parents must be notified of their legal obligations. If the family has left the area, details of their whereabouts must be obtained if possible and the Local Authority (CME Team) notified so that they can support the family to access education.

If contact cannot be established with the family and their whereabouts are unknown, a CME referral form will be completed and forwarded to the CME team. We would normally notify the CME Team if a child is unexpectedly absent from the school for 10 consecutive days or more and the school has been unable to contact the family.

If the child does not return to school after 20 days and with permission from the CME Team the child's name may be removed from the school roll.

We will comply with our statutory duty to inform the local authority of any pupil who falls within the reporting notification requirements outlined in the statutory guidance, 'Children missing education - Statutory guidance for local authorities and advice for other groups on helping children who are missing education get back into it'. Last updated 5 September 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

| Code | Description  | Definition                    | Meaning                 |
|------|--|-------------------------------|-------------------------|
| /    | Present AM   | Present                       | In for morning lesson   |
| \    | Present PM   | Present                       | In for afternoon lesson |
| C    | Other Authorised Circumstances                       | Authorised Absence            | Out of school           |
| D    | Dual Registered                                      | Attendance not required       | Out of school           |
| E    | Excluded (no alternative provision arranged)         | Authorised Absence            | Out of school           |
| I    | Illness (not medical or dental)                      | Authorised Absence            | Out of school           |
| J    | Interview  | Approved Educational Activity | Out of school           |
| L    | Lates (before registers close)                       | Present                       | Late for the session    |
| M    | Medical / Dental Appointments                        | Authorised Absence            | Out of school           |
| N    | No reason yet provided for absence                   | Unauthorised Absence          | Out of school           |
| O    | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code) | Unauthorised Absence          | Out of school           |
| P    | Approved Sporting Activity                           | Approved Educational Activity | Out of school           |
| R    | Religious Observance                                 | Authorised Absence            | Out of school           |

|          |  |  |                         |
|----------|--|--|-------------------------|
| <b>S</b> | <b>Study Leave</b>                           | <b>Authorised<br/>Absence</b>                | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>T</b> | <b>Traveller Absence</b>                     | <b>Authorised<br/>Absence</b>                | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>U</b> | <b>Late (after register<br/>closed)</b>      | <b>Unauthorised<br/>Absence</b>              | <b>Late for session</b> |
| <b>V</b> | <b>Education Visit or trip</b>               | <b>Approved<br/>Educational<br/>Activity</b> | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>W</b> | <b>Work Experience</b>                       | <b>Approved<br/>Educational<br/>Activity</b> | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>#</b> | <b>School Closed to pupils<br/>and staff</b> | <b>Attendance not<br/>required</b>           | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>X</b> | <b>Non compulsory School<br/>age absence</b> | <b>Attendance not<br/>required</b>           | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>Y</b> | <b>Enforced Closure</b>                      | <b>Attendance not<br/>required</b>           | <b>Out of school</b>    |
| <b>Z</b> | <b>Pupil not on roll</b>                     | <b>Attendance not<br/>required</b>           | <b>Out of school</b>    |

**Appendix 2: Flowchart for addressing attendance concerns at The Grange Primary School.**

