

Graiseley Primary School



Attendance & Punctuality Policy July 2023

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the learning, progress and safeguarding of all pupils. Graiseley Primary School expects all pupils to have good attendance of at least 95%. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place the 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.

At Graiseley Primary we believe that

- It is the responsibility of staff, parents and children to promote good attendance.
- Good attendance helps to promote good attitudes and behaviours which prepares children to take an active and responsible part in the adult world.
- Poor attendance and punctuality can seriously hinder a child's progress and undermine learning.
- Children who have poor punctuality disrupt others' learning by interrupting lessons and breaking concentration.
- Children who are not at school may be at risk in the community.

How attendance described at Graiseley Primary School:

100%	Outstanding
97-99%	Good
95-96%	Satisfactory
90-94%	Cause for Concern
<90%	Unacceptable

Aims of Policy

- To act early to address patterns of absence and reduce absence.
- To ensure that staff, parents and pupils realise the importance of attendance to the overall achievements of pupils in school.
- To promote a positive attitude towards attendance and good time-keeping with staff, pupils and parents.
- To monitor and organise procedures to encourage positive attendance.
- To communicate clearly to parents the school's policy for attendance and good time-keeping and to make them aware of the school's procedures over a given period of time.

- To ensure that non-attendance (and poor punctuality) is effectively monitored and swift action taken to address these.
- To improve attendance to a minimum of 96%.
- To support families and pupils who are having difficulties attending and arriving on time.
- To create a climate and system which gives attendance a high profile and ensures that absence for any reason is kept to a minimum.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) May 2022 from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#) 2013. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)

Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)

Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)

[The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles & responsibilities

LA (Local Authority) has a duty to:

- Ensure that all pupils attend regularly.
- Help schools improve attendance.
- Support individual pupils.
- Collect and publish required data.

The Governing Board will:

- Promote the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school
- Make sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Hold the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Our Governing Body have a link Governor for Attendance, who asks the school questions regarding our attendance procedures and acts as a critic for our policy and procedures on a termly basis.

Parents will:

- Ensure that their child arrives on time for the start of registration (8.50 a.m.).
- Ensure any child arriving after the start of school accesses school via the main office.
- Contact the school on the first day of any absence before 9.30 am. This may be done by phone, by letter or in person. (Verbal messages on the parent's behalf from an adult relative or representative such as a child-minder or friend may be accepted at the school's discretion on the first day of absence - subsequent absences must be explained by the parent. Verbal messages from children, e.g. siblings, will not be accepted).
- Contact the school in advance if their child will be absent for any reason (e.g. medical appointment).
- Avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day.
- Ensure family holidays are not booked during term time. **No holidays will be authorised in term time**; only in very special circumstances and with extenuating evidence will this be considered by the Headteacher and Governors.
- Notify school in advance if they intend to remove their child permanently from the school for any reason.
- Work with the school and Education Welfare Officer to improve lateness and attendance.

Staff (Head/Assistant Heads/Other Staff

- The Headteacher may authorise absence due to ill health or other unusual circumstance.
- The Headteacher ensures that parents are informed about session times, term dates, additional day's closure and procedures for contacting school about absence or lateness.
- Governors are informed by the Headteacher as to the procedures in place to monitor attendance; the attendance and absence levels.
- The school uses established monitoring systems to analyse attendance in order to report to parents, the LA and DfES.
- Staff keep an accurate register of attendance, with registration twice daily and should be vigilant in monitoring and reporting absence in accordance with school procedures.

At Graiseley Primary School the Headteacher works in partnership with the Pastoral Team to address the holistic nature of low school attendance. The team consists of HT, AHTs, HSCLO, Admin assistant and SENCO and is supported by the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO). We use a multi-agency approach towards understanding and supporting families to achieve good attendance. A high percentage of families at Graiseley receive support through an Early Help, or Social Care plans. Attendance is monitored and supported throughout these plans.

Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence.

There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
- **Unauthorised Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request. Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised and further evidence for absence may be required.

Acceptable reason for absence:

- Illness (evidence may be asked for)
- Days agreed by school as religious observance

Unacceptable reasons for absence:

- Truancy (absence without parents/carers knowledge)
- Minding the house
- Shopping/running errands (eg buying new shoes or clothes)
- Looking after sick relatives
- Looking after brothers or sisters
- School clothing in the wash
- Oversleeping
- Headlice
- Birthday

- Parents illness
- Children at different school not in school
- Last day of term
- Child not wanting to come to school
- Holiday (whole weeks or odd days)
- Any other reason that the Headteacher deems unacceptable

If a child of compulsory school age who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, then the parent is guilty of an offence under the Education Act 1996 and can be served with a penalty notice by an authorised officer.

Application for leave of absence during term time (for exceptional circumstances)
 Application for term-time leave of absence must be made 4 weeks in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'Application for leave of absence during term time'. These may be obtained from the school office. Parents have no entitlement to leave of absence and authorisation will only be given for "Exceptional circumstance" and proof will be asked for.

