

Greenway Primary
& Nursery School



GREENWAY PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

In the current COVID-19 pandemic, Greenway Primary & Nursery School are taking into account and following closely all advice and guidance received from the Department for Education and Public Health England noting that the same is being updated on a regular basis.

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1. Aims

At Greenway Primary & Nursery School ('the School') we aim to meet our obligations with regard to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.

2. Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

The School offers an environment in which its families feel valued and welcomed and in which parents/carers understand the importance of a consistent, reliable, full time education. The School's ethos demonstrates that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent or late, and that follow-up action will be taken.

Attendance registers are monitored every month and analysed in order to identify attendance patterns of individual pupils, correlate attendance and standards of achievement, and inform policy and practice.

Pupils with less than 95% attendance are reported to the Headteacher monthly & are discussed at half termly class review meetings to spot any deteriorating trends.

Parents are regularly reminded via newsletters, prospectus, etc, of the importance of good attendance. School holiday dates are published well in advance and as soon as they are known in order to assist parents/carers in booking family holidays outside of term times.

Pupils who are absent for an extended period of authorised absence will, where appropriate, have work sent home to them, and will be supported in school on their return.

3. Expectations

The responsibility for good attendance is shared between the Governing Body, the School, parents/carers and pupils. All these groups need to understand the expectations which this policy has of them.

4. The Role of the Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis and for holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

5. The Role of the School

The School will provide a safe learning environment in which all pupils can thrive and succeed. In order to ensure pupils make progress of which they are capable, the School will:

- ensure that pupils are able to attend school for 380 half days (known as 'sessions') each year ie 190 days.
- ensure that accurate records of attendance and punctuality are maintained according to Government legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- ensure that emails/notes from parents are kept in the office register; filed at the end of the academic year and kept for three years. Telephone messages regarding lateness and absence are recorded in Arbor.
- clearly distinguish between absences which are authorised and those which are unauthorised (it is the decision of the Headteacher as to whether or not an absence will be authorised).
- encourage good attendance and punctuality and ensure school staff set good examples in this regard.
- investigate all unexplained or unjustified absences and follow up poor attendance and punctuality.
- keep parents informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record and work with parents should either give cause for concern.
- record pupil's attendance figures, including unauthorised absences in their annual report.
- monitor attendance and punctuality levels regularly and report to Governors via the Heads report
- liaise as necessary with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) over attendance and punctuality issues relating to individual pupils.

6. The Role of Parents/Carers

Parents/carers of registered pupils have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 for ensuring their child's attendance and punctuality at school. They are also responsible for ensuring that their child stays at school once they have registered. Consequently, they should:

- ensure their child attends school regularly and on time.
- ensure their child is properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
- avoid arranging family holidays in term time.
- avoid arranging non-urgent medical appointments during school hours/term time.
- inform the school by 9am on each day of absence and communicate the reason for their child's absence by telephone or email;

- confirm in writing as soon as possible, the reason for their child's absence. Absence will not be authorised until this note of explanation is received and even then that authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher;
- maintain regular communication with school staff about any concerns/issues.
- ensure the school office is notified immediately of any change to contact details.
- pupils are signed in and/or out at the school office when they arrive late, leave for/return from medical appointments.
- take an active interest in their child's school life and work.

It is accepted that young pupils tend to be accountable to their parents and do not usually truant from school. However, all children are occasionally reluctant to attend school and disaffected pupils may exhibit symptoms of illness, whether real or imagined, and be allowed to remain at home. Pupils who experience difficulties need support and understanding. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and is not helpful in identifying and addressing the underlying issue(s).

7.The Role of Pupils

All pupils are expected to:

- attend school daily and punctually.
- be ready to learn.
- sign in and/or out at the school office when they arrive late, leave for/return from medical appointments;

8.The Role of the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)

There is regular contact between the AIO and the School Office and /or Head Teacher, **Katharine Ellwood**, who is the Senior Leadership Team member with overall responsibility for attendance. Pupils are identified who are experiencing attendance difficulties and focused and time-limited action is agreed which needs to be taken by the School and/or AIO.

9. Registration

Pupils are expected to be at school in time to enter the classrooms for registration:

Key Stage 2 - 8.50am,

Key Stage 1 and Reception - 8.55am,

Nursery - 9am.

Years 5 & 6 – Classroom doors will open at 8:50am & close promptly at 8:55am. Any pupils arriving after this time must be signed in via the main school office and will be marked as L (Late before registers closed). Pupils arriving after 9:10am will be marked U (Late after registers closed).

