

Grendon CE Primary School  
**Attendance Policy**

**1. Background**

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils. We believe high attainment depends on good attendance.

We expect all school staff to support and promote excellent school attendance by acting as role models and to work hard to provide a learning environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued and enjoy coming to school.

Sometimes a pupil's absence or lateness may not be their fault and in these circumstances it is our policy to be supportive of the child and not to make them feel guilty or inadequate. Also, at times we have to give allowances for religious beliefs and individual family circumstances.

We believe it is essential to regularly remind parents of the importance of good attendance and its links to pupil attainment. The Education Act 1996 clearly states that the prime responsibility of parents/carers is to ensure that their children attend school regularly.

**2. Aims**

- To create a culture in which good attendance is accepted as the norm.
- To demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- To maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance between home and school.
- To work with other schools to share good practice in order to improve this policy.

**3. Responsibility for the Policy and Procedure**

*Role of the Governing Body*

The Governing Body will:

- delegate powers and responsibilities to the Head Teacher to ensure all school staff are aware of and comply with this policy;
- nominate a link governor to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Coordinator and to report back to the Governing Body;
- ensure that the attendance policy is carried out;
- ask questions about trends and what is being done to prevent persistent poor attenders;
- monitor termly progress;
- take responsibility for ensuring this policy and all policies are maintained and updated regularly;
- take responsibility for ensuring all policies are made available to parents;

*Role of the Head Teacher*

The Head Teacher will:

- ensure all school staff, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;

- undertake the daily monitoring of school attendance by using an appropriate and effective registration system;
- monitor attendance according to gender, age, ethnicity, first language, eligibility for Free School Meals and special educational needs;
- target intervention and support to those children that have been highlighted as poor attenders;
- have in place a system for parents to report a child's absence;
- report the attendance figures and progress to the Governing Body;
- remind parents of their commitment to this policy;
- publicise good attendance during assemblies, newsletters and the termly report to the Governing Body;
- introduce rewards and incentives to encourage punctuality;
- organise training for school staff on the use and understanding of attendance codes and authorised and unauthorised attendance;
- work closely with the link governor and First Day Contact Supervisor;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

#### *Role of the School Office Staff*

The office staff are responsible for:

- implementing the policy with the Head Teacher;
- monitoring individual and class attendance on a daily basis;
- keeping the Head Teacher informed of attendance figures and trends;
- contacting parents regarding concerns about their child's attendance;
- compiling attendance data for the Head Teacher, the Governing Body and the EWO;
- ensuring registers are distributed to the teaching staff and are kept up to date
- contacting parents if they have not reported their child's absence by 9-30 a.m;
- sending a letter if no contact is made;
- continuing to contact the parents throughout the day until contact is made;
- contacting the key worker if a child is on the child protection register and no reason has been given for the child's absence;
- informing the Head Teacher of trends in absence

#### *Role of School Staff*

School staff will:

- comply with and implement this policy
- set an example of punctuality and good attendance;
- ensure that registers are taken at the appropriate times and are accurate and up to date;
- monitor class and individual attendance patterns;
- inform the school office of any concerns about attendance;
- emphasise the importance of punctuality and good attendance;
- discuss individual pupil attendance at parent-teacher consultations

#### *Role of the Nominated Governor*

The Nominated Governor will:

- work closely with the Head Teacher and the coordinator;

- ensure this policy and other linked policies are up to date;
- ensure that everyone connected with the school is aware of this policy;
- report to the Governing Body every term;
- annually report to the Governing Body on the success and development of this policy

#### *Role of Parents*

Parents are responsible for:

- ensuring that their children are punctual and know the importance of good attendance;
- informing the school on the first day of absence;
- informing the school of any changes to their contact details;
- collecting their children on time
- supporting the school Code of Conduct and guidance necessary to ensure smooth running of the school

#### *Role of Pupils*

Pupils are responsible for:

- arriving at school on time;
- knowing the value of good attendance;
- taking part in questionnaires and surveys

### **4. Dealing with Trends in Attendance**

When there is a pattern of poor attendance then the following procedure will take place:

- Parents are invited to attend an informal meeting with the Coordinator/Head Teacher to explain their child's repeated absence.
- Support will be offered if there are underlying reasons for the absence.
- If not, then the situation will be monitored for improvement.
- If there is no improvement then appropriate action will be taken.