Legislation introduced in Sept 2013 states that parents do not have the right to take their child/ren out of school during term time, parents can be fined £60 per child, per parent in the first instance for doing so except in exceptional circumstances. By law you must ask permission for your child to miss school. If you don't you risk being served a penalty notice from the local authority.

There are approximately 195 school days (390 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 71 days (142 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your family holidays are taken during the school holiday period.

Lateness

Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.

- Children must be in class by 8.50 am each day. Registers will be taken as soon as possible after that time. Children will be marked late if they arrive at school after the registers have been taken.
- Children who arrive after the bell at 8.50 must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered into the late book.
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 9.30, this may be recorded as an unauthorised absence although we are aware that the pupil is on the school premises in accordance with health and safety.

- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'. Please be advised that where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Lateness will be monitored. Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness will be reminded by letter of the importance of good time keeping. If lateness persists, parents will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem.

Procedures for monitoring absence

- Staff are given guidance on completion of the register on computer and it is their duty to ensure that the registers are maintained accurately, timely and regularly.
- On the first day of absence the appointed Attendance Officer (office) will text message home to ascertain the reason for the absence; updating register accordingly.
- If no reply a phone call will be made by the HSCLO.
- If no reply a home visit by the HSCLO will take place as early as possible.
- Families of regular/ higher concerns will receive a phone call or, if necessary, a home visit will be made by HSCLO rather than a text message.
- If no contact can be made a compliment slip form school requesting a call back will be left at the house.
- If no contact can be made attempts for home visits will be made at least 3 times within a 10-day period followed by a CME (Child Missing in Education) referral to the Local Authority.
- Reasons for absence are usually given to the office using email, class Dojo or a phone call. The reasons are logged on the child's attendance register on Sims by the Admin Assistant.
- Reasons for absence which are not validated by an acceptable code will be checked with the HT for approval before being assigned CC for approved reason for absence or O as unauthorised absence.
- If the child has a history of extended absence the Attendance Officer/Head teacher will track attendance closely and invite parents in to discuss historical attendance.
- The Headteacher and/or Attendance Officer will check attendance data regularly and monitor attendance patterns- with weekly analysis if attendance falls below 95%. If no improvement in attendance and percentage falls below 90% then an Early Help may be offered and led by HSCLO.
- School will report to parents at the end of each term attendance percentage and number of unauthorised attendance for each term.

- HSCLO will make individual arrangements for high risk/ vulnerable individual cases and those on Early Helps and report on their progress at Pastoral Meetings or directly to the Head teacher, as required.

Action will be taken as follows:

1. Depending on the circumstances informal contact will be made in the first instance, (e.g. A 'phone call or contact on the playground) outcomes will be logged.
2. The school Attendance team/ pastoral team will discuss issues around reasons for absence and identify key actions to support family and improve attendance.
3. Early Helps/ Parent contracts will be set up and reviewed 6 weekly; advice and support as appropriate.
4. If problem persists the Headteacher will refer to the Local Authority and make a referral for a Legal Notice to be issued, or a MASH referral may be made if there are other circumstances.

If a child is repeatedly late the same procedures will be followed.

Staff should note, that in any event, if they are concerned about a child's absence, they should immediately inform the Attendance team/ Headteacher.

To encourage & reward good attendance

- Attendance data is assessed weekly and Gold, Silver and Bronze rosettes will be given out during weekly Achievement Assembly to the classes with highest attendance percentage to put onto the Attendance board. The winning class will be rewarded termly.
- 100% Attendance Certificate / prize will be given out on a termly basis.
- A family/ group reward will be awarded from random attendance monitoring weeks (Goody Friday), whereby children with 100% attendance during that week will be put into a draw for a special prize each half term.
- Children with 100% attendance for the whole year will receive a Mega Certificate and a shield.
- Specific classes could be targeted for a period of time and whole class rewards given.
- Late Clinics / rewards will be arranged for target children with Attendance officer.

Staff should make every effort to make sure that sanctions are not used as the problem lies with the family and not the child.

Please note:

- By law, all absences have to be monitored and recorded accurately. Statistics are collated and have to be published regarding unauthorised absences. It is vital that absences are recorded accurately.
- If parents give no explanation for absence, staff should refer to Headteacher in the first instance.
- If children are repeatedly late the same procedures should be followed.
- A pro forma holiday form (Leave of Absence) is available for parents from the school office. However, holidays are not authorised and only in very special circumstances and with extenuating evidence will be authorisation be considered by the Headteacher and Governors. The office staff will mark register with 'H' for 'holiday.'
- Absence letters, information to be entered on SIMS, letters to be kept for 3 years then shredded.
- Any concerns about pupil's welfare, including absence and punctuality, should be discussed with the Headteacher/ HSCLO who will take appropriate action.