Years 3 & 4 – Classroom doors will open at 8:50am & close promptly at 8:55am. Any pupils arriving after this time must be signed in via the main school office and will be marked as L (Late before registers closed). Pupils arriving after 9:10am will be marked U (Late after registers closed).

Years 1 & 2 (KS1) & Reception – Classroom doors will open at 8:55am & close promptly at 9:00am. Any pupils arriving after this time must be signed in via the main school office and will be marked as L (Late before registers closed). Pupils arriving after 9:15am will be marked U (Late after registers closed).

Parents of children arriving late have to enter school via the office as the classroom doors have closed. Parents of children arriving late must sign them in the 'Late' book with a detailed explanation which is recorded on Arbor.

The register for Nursery remains open, but parents are encouraged to help their children develop good habits by ensuring their children attend regularly and punctually.

Afternoon registration is at 1pm for all year groups.

Registers are completed electronically in the classroom via Arbor.

Parents/carers of absent pupils, whose absence has not been reported to the school, will receive a text message requesting a call to the school to advise the reason for absence. If the school does not receive a response, this will be followed up by a telephone call.

In the case of fire or evacuation, the procedures set out within the School's Health and Safety Policy will be adhered to and the Office staff will bring out the signing in/out sheets for pupils, staff and visitors.

A print out of the school register is printed monthly and retained in a secure file for a period of not less than three years.

10.Lateness

Lateness will be monitored on a half termly basis and a letter will be sent to parents for persistent lateness (more than 3 times in a half term). Lateness (recorded in minutes) with a detailed reason will be recorded on Arbor.

11.Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Every half-day absence from school (known as a session) has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **Authorised** or **Unauthorised**. This is why information about the reason for each absence is always required, in writing.

An absence from school is an **authorised** one if:

- the pupil was absent with the permission of the Headteacher.
- the pupil was unwell, or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause.
- there is a medical appointment which is unavoidable.
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observances by the religious body to which the child's parents belong.
- the pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion.
- the pupils is taking part in a performance within the meaning of s.37 Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued.

Pupils requiring Leave of Absence to take part in examinations eg music, ballet etc or other legitimate educational activities will have their absence authorised.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been granted. This includes:

- No explanation for absence has been forthcoming or is not confirmed in writing.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.

- The pupil stays at home to help look after parents/carers or younger siblings (other than in exceptional circumstances).
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday/day trip without an authorisation from the school.
- Any pupil arriving too late to be entered into the Register (Late after Registers closed).
- Birthdays.

12 Family Holidays and Other Absences

Absences in order to take family holidays and outings will **not** be authorised except in very exceptional circumstances. The Governors, in conjunction with those from the other local Berkhamsted maintained schools, have agreed that the following **may**, in some cases, be viewed as “exceptional circumstances” for which the absence will be classed as Authorised:

- Family/carer funeral or trauma
- Weddings (immediate family only – 1 day maximum)
- Visiting new schools prior to relocation

A request must be made at least 3 weeks before departure (except in the case of funerals when this time constraint does not apply) by completion of a “Leave of Absence” form obtainable from the school office. The parents/carers may be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the request.

Should the child remain absent beyond the time granted, any further absence will be recorded as “Unauthorised”. Parents must agree with the school a return date and should they fail to return within 10 days of that date, the pupil will be deleted from the school’s Register, thus losing their place.

It follows that the parents/carers should contact the school immediately if their return is delayed or if the child is unable to attend the school by reason of illness or other unavoidable circumstances.

13. Persistent Absenteeism

A pupil becomes a **persistent absentee** when their attendance rate falls below 90% at any time of the school year, for whatever reason. Absenteeism of this level will considerably damage a child’s educational prospects and the parents’/carers’ fullest support and co-operation will be needed to tackle this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absenteeism level or is at risk of moving towards that level is given priority and the parents/carers of those pupils will be informed of this promptly.

Persistent absenteeism pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the School Office and Attendance Officer/Headteacher. Parents/carers may need to come into the School and meet with the Headteacher (and possibly the Local Authority AIO) to discuss their child’s attendance and the progress being made.

All attendance actions, reviews and comments for pupils deemed as a ‘persistent absentee’ will be documented using the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS).

14. When Problems Arise & Penalty Notices

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage and work with staff in resolving any problems together. The school pays particular attention to the school’s Children

Looked After Policy and where there is a concern about attendance or punctuality of a child looked after or a previously looked after child the school contacts the carer, social worker and other professionals including the Virtual School, as an early intervention. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way the school may refer the child to the AIO. The AIO will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but parents/carers who fail to respond to requests by the school to send their children to school or who take unauthorised holidays during term time may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Education Authority.

