

Greenway Primary  
& Nursery School



# **GREENWAY PRIMARY & NURSERY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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## Contents

1. Aims
2. Legislation and guidance
3. Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance
4. Expectations
  - i. The Role of the Governing Body
  - ii. The Role of the School
  - iii. The Role of Parents/Carers
  - iv. The Role of Pupils
  - v. The Role of the Attendance Officer
5. Registration
6. Lateness
7. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences
8. Requesting an Authorised Absence
9. Persistent and Severe Absenteeism
10. When Problems Arise & Penalty Notices
11. The Use of Legal Action
12. Part-Time Timetables
13. Links to Other Policies
14. Policy Review

### Appendix 1 Attendance Codes

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#### 1. Aims

At Greenway Primary & Nursery School ('the School') we are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Building strong relationships with our families to ensure pupils have the support in place that they need to attend school.

We also promote and support punctuality in attending school/lessons.

#### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [School](#)

[behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures](#). 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 \(and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016\)](#)

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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on 'persistent' (missing 10% or more of school) and 'severe' (missing 50% or more of school) absence thresholds as set out in Section 5 of their Working together to improve school attendance document (see link above).

Attention is also drawn to the [Code of Conduct](#) applied by Hertfordshire County Council in respect of any Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence (Truancy).

### **3. Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance**

The School has a very good record on attendance and offers an environment in which pupils feel valued, welcomed and safe. 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 pupil progress meetings to spot any deteriorating trends.

Parents/carers 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 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 so that they have the opportunity to catch up and allowing the value of the education that they would otherwise miss to be reinforced.

### **4. 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.

#### **i. 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.

## **ii. 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

### Generally:

- ensure that pupils are able to attend school for 380 half days (known as 'sessions') each year i.e. 190 days.
- ensure that accurate records of attendance and punctuality are maintained, according to Government legislation and guidance, on a daily basis.
- encourage good attendance and punctuality and ensure school staff set good examples in this regard.
- 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 Head's Report.

### When (unplanned) absence happens:

- ensure a member of office staff is available each school day to receive emails and calls/messages from parents about absence.
- follow up on any absence where no explanation has been received by 9.30am on the same day – initially follow-up will be by email but if that is not responded to promptly staff will then seek to call a parent/carer.
- ensure that emails/notes from parents/carers are stored within the email system (with any paper notes that are not followed up with an email, attached to the attendance sheet for the day); filed at the end of the academic year and kept for three years. Telephone messages regarding lateness and absence are recorded in Arbor (the school's online recording and reporting database).
- 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).
- Refer concerns about all unexplained or any unjustifiable absences and lateness to the Headteacher to allow her to investigate further and follow up poor attendance and punctuality – noting that school may ask a parent/carer to provide justification for absence and/or evidence of illness in writing at any point (but also noting that GPs are not obliged to provide sick notes for children).
- liaise as necessary with the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) over attendance and punctuality issues relating to individual pupils.

## **iii. 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

### Generally:

- 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 – see Section 8 on the process for requesting authorised absence.
- avoid arranging non-urgent medical appointments during school hours/term time.
- maintain regular communication with school staff about any concerns/issues.
- ensure the school office is notified immediately of any change to contact details.
- take an active interest in their child's school life and work.

#### When (unplanned) absence happens:

By telephone/email or in person/by letter –

- inform the school by 9am on the first day of absence and each subsequent day of absence (unless an absence period has been agreed or defined with school from the outset or – e.g. following an operation or a period of illness where there is a known isolation or recovery period) **and**
- communicate the *reason* for their child's absence noting that absence will not be authorised until an explanation is received and even then that authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

#### When a child is late (or needs to leave for/return from an appointment):

- ensure that pupils are signed in and/or out at the school office when they arrive late (see Registration details below to identify when a child is considered to be late), and when they leave for/return from medical/other appointments.

It is accepted that young pupils tend to be accountable to their parents/carers 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, that put pressure on parents/carers to allow them to remain at home when they should be in school.

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 working together. 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 child the impression that attendance is not a priority and is not helpful in identifying or addressing the underlying issue(s).

#### **iv. The Role of Pupils**

All pupils are expected to:

- attend school daily and punctually.
- be ready to learn.
- sign in and/or out of the school office when arriving late or leaving for/returning from medical/other appointments.

#### **v. The Role of the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO)**

There is regular contact between the AIO and the School Office and/or Headteacher, 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 to ensure as rapid as possible a return to regular and punctual attendance.

## **5. Registration**

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

Nursery – 09:00

Reception - 08.55am

Years 1-6 - 08:50

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).

Years 1 - 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).

Parents/carers of children arriving late are required 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 1:15pm for all year groups.

Registers are completed electronically in the classroom via Arbor.

## **6. Lateness**

Lateness (poor punctuality) will be monitored on a half termly basis and a letter will be sent to parents/carers for persistent lateness (which is defined as 'more than 3 times in a half term'). Lateness (recorded in minutes) with a detailed reason will be recorded on Arbor.

## **7. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence**

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

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 (music, ballet etc.) or other legitimate educational activities will generally have 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 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.

### **8. Requests for Authorised 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 or downloadable from the [school website](#). The parents/carers may be invited to attend a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss the request.

### **9. Persistent and Severe Absenteeism**

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when their attendance rate falls below 90% at any time of the school year, for whatever reason. They would go on to be a severe absentee if their attendance was then to fall below 50%. Routine absenteeism at any level (noting that school will engage with targeted interventions where attendance is less than 95%) 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 (and any severe) 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' or a 'severe absentee' are required to be documented using the Child Protection Online Management System (CPOMS).

## **10. When Problems Arise & Penalty Notices**

Parents/carers are expected to contact the school at an early stage when absenteeism is emerging and work with staff in resolving any problems together. This approach is nearly always successful.

The school pays particular attention to all disadvantaged children (this includes children looked after, previous looked after, children with SEND and children who are in receipt of Pupil Premium).

If attendance difficulties cannot be sorted out quickly, the school may be required to refer the child to the AIO. 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 AIO will try to resolve any absenteeism 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 school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

The school will always put a lot of effort into re-integrating a pupil who has had extended absence, for whatever reason, and will work closely with the parents/carers to provide appropriate support.

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

## **11. 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 pupils 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.

## **12. 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 as follows:

*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 any 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 regular reviews with parent/carers. 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 Education Health and Care plan the School will consult with the Local Authority's SEND team to ensure that the 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.

### **13. Links to Other Policies**

This policy is linked to the School's Safeguarding Policy, Child Protection Policy, Child 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.

### **14. Review**

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

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance and are used by this school:

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>/</b>	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
<b>\</b>	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
<b>L</b>	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
<b>B</b>	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
<b>D</b>	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed