



Greenfields Primary School

Attendance Policy

Approval

Signed by Head teacher/Chair	<i>Kate Day</i>
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Section 1: Introduction

Good attendance and punctuality at Greenfields Primary School is vital for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend every day, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable. **It is also very important that they arrive on time every day.**

Poor attendance can have a significant impact on a child's:

- Attainment and progress;
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships;
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

Greenfields Primary School's attendance policy is written with reference to the DfE's '*School Attendance*' guidance (October 2014). This guidance outlines that the government expects:

- Schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence;
- Schools to ensure every pupil has access to full-time education;
- Schools to act early to address patterns of absence;
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age attend regularly;
- Pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Section 2: Promoting Good Attendance

The minimum level of attendance that Greenfields Primary School expects is 96%. Attendance can be summarised as:

- 100%: Outstanding!!
- 97%-99%: Very good. This will help all aspects of a child's progress and life in school.
- 95%-96%: Expected. Your child is still attending regularly, but try to increase this figure.
- 90%-94%: Below Expected. If attendance remains at this level or slips below this, then attainment and progress will be affected.
- Below 90%: Attendance is a concern. The school will work with you to improve attendance and we may ask the Local Authority's Participation Team to support.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give details about attendance in our newsletters;
- Report to you termly on your child's attendance and punctuality if concerns have been raised;
- Celebrate good attendance by highlighting individual and class achievements (e.g. non-uniform days for classes achieving 100% attendance for a whole week, class attendance rainbows, improved attendance awards);
- Offer advice to families where attendance is a cause for concern.

At Greenfields Primary School, the people responsible for managing attendance, punctuality and absence are the Head teacher, Pupil & Families Worker and Receptionists.

Section 3: Arriving at School

In the Nursery

All children should arrive at the Nursery at 9am. If a child has not arrived 15 minutes after the start of their session, then they will be marked as late.

In the Main School

All children should arrive ready to enter school promptly – soft start allows children to arrive from 8.45am. The school doors are closed at 8.55am minutes after this time and if a child has not arrived by 8.55am they will need to go via the main entrance to the school where the office will mark them on the Late Register. They will be recorded as **Late**. Arrival after 9.30am will result in a child being marked as **Unauthorised**.

Section 4: Absence Procedures

If your child is absent, you must contact the school by telephone (or in person) by 9.30am on the first day of absence. You should also keep us informed if the absence lasts for longer than a day. If we have not heard from you about a child's absence, we will contact you for information. Therefore it is important that you make sure the school always has up-to-date contact numbers for you. For any absence which goes on for more than 5 days you will be required to provide medical evidence.

When making medical/dental appointments, please try to arrange these outside of school hours, although we recognise this is not always possible, at which point please inform the office as soon as possible with proof of appointment.

Section 5: Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence (either morning or afternoon) has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why we need to collect information about the reason for any absence, preferably in writing and with evidence if this was for a medical appointment.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason. Illness and medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes are authorised in line with this policy.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, and therefore does not agree that the absence should be authorised. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority, through its Participation Team, using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised absence can include:

- Keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy during the school day;
- Not properly reporting the reason for absence to the school;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark in the register;
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips or holidays in term time;
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to keep them off school. The school can offer you support if this occurs.

Please note that keeping your child off with minor ailments such as a slight cold or cough is not necessary.

There are circumstances when a child may need to be absent from school for a certain period of time. For example, if a child has chicken pox or measles a child would normally need to remain off school for 5 days.

If a child has had sickness or diarrhoea, then they should not return to school for 24 hours after their last illness.

If you are unsure about whether your child should be absent from school, please speak to a member of our office team who will be able to advise.

Section 6: Persistent Absence

A pupil who misses considerable amounts of schooling during the year becomes a 'persistent absentee', whatever the reason for absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to a child's educational prospects.

If your child's attendance is becoming a cause of concern, then the school will always try to work with you to resolve this. In the majority of cases, this is nearly always successful.

These are the stages we may take to address poor attendance:

1. Send a message to let you know when attendance has fallen below 96%
2. Send home a letter informing you when attendance has fallen below 95% to draw attention of this to you.

3. Below 90%, outlining the need for improvement in attendance an invitation to an *Improving Attendance Meeting* will be sent. If no improvement in attendance is seen after Stages 1 and 2, an Action Plan will be put in place at this meeting.
4. If no improvement is seen, referral to the Local Authority's Participation Team, who will try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, they may recommend legal action is taken. This may involve the issuing of Penalty notices or prosecution in a Magistrate's Court.

At any point, pupils may be fast-tracked through the stages described above if attendance deteriorates rapidly over a short space of time or if no improvement in poor attendance is seen. All correspondence is kept on file throughout the child's time in school.

Section 7: Punctuality

Arriving on time to school is as important as attending regularly. Being just 6 minutes late a day adds up to half an hour a week and half a day's learning in just 6 weeks. If a child arrives after the class doors have closed they will be recorded as **Late**. Arrival after 9.30am will result in a child being marked as **Unauthorised**.

These are the stages we may take to address persistent lateness:

1. Send home a letter if a child is late 10 times in an academic year **or** 5 times in one half term **or** has 5 unauthorised 'lates'.
2. Send home a second letter if a further 5 'lates' **or** 2 unauthorised 'lates' occur, outlining the need for improvement in punctuality.
3. Invitation to an *Improving Attendance Meeting* if no improvement in punctuality is seen after Stages 1 and 2. An Action Plan will be put in place at this meeting.
4. If no improvement is seen, referral to the Local Authority's Participation Team, who will try to resolve the situation by agreement. However, they may recommend legal action is taken. This may involve the issuing of Penalty notices or prosecution in a Magistrate's Court.

At any point, pupils may be fast-tracked through the stages described above if punctuality deteriorates rapidly over a short-space of time or if no improvement in persistent lateness is seen. All correspondence is kept on file throughout the child's time in school.

Section 8: Requests for Exceptional Leave

There is no entitlement in law to have time off in school time to go on holiday. The school has no power to grant leave for holidays in term time.

The Head teacher will consider requests for exceptional leave during term time but is under no obligation to agree this. You will be asked to provide evidence in support of your request. **Holidays will not be agreed under any circumstances.** Any request for Exceptional Leave must be made in writing and addressed to the Head teacher at least one month prior to the planned absence. In most cases, the Head will arrange a meeting

with the parents to discuss the request. Should the Exceptional Leave request be refused, the Head teacher's decision is final and there is no right of appeal. All correspondence is kept on file throughout the child's time in school.

Reasons for exceptional leave will be logged on the pupil's record and shared as part of the transfer/transition process when your child leaves the school.

Greenfields Primary School will grant up to two days per academic year for religious observance. In line with guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), *"the day(s) must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong"*.

Any unauthorised exceptional leave that occurs may result in a referral to the Participation Officer and they can issue a fine to the family. The penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days or £120 per parent per children within 28 days. Failure to pay the fine may result in prosecution from Watford Magistrate Court.

Section 9: Monitoring

Greenfields Primary School has a legal duty to publish its attendance and absence data, and to promote good attendance. It is the Governor's responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in the school.