



ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy confirmed by the Governing Body of The Grove Primary School on:

Date: February 2019

Reviewed: Autumn 2018 to adopt change in county policy

To be reviewed: 2020

1 Introduction

1.1 We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. 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.

1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate the reason for an absence and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 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 guardian, for example if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

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

2.2 Unauthorised absence

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

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. This includes children who arrive after 9.15 am, when registers are closed. These absences will affect the child's overall attendance record which is monitored by the Education Welfare Service and remains on their school file.

2.3 Lateness

School starts at 8.55am. At this time children must be in their classroom, ready for registration. Children may enter their classrooms, via the outside classroom doors, from 8.45am.

It is important to be on time as the first few minutes of the school day are often used to give out instructions or organise school work for the rest of the day. If a child misses this short but vital session, their work for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

Parents who arrive after the gates and classroom doors are closed must bring their child into school through the Community Entrance, where a member of SMT will be monitoring late arrivals. Parents must sign their child's name in the late book, giving a reason for the lateness. The child will be marked as 'L' (late) in the register. Parents may be invited to make an appointment with a member of SMT to discuss concerns regarding lateness in more detail.

Children who arrive **after** 9.15 am must be brought into school by their accompanying parent via the school office. Parents must sign their child's name in the late book, giving a valid reason for the lateness. Lateness after 9.15am will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence) and will count towards the

child's overall attendance record.

The late book is monitored weekly by the school and the Education Welfare Officer and in the case of repeated lateness (3 or more times in one week or a regular pattern of late arrivals over a half term), a letter will be sent home and parents will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the reasons for this.

3 What happens when a child is absent

3.1 When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, using the appropriate code, or, if the reason has not yet been established, recording 'N'. At 9.15 am each morning, office staff will check the class registers and begin contacting parents/carers of any child who is absent but whose absence has not been reported by that parent/carer. Calls to parents/carers will be made by 10.15am.

3.2 On the first day of a child's absence, parents are asked to contact the office to give the reason for the absence and to contact the office as early as possible on each subsequent day of absence.

3.3 If a child has a medical or other necessary appointment, parents should contact the office prior to the day of absence. If a child is absent due to illness for longer than 3 school days medical evidence may be requested.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The office staff will then be in contact as soon as possible with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. If no contact is made with the parent/carer and there are concerns about the child's well-being, a home visit may take place or contact made with outside agencies.

4 Requests for exceptional leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we understand that there are circumstances where a parent may request leave of absence for a special reason. The 'Exceptional Leave Request Form' is available on the website or from the school office. The form should be completed by the parent and returned to the school office at least one week before the first day of requested absence. This does not guarantee that the absence will be granted however.

4.2 Requests for exceptional leave will always be looked at on an individual basis and a decision will be made based on whether it is considered to be exceptional and therefore whether or not it will be authorised. Taking additional leave than that which has been agreed will be marked as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice is likely to be issued. There is also a risk of the child being taken off the school roll.

4.3 If the school does not agree to the exceptional leave request and a child is still taken out of school, the absence will be unauthorised and will affect the child's overall attendance record. This absence will then be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and it may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. *The more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in the classroom.*

5 Repeated unauthorised absences

5.1 The school is following the 'stepping stone' system, as recommended by Cambridgeshire County Council:

If a child has a significant number (below 95% attendance) of absences, the parent(s) or carer will be contacted by phone or sent a letter informing them of school's initial concerns regarding their child's fall in attendance. Parents/carers will be reminded about the importance of regular school attendance and any immediate issues will be discussed.

If attendance does not improve, parents/carers will be sent a letter asking them to meet with a member of the school attendance team to discuss the barriers to regular school attendance and identify any possible solutions. A target of 96% attendance over a specified monitoring period will be set and medical evidence will be required for any further absences to be recorded using the I code. Parents/carers will be informed that a penalty notice could be issued by county if targets are not met.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance during or by the end of the monitoring period and no satisfactory explanation for the absences has been provided, a penalty notice form will be completed and sent to the county's Legal Panel for discussion. The EWO will be informed.

5.2 Parents will be informed by letter if their child is named on the Persistent Absentee Report for a term. The letter outlines the DfE's statutory guidance on parental responsibility for attendance and that a penalty notice could be served if attendance fails to improve.

5.3 Children with poor attendance may be invited to take part in the sticker reward programme; with a small prize at the end of each week of full attendance. Parents will be informed by letter if their child is going to take part in the programme.

5.4 The teacher with responsibility for attendance has regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and school attendance officer to discuss those children with repeated unauthorised absences.

6 Attendance monitoring

6.1 The Grove Primary monitors attendance carefully and considers the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting their own priorities for the coming year.

6.2 The teacher with responsibility for attendance and attendance officer monitor the attendance of children whose attendance is falling below the 96% threshold due to unauthorised absences or a pattern of regular authorised absences and implement strategies to enable attendance to improve.

6.3 Through letters, the school website and consultation evenings, parents/carers are reminded about their responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and the consequences of poor attendance.

6.4 Parents will be encouraged to understand the full implications for both their children's academic progress and their social groupings when they miss school.

6.5 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for bringing any concerns to the attention of the Attendance Officer. If there is concern about a child's absence, teachers will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term concern about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to headteacher, who will contact the parents or carer.

6.6 The EWO monitors attendance regularly and meetings are arranged/letters sent home as appropriate to encourage good attendance and remind parents/carers of the effects of low attendance.

7 Reviewing attendance

7.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school attendance figures are as high as they should be. The responsibility to authorise requests for absence has been delegated to the headteacher. Letters will be sent to all parents who request absence and the seriousness of unauthorised absence will be clearly explained.

7.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records.

7.3 A termly attendance report for governors and SLT will be compiled by the Attendance Team. This will include numbers of and reasons for authorised and unauthorised absences; attendance figures for year groups and key groups with analysis of those figures and actions/review of actions for improving attendance in subsequent terms.

8 Celebrating good attendance

8.1 At The Grove we appreciate the commitment that the majority of parents have towards ensuring that their children attend school regularly and we celebrate good attendance in a number of ways.

8.2 The classes achieving attendance of 96% or above over a week gain pieces to put on their Mr Potato Head.

8.3 The name of the class with the highest attendance each week will be displayed in the school entrance hall for all our visitors to see. They will also be in charge of looking after a completed Mr Potato Head for the week!

8.4 The first class to complete their Mr Potato Head will have a special treat and they will be involved in deciding what that treat will be. Their name and photograph will be displayed on the Celebrating Good Attendance board.

8.5 Children who achieve 100% attendance over a half term will receive a sticker and will be recognised during a whole school or class assembly.

8.6 Children who achieve 100% attendance over a whole term will receive a certificate and prize in a special celebration assembly, to which parents will be invited.

8.7 Children who achieve 100% attendance over a whole year will receive a certificate and book token in a special celebration assembly at the end of the school year, to which parents will be invited.

Code	Description	Code	Description
C	Other authorised circumstances	O	Unauthorised absence
E	Excluded	P	Approved sporting activity
I	Illness	R	Religious observance
L	Late (before registers closed)	V	Educational visit or trip
M	Medical/dental appointment	X	Non compulsory school age absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence		