



Greatworth Primary School Attendance Policy

Aims

Greatworth Primary School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

National data clearly shows a correlation between high attendance and high examination performance.

Authorised Absences

The Department for Children and Families (DCSF) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention;
- Days of religious observance notified in advance;
- Absence due to exceptional circumstances (at the Head Teacher's discretion).

There are other absences, such as "Approved Sporting Activity" that can be authorised.

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged **out of school hours**.

Unauthorised Absences

Unauthorised absences are those where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

We ask parents to **notify the school well in advance** (preferably 4 weeks notice), by completing an Application for Absence Form, of any exceptional circumstances to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. Every decision made will be in the best educational interest of the children.

The DfE guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the **school** that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

Holidays in Term Time

We do not authorise holidays being taken in term time as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Holidays taken during term time will be monitored and we have a duty to report these to the Local Authority who may take further action.

The school cannot legally authorise any absence unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. It is at the Head teachers discretion whether an absence is deemed under 'exceptional circumstances'.

An Application for Absence Form must be completed if you are planning to take holiday during term time. A meeting will then take place to discuss your application.

Expectations

Parents:

- To do all they can to ensure their child arrives **on time** for morning and afternoon school. School starts at 8:45am and afternoon registration is at 1.15 p.m. for Key Stage 2 and 1.30pm for Reception and Key Stage 1. We will monitor persistent late comers and inform parents of our concerns.
- If their child is ill, notify the school **on the first day before 9.30am** with an estimation of the likely length of absence;
- Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school.

In return the school will:

- Contact home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- Contact second contact if no success in response by 11am on the first day of absence
- If still no success, try other means of contact such as email
- If concerns raise to a safeguarding nature, follow reporting processes as detailed in the safeguarding children policy
- Contact home over any unexplained absences.
- Follow up promptly any concerns that parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in school;
- Involve external services where appropriate to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;
- Regularly and consistently remind students of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

Registers

Registers are important legal documents and we rely on accurate input in order to follow up any concerns as well as for data analysis.

The registers information will be checked every morning after registration. It is imperative that the data entered is accurate. Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information we have is as accurate as possible.

Children who arrive late will receive a late slip and will be marked in the register as 'L' (late- authorised) before 9am. After 9am they will receive the unauthorised mark 'U' (arrived in school after registration has closed).

Parents of children who are persistently late may be contacted by the school in order to address the issue.



The Process to Improve Attendance/Punctuality

As part of our commitment to ensure pupils attend well at school, our strategy to improve attendance/punctuality will come into force when there is a concern over a child's level of attendance. The following grid explains at what points the process will be implemented:

Attendance level	Action
Below 96%	The pupil is entered into the monitoring list. Parents receive an initial attendance letter.
Below 90%	Parents receive a phone call from the Head teacher and a second letter.
Below 90% and no improvement from when the second letter was sent.	Invite to a Parent Contract meeting
If did not attend the meeting	Re-invite letter
When improvement has been made after a meeting to review	A letter to praise the achievement
If no improvement after meeting	A letter to inform of a referral to the Education Entitlement Service
If child's attendance is due to arriving late to school	A letter to inform of time needed to be in class and the impact this has if they are not
If no improvement after initial lateness letter	A letter to invite to meeting

Roles and responsibilities:

At Greatworth Primary School we believe that high attendance levels are achieved as a result of staff working closely together and knowing where their responsibilities lie. The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Parents

- Ensure that children attend school regularly.
- Inform us by calling the school by 9.30 am each day giving specific reason why their child is absent and indicating how long they might be away from school.
- When children have been ill, ensure that they return to school as quickly as possible once they are no longer infectious.
- If a child's attendance falls below 90% attend Attendance Meetings with the Head teacher to set a target for improvement and a plan of action to support their child's attendance.

Governors

- To set and monitor whole school annual targets with the Head teacher.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.

Head Teacher

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.



- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To arrange contact with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To keep detailed records of intervention work with parents and carers on attendance issues.

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence, if known, on the appropriate system.
- To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness or through a temporary exclusion of up to five days.

Office Staff

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason. To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Head teacher whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- To meet with the Head teacher and provide updates on current attendance and punctuality.

Education Entitlement Service

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

Northamptonshire County Councils Code of Conduct - Penalty Notices to Address Absences and Poor Attendance at School or Alternative Provision.

Rationale

1. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that the associated powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of Penalty Notices.
2. Regular and punctual attendance at school, or alternative provision, is both a legal requirement and essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities. Penalty Notices offer a swift intervention which Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) will use to deal with issues of unauthorised absence before they become entrenched.
3. An offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at school, or alternative provision, at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school, or alternative provision.



