

Attendance Policy

1 Introduction

Regular and punctual school attendance is essential. Pupils need to attend school regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Grangewood Independent School fully recognises its responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school on time and, therefore, have access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and is made available to all parents/carers of pupils registered at our school if requested. This policy has been written to adhere to the relevant Children's Acts, Education Acts, Regulations, and Guidance from the Department for Education, including **Working Together to Improve School Attendance—**Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, August 2024 and School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Although parents/carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the Headteacher and Governors at our school work together to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance. Procedures in this policy are followed to ensure this happens.

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind in their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning, which will impact their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations.

The Senior Attendance Champion responsible for our school's strategic approach to attendance is Mrs B. Roberts (contact details: 0208 472 3552), who will delegate appropriate tasks to the school's Attendance Lead, Mrs George.

The person parents/carers should contact first about attendance on a daily basis is Mrs S. McDonald (contact details: 0208 472 3552).

For more detailed support on attendance, contact the Headteacher.

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2 Aims and Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and Governors/Trustees in our school are fully aware of and transparent about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this Policy, we aim to

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% attendance for all children except those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness among parents, carers, and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy promotes good habits at an early age.
- Build strong relationships with all our families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.

- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, carers, and staff so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absences.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure, and valued, and encourage them to have a sense of responsibility.
- 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 Teachers, Class Leads and the Key Person within our EYFS classes, in promoting good attendance.
- 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/ren 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 development.
 - Maintaining effective 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 school which are preventing good attendance.
 - Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school

3 Definitions

3.1 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 or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent/carer has telephoned the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents/Carers do not have this authority, so not all absences supported by parents/carers will be classified as authorised.

3.2 Unauthorised Absence:

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

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

4 Procedures

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

- To maintain appropriate registration processes.
- To maintain appropriate attendance data.
- To communicate clearly the attendance procedures and expectations to all staff, governors, parents 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 discourage unnecessary absence through holidays taken during term time.
- To work with parents to improve individual pupils' attendance and punctuality.
- To refer to the Educational Welfare 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 Head Teacher.

5. Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of individuals' responsibilities.

5.1 Teachers, Class Leads or Key Person

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance, looking particularly for poor overall attendance, anomalies in attendance patterns, and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/carers.
- Informing the Headteacher where there are concerns and acting upon them.
- Providing background information to support referrals.
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns.
- Emphasising to their class the importance of good attendance and promptness.
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation, which should be noted on SIMs.
- Discussing attendance issues at Parents' Evenings or other Parent-Teacher consultations, where necessary.

5.2 Headteacher

- Overall monitoring of school attendance.
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues.
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the Governing Body.

5.3 Administration Staff

Staff in the School Office are responsible for:

- Collating and recording registration and attendance information.
- Taking and recording messages from parents regarding absence.

- Ensuring the Attendance Register is completed.
- Contacting parents of absent children where no contact has been made.
- 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 Headteacher.
- Sending out standard letters regarding attendance.

5.4 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.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter).
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- 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.

6. School Opening Hours

EYFS & Nursery: The school doors open in the morning at 8.30am (12:30pm for afternoon pupils) for Parents/Carers to take their child straight to their classroom/learning area.

KS1 & KS2: The school door is opened at 8.45am and closed 8:55am. This time is sufficient for all pupils to come into the school.

For all Key Stages and Nursery, the school door is opened in the afternoon at 3:30pm and closed at 3:45pm. This time is sufficient for all pupils to leave the school.

7. Registration

The school keeps both an Admissions Register and attendance registers.

The Admissions Register records specific personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers, and details of the school last attended. This will be kept electronically according to Chapter 7 of Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the register if a reason set out in Regulation 9 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies.

All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on the Admission Register and have their attendance recorded in the attendance register.

Schools must take the attendance register(s) at the beginning of each morning session and once during each afternoon session.

According to Chapter 8 of *Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024*, the attendance register will be kept electronically to aid accuracy and reduce the burden of information sharing.

The school cannot delete a pupil's name from the attendance register unless they have a reason (as set out in regulation 9) to delete the pupil's name from the Admissions Register; the pupil's name must be deleted from both registers at the same time.

Each Teacher, Class Lead and Key person has the responsibility for keeping an accurate record of attendance. Any absent pupil must be recorded at the beginning of the morning and afternoon session. The Teacher, class Lead, Key Person must complete the attendance register by **8:55am** in the morning and **1:30pm** in the afternoon. On each occasion, they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Absent
- Attending an approved educational activity as defined in regulation 6(4) or
- Unable to attend school due to exceptional circumstances as defined in regulation 6(5).

Schools must record whether or not the absence of a pupil of compulsory school age is authorised. There is no requirement for schools to record whether the absence of pupils not of compulsory school age is authorised or not, but where possible, schools should use the national attendance and absence codes to help them monitor their attendance and form good attendance habits.

Schools must record the nature of the activity where a pupil of compulsory school age is attending an approved educational activity and the nature of the circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Attendance codes will be used according to the document *Working Together to improve school attendance*. (See Appendix 1)

Attendance registers are legal records, and all schools must preserve entry in the attendance or admission register for six (6) years from the date the data was entered.

Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the registers show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment.

As the attendance register records the pupil's presence at the time it was taken, it should only routinely be amended where the reason for the absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry.

8. Lateness

Any pupils entering school after **9am** will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late before the register is closed; this is documented on the attendance register for each pupil (Attendance code L). *Any child who arrives for school after the register has closed and the school is not satisfied that the reason for lateness is an*

authorised absence 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 late will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning.

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.

9. Absences

Parents/carers should contact the school on the first day of their child's absence. 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.

All absences are recorded on the register as either authorised or unauthorised. It is important that we receive accurate information from parents/carers with reasons for the child's absence. This information is used to determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. The Headteacher is responsible for determining whether absences are authorised or unauthorised.

Where we have not received reasons for a child's absence, we will send a letter requesting that the parents/carers complete these details. If this letter is not completed and returned by the specified date, then the absence will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (Attendance Code O).

The school will regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and implement effective strategies.

10. First-Day Contact

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

11. 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 schoolwork.

Where a child has repeated periods of illness over the course of an academic year, the school will write to parents/carers 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 parents/carers for the school to make their own enquiries.

12. Parental/Carers Request for Absence from School for Holiday

Parents/carers should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from the school to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

An application for leave of absence will not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent/carer the pupil normally lives with, and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which justify the leave.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil may be absent. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

13. Addressing Attendance Concerns

The school expects attendance of at least 95%.

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

In Grangewood Independent we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents/carers are always informed of our concerns. Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

14. Monitoring Attendance

Grangewood Independent School is responsible for ensuring that all attendance data is accurately recorded in the register(s). Staff regularly meet 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.

Policy Adopted by Governors on: September 2015

Policy Last Reviewed on: 12/10/2024

Policy Due for Review: October 2025

APPENDIX 1

Attendance Codes

See Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 pages 77 – 92 for full details and the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Code / \: Present in school / = morning session \ = afternoon session

Code L: The pupil is absent from the school when the attendance register begins to be taken but attends before the taking of the register has ended.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable

Code D: Dual registered at another school

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded

Code G: The pupil is absent without leave for the purpose of a holiday

Code I: The pupil is unable to attend because of sickness (not medical or dental appointment)

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements

Code R: Religious observance

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip

Code W: Attending work experience

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register

Code #: Planned whole school closure