#### *Dealing with Lateness*

The office staff monitor lateness and inform:

- the Head Teacher of patterns of lateness;
- parents of the school's concerns;

#### *Absence*

Holidays during term time – only in exceptional circumstances will the school agree to a leave of absence in term time.

Religious Observance – a maximum of three days absence is allowed for religious observance.

Medical, Dental or Hospital Appointments – we encourage these appointments to take place out of school time in order not to disrupt the child's education.

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

Absences can be authorised if they are for certain reasons e.g. sickness, religious observance, approved holiday, absence following the death of a close member of the family and other exceptional family circumstances.

The ultimate responsibility to authorise absence rests with the Head Teacher. If the Head Teacher is not satisfied with the reasons provided, the absence may be categorised as unauthorised.

An absence will be classified as unauthorised when:

- A child is kept off school because a parent is ill
- A child is absent because a sibling is ill
- The parent cannot get the child to school
- The child is taken on a shopping trip
- The child is absent due to a birthday treat/family treat
- A child is absent due to family work patterns
- The child refuses to come to school or wants to stay at home
- A child arrives at school after the morning/afternoon session has begun

Each child's unauthorised absences (including unauthorised holiday absences) will be noted and recorded on termly Pupil Profiles which are shared with parents.

It is a legal requirement for a school to report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to parents in the annual Governors Report and to the DfES.

Parents have a responsibility to telephone the school if their child is ill. If a child needs to be absent for a medical appointment the class teacher must be informed before the appointment.

If a parent has failed to contact the school by 9:30am on the first day of absence the school will telephone the child's home to find out why the child is not in school. If contact has not been made after the second day of absence the Head Teacher will inform the Education Welfare Officer and write to the parent.

## **6. Holidays**

Holidays will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

School work will not be set by teachers for children to access during term time holidays.

Parents of children in Years 2 and 6 are particularly requested to avoid taking any holiday in the first half of the Summer Term when the end of KS1 and 2 statutory tests take place.

All other requests for absences due to other circumstances must be made in writing to the Head Teacher in advance.

## **7. Punctuality**

The school day begins at 8.55 a.m. when the bell is rung and the children line up on the playground. Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. should report directly to the school office.

Parents of children who persistently arrive late for school will be reminded of these times and their obligation to comply. It will be explained that the lateness not only interrupts their child's education but also that of others in the class.

If a child arrives after the morning session has begun, with no reason given by their parent, this will constitute an unauthorised absence.

If parents know their child is going to be late for any reason, they should let the school know.

If a regular pattern of lateness is observed, a note will be sent home asking for the parent to explain the lateness and to ensure that punctuality is maintained. Repeated, unexplained lateness or persistent lateness without an acceptable reason will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and/or Social Services where relevant.

Persistent lateness is defined by the school as 4 late arrivals within any half term period.

### **8. Medical appointments**

Parents must report directly to the school office, or front door if office is unmanned, when collecting a child for, and returning them from, a medical appointment during the school day.

If a child is in hospital for a long period of time arrangements will be made with the hospital teaching staff and the parents to provide planned work for the children to complete.

### **9. Off site activities**

Occasionally children are taught off site (eg; swimming lessons). These activities are part of the curriculum and attendance is required. If a child is unable to take part in these activities alternative teaching arrangements will be made for them in school.

### **10. Monitoring**

A print out of each child's record of attendance will be sent home with each termly Pupil Profile.

The Head Teacher will keep the stakeholders informed about attendance matters via the Head Teacher's Report, e-newsletters and the school website.

All staff will be expected to comply with the policy and any issues will be discussed at staff meetings.

The Head Teacher will write to parents if child's attendance falls below the DfE's persistent absence threshold of 90%. The head teacher will contact the EWO if concerns about a child's attendance have not been resolved.