

Attendance Guidance For Families – May 2022

Introduction

Our expectation is that pupils attend school every day for every session. We believe that regular, uninterrupted attendance secures the best possible learning achievement for all our children and we are committed to working in partnership with families to achieve this. Department For Education expect schools to monitor all pupils' attendance records closely and to share these with the Local Authority and with the next school when pupils transfer.

Attendance Above 97%: less than 6 days absence a year - These young people have every chance to make really strong progress at school.
95%: Attendance 10 days absence a year - These children benefit from strong overall attendance and are well placed to make good progress at school.
90% Attendance: 19 days absence a year - Young people in this group are missing a month of school per year; it will be difficult for them to achieve their best.
85% Attendance: 29 days absence a year - Young people in this group are missing six weeks of school per year; there is a real risk that this lower attendance will hinder children's progress. This level of absence is seen as persistent absenteeism.
80% Attendance: 38 days absence a year - Young people in this group are missing a year of school over five years of education and are not benefitting from their entitlement to an education.

All staff have a duty to informally monitor children's attendance and will pass any concerns on to Mrs Hawkes (Attendance Officer) and Mrs Smith (Wellbeing/ Safeguarding Leader) who will follow formal procedures for regular and systematic monitoring of pupil attendance.

Attendance below 96%: A text message and standard letter will be sent to any parent/carer whose child's attendance has dropped just below 96%. This is for information – it notifies the parent/carer of this attendance level and explains that the school will continue to monitor the child's attendance. Where the cause for a child's attendance dropping below 95% is very specific and clearly known and evidenced to the school, we may decide that such a letter is not required or appropriate. For example, where a child has had a known and confirmed medical issue and where this is the only substantial cause for the lower attendance. In such circumstances, the child's attendance will be closely monitored.

Attendance which falls below 90% will trigger regular formal monitoring by the Wellbeing and Safeguarding Team: Attendance at 90% equates to 19 days absence through a year and is therefore a cause for concern. In such circumstances, parents/carers will receive a specific letter which very clearly identifies that the attendance level is a significant cause for concern (except for in exceptional circumstances where the attendance is not a cause for concern, such as known medical condition). Parents/Carers are requested to attend a meeting, the purpose of which is to explore the reasons for the child's low attendance and formulate a plan for improvement. The content of this meeting will be used to draw up an attendance improvement plan which will be shared with the parents/carers and a review date will be agreed.

Participants in that meeting may vary according to the circumstances but may often involve staff such as the Safeguarding Leader within the school, class teacher, SENDCo and well-being staff. The school may also invite other relevant professionals.

At this stage, schools should make it known and confirm in writing that absences cannot be authorised without medical evidence unless there are exceptional reasons which render this inappropriate (for example, a known medical condition); schools cannot routinely authorise absence where a child's attendance has reached this level of concern.

Attendance which continues to decline from below 90%: Unless there are specific circumstances, the school will not be authorising absences at this stage. If attendance is not showing reasonable improvement within three weeks of the last communication to parents/carers, then school will take further action which will involve further meetings with the parents/carers. It is likely that a referral for intervention by the Local Authority will be appropriate and sought after. At this stage 'Early Help' will be offered by the Safeguarding Lead as another form of support. Schools will use their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils and their circumstances to inform decisions about escalation of welfare concerns if they are unable to account for a child's safety following their unexplained or consistent absence from school.

Grace Mary Primary School Approach

GREEN Pupils with attendance 96% - 100%	• Bronze, silver, gold reward system. • End of year 100% attendance award
YELLOW Pupils with attendance 90% - 95.9%	Text message monthly until it increases to above 95.9% – inform parents/guardians attendance has fallen below the national expectation
AMBER Pupils with attendance 85% - 89.9%	Your child's attendance is well below the threshold. RAPID improvements must be made Letter 1– inform parents/guardians attendance will be monitored for the next term and parents/guardians will be offered an attendance meeting and offered support ie, Children's Centre, School Wellbeing Team.
RED Pupils with attendance Below 84.9%	Letter 2– inform parents/guardians of attendance. Meeting will be carried out (school or home). Early Help will be offered and parents will be expected to work with the school to improve attendance. Outside professionals from (eg, housing, LA inclusion, Attendance & Prosecution) may be invited to the meeting. Expectations will be set through a school/parent agreement. <i>This level of absence will highly affect pupils learning and progress.</i>

Headteachers have no discretion to grant leave of absence during term time unless there are genuinely exceptional circumstances. It is the responsibility of parents to contact the school in writing when requesting any leave for their children so that each case can be considered on an individual basis. This must be at least **10 days before** the event.

Penalty Notices: When a leave of absence is taken and the school has not authorised the absence because the reasons are not considered 'exceptional', the school will request that the Local Authority issues a Penalty Notice. In considering whether to do so, the school will consult the latest advice given from the LA. If the absence meets the threshold the school will request that a Penalty Notice is issued.

The following situations might be considered examples of ‘exceptional circumstances’:

- Return of parent from active service (Forces);
- Death or serious illness of a parent, step-parent or sibling;
- Young Carers;
- Disability or respite leave;
- Periods of obligatory religious observance;
- Approved public performances (with clear supporting evidence).

The following (not exhaustive) are examples of situations which would not typically be considered as exceptional:

-Family holiday/cheaper holiday dates;
-Educational visits arranged by family members during school time;
-Attendance at a wedding or christening;
-Visiting relatives either abroad or in the UK;
-Limitations on parents / carers leave’ entitlement or dates; parents / carers’ profession or place of work making it difficult to coincide school and work holidays;
-A family member going for medical treatment abroad.

Medical and Other Appointments: Parents / carers must avoid arranging appointments for their child during the day. However, if it is unavoidable, parents /carers must notify the school of the appointment details. A child should only be taken out of school for his/her own appointment, not because another family member has an appointment. This includes collecting a child early so a parent or carer can attend an appointment for someone else.

Reporting Absence for Illness: Parents should inform the school by telephone of the reasons for their child’s absence **by 8:30am** on the **first** day of the child’s absence and on **each subsequent** day of absence unless the office deems it is not necessary, ie chicken pox, covid etc.

If a child is absent with no explanation, school office staff will text or telephone the parents to ascertain the reason. **Please make sure that we have up to date details.**

Lateness: classrooms open at **8:30** and this is the time pupils will have the opportunity to be involved in extra intervention catch up activities, Reading, review learning from the day before and seek support for misconceptions, time for settling for some pupils etc. Lessons start at **8:45am** the register is taken and lessons begin. If a child arrives at school after the start of the school day **8:45am** they will be registered as ‘late’; this is an unauthorised absence and the child is counted as absent for the morning session unless parents/carers provide the school with an acceptable reason.

Minutes later per day	= days of learning lost per year
5	3
10	7
15	10
20	13
30+	19+