The Notices will be issued at the discretion of the Headteacher and will be applied to parents/carers whose children have at least 15 sessions (7.5 days) of unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term. The fines will apply to cases where the parent/carer is able but unwilling to ensure the attendance of the pupil. The penalty is £60 per parent/carer if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid, the Local Authority may subsequently prosecute the parents/carers for their child's irregular attendance (see below). Fixed Penalty Notices will operate following the Hertfordshire County Council Guidance for Schools dated February 2016 (see attached Appendix).

Parents, carers or children may wish to contact the AIO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. The telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

The school puts a lot of effort into re-integrating pupils who have had extended absence, for whatever reason, and will work closely with the parents/carers to provide support.

Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support in matters of school communication.

15. The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil fails to attend school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the school and the AIO fail to secure the pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action.

A complaint may be made against the parents/carers in the Magistrates Court (under s.444 of the Students Act 1996) or an educational supervision order relating to the pupil under s.36 of the Education Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances are taken into account when considering legal action.

16. Part Time Timetables

It is recognised that there may be occasions when a pupil is unable to attend school full-time, due to, for example, recovery from illness or exceptional family circumstances. Also, there may be instances when a pupil is experiencing severe behavioural difficulties at school and is finding it increasingly difficult to cope with full time attendance. In such circumstances the law permits the temporary use of a part-time/reduced timetable:

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the

pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

The School applies the following protocols when implementing a part-time/reduced timetable

- A part-time timetable will only be used with the informed (written) consent of the parents/carers and in agreement with the agencies involved in supporting the family.
- A part-time timetable will not be treated as a long-term plan. The arrangement will always specify an end date by when it is expected that the pupil will return to full-time education (or when an alternative will be provided) and will be reviewed regularly in the light of any changes in the child's circumstances.
- A temporary part-time timetable will provide a means of achieving re-integration to full-time education. It will never be used as a form of exclusion from school for part of the school day or as permanent provision.
- The Local Authority will be informed of any instance of a pupil being placed on a part-time timetable, so that the Local Authority is aware of the arrangement.
- Governors will be informed about any pupils placed on part-time timetables, so that they can fulfil their responsibilities in monitoring the School's provision.

When the School considers that full-time education is not in the best interests of a pupil's physical or mental health, and is considering placing him/her on a temporary part-time timetable it will undertake the following steps:

1. Consult with relevant agencies to determine the education and support provision that would best meet the pupil's individual needs for a fixed term
2. Complete an action plan which shows a clear path to planned re-integration from part-time to fulltime attendance, with a date for review. Where appropriate, the pupil should be actively involved in this planning. The plan should be reviewed if there is a change to his/her circumstances or needs.
3. If the pupil has a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education Health and Care plan the School will consult with the Local Authority's SEND team to ensure that the Statement/EHCP is implemented fully under a reduced timetable. The School will also consider whether it is appropriate to arrange an interim statement review if, for example, the pupil's needs have changed and it is considered that this could impact on the ability for the provision to meet his/her needs.
4. Confirm in writing which adults will be responsible for the duty of care for the pupil during school sessions when he/she is not attending as schools retain a full duty of care for all children who are on the school roll if they are receiving education off-site.
5. Obtain written consent to the arrangements from the pupil's parents/carers. Should the parents/carers not agree to the part time timetable it cannot be implemented as without parental agreement, a part-time timetable would be considered to be an unlawful exclusion.
6. Keep a central record of the arrangement and reviews and notify the Local Authority using the form provided for this purpose.
7. Record the pupil's absence from school for sessions when he/she is not in attendance as authorised absence (register Code C).
8. Inform the Local Authority when the pupil returns to full-time education.

17. Links to Other Policies

This policy is linked to the School's Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy, Children Looked After Policy and Behaviour Policy, the latter of which specifically deals with instances where a pupil may attend alternative provision for a period of time.

18. Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the Senior Leadership Team and ratified by the Governing Body.

APPENDIX

Hertfordshire County Council

**Penalty Notices
Unauthorised Absence
(Truancy)**

Hertfordshire Code of Conduct

February 2016

Local Code of Conduct – Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy)

Introduction

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers the police, designated Local Authority Officers and Headteachers and Deputy and Assistant Headteachers authorised by them to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence (truancy) of pupils of statutory school age.

