



Attendance Policy

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Committee

Signed by Chair of Committee:

Date:

Greenmead Primary School

Attendance Policy

The school staff and governors of Greenmead Primary School, alongside the LA, believe that it is essential for all pupils to attend school regularly and avoid any absence. Any loss of time at school can adversely affect a child's attainment and their access to all educational, health and therapy provisions. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure that the children in their care achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.

This policy is written in accordance with guidelines as advised by the DfE, updated 11th September 2018.

Expectations

The government expects schools and local authorities to;

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

The school expects that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly (above 85%) and on each day the school is open to pupils;
- Arrive punctually;
- Engage with the education being provided;
- Arrive at school appropriately prepared for the day.

The school expects that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;
- Ensure that their child/children arrive at school each day punctually and properly prepared for the school day;
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Contact the school office directly whenever the child/children is/are unable to attend school, on the first day of his/her/their absence.

The school expect that staff will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Emphasise the importance of good attendance and take positive steps to encourage it;
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils;
- Monitor attendance of every pupil on a child protection plan or where there is cause for concern;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any parental concerns about the pupils;

- Monitor every pupil's attendance particularly those pupils whose attendance has dropped below 85%;
- Office staff will contact parents/carers as soon as possible on the first day of absence where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Designated person for attendance is to liaise regularly with office staff to ensure poor attendees are tracked and acted upon;
- Teachers to follow up and liaise with designated person for attendance for all unexplained absences to obtain notes giving a reason for the absence and the likely date of return;
- Make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly, express their concern and clarify the school's and LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- Refer irregular or concerning patterns of attendance to the Education Welfare Service (EWS);
- Designated person to arrange TAC (Team Around the Child) meetings to ensure concerns of poor attendance are being addressed and all the relevant professionals are clear of the concerns.

Illness (not medical appointments)

The school expects parents to notify the school office on the first day their child/children is/are unable to attend due to illness. The school will authorise absences due to illness unless we have a genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, we will request parents/carers to provide medical evidence to support illness. We will record the absence as unauthorised if we are not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness and will advise parents of this intention. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Appointments

If a child has an appointment during the school day it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school of this. This is done by informing the class teacher via the pupil's home/school book. If this has not been completed parents/carers can also notify the admin office by telephone.

If the school have concerns regarding the frequency of appointments or a child's overall attendance, they may request that parents/carers provide written or electronic proof of scheduled appointments.

Missing school for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Religious observance

Religious observance is treated as authorised absence. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupils belong.

Holidays

The Local Authority and the DfE advises Headteachers to only authorise absence for leave in special or exceptional circumstances.

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Headteachers cannot grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in writing in advance using the 'Request for Authorised Absence' form from the school

office. The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion. No parents/carers can demand leave of absence for their child/children as a right.

Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher will be recorded as unauthorised. Any absence that is not authorised, parents/carers could be subject to a Fixed Penalty Fine by the Local Authority (LA).

As absence from school (whatever the reason) can adversely affect a child's ability to benefit fully from their educational opportunities and to keep up with their learning programmes.

Encouraging Good Attendance

Greenmead Primary School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;
- By marking registers accurately and punctually. If pupils arrive at school after the close of the register without a written explanation, their lateness will be recorded in the late book;
- By publishing termly attendance figures to the governors;
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9:30a.m. The school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and make contact with the EWS officer to raise a concern that the child is missing from education.
- School will continue to contact parents via telephone and email. If, by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers (via post) and invite them into school to discuss their concerns. The school will tell parents/carers that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).
- If no further contact can be made with the parents/carers then the school will action Local Authority procedures for 'Children missing from Education' (see safeguarding policy).
- The EWS will make repeated efforts to contact the parent/carer and establish why the pupil is not attending school. If the problem is quickly resolved and the pupil returns to school, or if a legitimate reason is provided for the absence, the EWS will continue to monitor the situation. If problems appear to be ongoing an Education Welfare Officer will be allocated to work with the family.
- The Education Welfare Officer will make arrangements to meet with the parent/carer, at home, in school or at Wandsworth Town Hall, to discuss the reasons for the pupil's non-attendance. The EWO will support and advise the parent/carer and the school, with a view to resolving any difficulties and improving the pupil's attendance.
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWS can result in further or legal action, and application for an Education Supervision Order, or a court prosecution.
- We encourage children to take part in extra-curricular activities with prior agreement in writing from the Headteacher. However if your child's attendance levels fall below 85% they will not be

able to participate in extra-curricular activities that take them out of school on a regular basis such as horseriding. They will be able to start again once their attendance has reached an acceptable level.

Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School

Where the parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, school must record in the admission register:

- (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live,
- (b) the new address, and
- (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, school must record in the admission register:

- (a) the name of the other school, and
- (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

If you change your home address please inform the school office as soon as possible.

Missing children:

As a school and governing body we have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (2018) when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Greenmead School has put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeated occasions. We hold at least two emergency contact numbers for every pupil. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides the school with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

If you change your telephone number or email address please inform the school office as soon as possible.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

Where the school notifies the local authority (LA) that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent/carer with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent/carer who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

School Organisation

In order for the Schools Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance a high priority and convey this to families at all times.

In addition to this the School has the following responsibilities:

Headteacher, Governors and the designated member of the school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- Agree a whole school attendance policy;
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that the appropriate resources are provided;
- Implement a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- Ensure that key staff have timetabled periods for liaison and follow up work with the EWS and appropriate access to attendance data;
- Consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay;
- Work in close collaboration with the EWS;
- Monitor and evaluate attendance with the EWS. Hold TAC (Team Around the Child) meetings where appropriate, in liaison with the school and EWO;
- Share the class teachers' concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with parents/carers with the EWO;
- Co-ordinate and work effectively with the EWO as appropriate;
- Discuss absences with a parent/carers on the return of their child to school to ascertain the reason behind the absence and minimise the likelihood of further absence.

School Admin Office to:

- Oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually;
- Liaise with the designated member of the school staff with responsibility for attendance;
- Share the teachers' concerns regarding the early identification of disaffection with the designated member of staff with responsibility for attendance;
- Follow up any unexplained non-attendance;
- Monitor pupils whose attendance is of concern to ensure immediate follow up of any further absences from school.

Class Teachers to:

- Complete registers accurately and punctually;
- Record all reasons for absence in the register using the correct codes available in the front of the registers;
- Inform the designated person in charge of overall attendance of concerns;
- Be alert to early signs of disaffection which could culminate in non-attendance and report these concerns as soon as possible to the designated person for Attendance.