4. In addition a Penalty Notice can be used to help ensure parents fulfill their responsibilities to ensure their child is not out in a public place without reasonable justification during the first five days of every exclusion from school.

Authorisation

1. The primary responsibility for the issuing of Penalty Notices rests with the Local Authority. Educational Inclusion & Partnership Team (EIPT) of NCC will therefore issue Penalty Notices in Northamptonshire. This ensures consistency and will prevent conflict with other enforcement sanctions

2. Although professionals other than those within the Local Authority (e.g. Head Teachers, the Police etc.) are accredited persons within the legislation, able to issue Penalty Notices, there is no requirement for them to do so. In Northamptonshire it has been agreed that the Police will not issue Penalty Notices. If a Head Teacher feels it is appropriate for a Penalty Notice to be issued they must refer to the EIPT. This will avoid a Penalty Notice being issued when the EIPT is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance or where a Penalty Notice is not deemed an appropriate form of intervention.

3. Penalty Notices will be issued by First Class post to satisfy evidential requirements.

4. EIP will act upon requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, academies, or alternative education providers and Northamptonshire Police, provided that;

- a) All relevant information is supplied in the specified manner;
- b) The circumstances of the pupil's absence meets the requirements of this Code of Conduct; and
- c) The issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other interventions strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already in process.

Criteria for Issuing Penalty Notices

1. Penalty Notices are issued to parents as defined under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, in relation to children of compulsory school age. Under the Act the term "parent" includes;

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- Any person although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with a child.

2. They may be issued for children at maintained schools, academies, free schools and alternative provision providers in Northamptonshire.

3. In accordance with the definition of parent, and thereby parental responsibility for non-school attendance, more than one person may be liable for the offence. In such circumstances, separate notices will be issued to each person.

4. Penalty Notices may be issued when:

- Where there has been an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence from an educational establishment and enforcement is necessary to improve attendance. Unauthorised absence



is absence without permission from a head teacher or other authorised representative from the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. The categories of authorised and unauthorised absence are explained in the Guidance to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

- A minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 school week period will usually have occurred. However, a shorter period of time may be considered appropriate in some circumstances.
 - In the case of a unauthorised holiday taken during term time, if;
 - Parents have not sought permission from the Head Teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time.
 - The Head Teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
 - A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation.
 - And there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 school week period.
 - Each case is considered on its own individual merits.
- A pupil is persistently late to school, i.e. arrives after the register has closed;

Under truancy sweeps carried out under Crime and Disorder Act 1998 powers, a minimum of 5 sessions of unauthorised absence may generate a Penalty Notice, if these unauthorised absences occur in the 6 school weeks (maximum) after the child was stopped on a the truancy sweep; and

- When an excluded child is present in a public place during school hours on a day which is one of the first 5 school days to which the exclusion relates or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates, under the protocol for Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Alternative action may need to be considered if school attendance offences re-occur, in the light of advice from Legal Services.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notices

Once issued a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstance;

- The Penalty Notice has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- Evidence has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- There are material errors in the information leading to the issue of the Penalty Notice.
- The period for payment has expired and the Local Authority does not intend to institute legal proceedings for which the Penalty Notice relates.

Payment of Penalty Notices

The arrangements for the paying of Penalty Notices will be detailed on the Penalty Notice. Revenue generated from the Penalty Notices will be used to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices, or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

The Penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice (assumed as 2 working days following the Notice being sent by first class mail), or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice.

If the Penalty Notice 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. The prosecution relates to irregular school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a prosecution is an appropriate course of action a Caution may be offered by the Local Authority as an alternative method of disposal.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

A record will be kept of all prosecutions relating to offence for which a Penalty Notice was issued.

Legislation

1. Section 23 Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers authorised officers of a Local Authority, Head Teachers (and Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by the Head) and Police Officers (including Community Support Officers) to issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence from school, or alternative provision.

2. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004.

3. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 require the Local Authority, in consultation with the above, to develop a code of conduct for issuing of Penalty Notices. Any person issue a Penalty Notice must do so within the terms of this code of conduct) the Code of Conduct”).

4. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2005 extends the issuing of Penalty Notices to alternative provision.

5. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 confirms the increase in the amount of penalty where the offence are alleged to have been wholly or partly committed after 1st September 2012.

6. Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 confirm that the penalty of £60 must be paid within 21 days or after that period increase to £120 to be paid within 28 days.

7. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 remove all reference to *family holiday* and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. Amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school *if* the leave is granted.

8. The education provisions of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition of parent as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996.

9. Penalty Notices supplement existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or Section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school or alternative provision.

10. Education and Inspections Act 2006; giving authorisation to Penalty Notices when a child has been excluded.



11. This Code of Conduct complies with the requirements set out in Sections 14-16 of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

12. The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and Equal Opportunities legislation