The government requires Local Authorities to issue a Code of Conduct to which all parties involved must adhere. Penalty notices may be issued only in accordance with the terms of the Code of Conduct.

The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that:

- the powers are applied consistently and fairly
- duplicate notices are not issued
- issuing a notice does not conflict with proceedings proposed or being taken by the Local Authority under section 444 of the Education Act 1996
- suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of the penalty notice scheme.

The Law

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added sections 444A and 444B to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents to discharge potential liability for that offence by paying a penalty. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the framework for the operation of the scheme.

All those defined as a parent under section 576 of the Education Act 1996 are considered to be parents for the purpose of these provisions.

As with prosecutions under section 444 of the Education Act 1996 a penalty notice may be issued to each parent liable for the offence in respect of each child.

Penalty notices apply to parents of children of compulsory school age who are registered pupils at maintained schools, academies, Pupil Referral Units (Education Support Centres), City Technology Colleges, Studio Schools, UTCs and any other alternative education provision arranged under section 19 of The Education Act 1996.

Parents cannot be prosecuted for the offence for which the penalty notice was issued until after the final deadline for payment has passed and the penalty remains unpaid. Parents cannot be convicted of that offence if the penalty is paid in accordance with the notice. The Local Authority will retain any revenue from penalty notices to cover the administration of the scheme and any legal actions arising from it.

Rationale

Regular and punctual attendance is a legal requirement for pupils registered at schools, academies or other maintained or alternative provision.

A penalty notice may be a suitable intervention in circumstances of unauthorised absence where the school considers a parent is capable of securing their child's regular attendance. It may be particularly effective at an early stage before attendance problems become entrenched.

Circumstances in which a penalty notice may be issued

- Penalty notices may only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The pupil must have at least **15 sessions** (half days) unauthorised absence in the current and/or previous term
- The school must have sent a formal warning to the parent
- The school/academy/police or Attendance Improvement Officer considers that issuing a penalty notice could avoid further absence
- Issuing a penalty notice does not conflict with any other legal action being taken
- A maximum of **two** separate penalty notices will be issued to a parent within any twelve month period
- Penalty notices will be issued for pupils of compulsory school age, up to the end of the spring term of year 11
- A penalty notice will not be issued in respect of a pupil who is looked after by the Local Authority without the prior agreement of the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the County Lead for Attendance

Responsibilities of the Local Authority for issuing penalty notices

Primary responsibility for issuing penalty notices rests with the Local Authority and may not be delegated. Schools, academies and the police may issue penalty notices if they wish to do so but any notices issued by them **must** comply with the Local Authority Code of Conduct and a copy of any penalty notice issued must be provided to the Local Authority.

In Hertfordshire all parties agree that the Integrated Service for Learning Attendance Teams administer the scheme and issue penalty notices on behalf of police, schools, academies and other settings to ensure fairness and consistency and in the event that subsequent legal action may need to be taken.

The Local Authority receives applications to issue penalty notices from schools, academies and the police. Penalty notices will be issued provided that:

- the circumstances of the absence meet the requirements of the Code of Conduct
- the information is provided in the specified manner
- the request is received not more than 10 school days after the final absence cited

The Local Authority retains revenue from the scheme to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Appealing against the issue of penalty notices

There is no statutory right of appeal once a penalty notice has been issued. The Local Authority may withdraw a notice if it has been issued incorrectly. If the penalty notice has been issued in accordance with Hertfordshire's Code of Conduct there is no facility to overturn the decision to issue the notice.

Effect of issuing penalty notices

If the penalty is not paid in full before the expiry of the period for paying it the Local

Authority named in the notice shall either institute proceedings against the recipient for the offence or shall withdraw the notice.

Payment of penalty notices

The amount payable is £60 (per parent) if paid within 21 days or £120 (per parent) if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.

Separate notices are issued to each parent in respect of each child.

Penalty notices are sent by first class post and are deemed to have been received on the second day after posting.

Arrangements for payment are detailed on the penalty notice and payment by cheque, postal order and by debit/credit card is accepted.

Withdrawal of penalty notices

The Local Authority may only withdraw penalty notices in circumstances where it determines that the notice:

- has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct
- ought not to have been issued
- ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient
- has not been paid but it is not appropriate to prosecute the recipient for the offence

Prosecution of unpaid penalty notices

If the notice remains unpaid after the expiry of the payment period and the Local Authority has not withdrawn the notice, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

All decisions to prosecute (or not) rest with the Local Authority