



Attendance policy

At Grayrigg CE Primary School, we believe that all pupils benefit from the education we provide and therefore, from regular school attendance. In order to achieve this, we will take appropriate action to ensure that all pupils achieve the maximum possible attendance and that any problems which may impede full attendance are acted on as quickly as possible.

Aims: School aims to ensure that all pupils have an equal right and access to an education in accordance with the National Curriculum. We recognise that the majority of pupils want to attend school to learn; to socialise and interact with their peers; and to prepare themselves fully for their future. We have high expectations of attendance in school and share these expectations regularly with parents and pupils.

The whole school's target for attendance is 98% with the aim that no child falls below 96% at the end of the year (unless there are exceptional circumstances). This target is regularly reviewed by governors with regard to the context of our school and cohorts; and in relation to national statistics.

Expectations: School expects that all our pupils will:

- Attend school regularly with the aim that all children will be above 96%;
- Arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the day, which means ready to learn in class at 8:45. Children can be dropped off at school free of charge from 8.30.

School expects that parents will:

- Endeavour to keep health appointments out of school hours when possible;
- To take all family holidays and trips out of term time;
- Inform a member of staff of any reason or problem that may hinder their child from attending school - this may be done via email to the school office office@grayrigg.cumbria.sch.uk or phone call 01539 824676
- Fulfil their legal responsibilities and ensure their child/children attend school regularly;
- Contact school, as soon as is practical and before 8.45a.m, whenever their child is unable to attend school.

Parents and children can expect the following from the school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance;
- Early contact when a pupil is absent without explanation;
- Action on any attendance problem notified to the school;
- Referral of specific attendance issues to supporting agencies where appropriate.

Governors will:

- Monitor attendance via the termly headteacher's report to governors.
- Appoint a governor to monitor processes and procedures and how these are followed in school.
- Agree and set targets and actions to be completed where there are any concerns regarding how school leaders manage school attendance.

The attendance governor will:

- Meet with the headteacher every term to check and monitor the attendance procedures in line with this policy.
- Report back to governors on their findings from each monitoring visit.



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We encourage attendance by:

- Consistent, clear, communication with parents and pupils about the importance of regular, prompt, attendance;
- Formal and informal reporting to parents on individual attendance at various points throughout the year;
- Setting targets for improved attendance and sharing these with governors, parents and pupils;
- Accurate completion of registers at the start of each session;

The school responds to non-attendance by:

- Contacting parents on the first day of an absence, by telephone, if no reason has been received;
- If there is no response, the school will continue to telephone parents throughout the day. School will also contact other emergency contacts for the pupil on the first day of absence. School MUST be provided with at least two emergency contacts for every pupil in school;
- If no contact has been made by 9.30, the HT, accompanied by another member of staff will attempt a home visit. If there is no answer from the home, the police will be contacted to ensure the family are safe.
- Where a pattern of non-attendance or persistent lateness is emerging, the parent/carer will be contacted by school and the issues causing non-attendance or lateness will be discussed at an attendance meeting with the headteacher. Any action plan generated at the attendance panel meeting that fails to improve the child's attendance, will result in a full assessment of the children's needs and family circumstances. The headteacher will then contact the Local Authority Inclusion Officer explaining the actions and support provided so far and will discuss the possibility of an Attendance Review Conference. At this stage, it may be agreed that an Early Help Assessment may be the most appropriate intervention to support the family and improve attendance.

School will inform the Local Authority Access and Inclusion officer of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's authorisation.

All Staff are aware of children missing from education procedures in accordance with our safeguarding practices in school.

Punctuality: The expectation is that children should arrive on site in the morning no earlier than 8.30am (unless they have been booked into breakfast club) they should go straight to their morning classroom. Children will be registered as they arrive until 8.45 am. Children arriving after 8.45 am will be recorded as 'late'. The punctuality of all pupils is regularly monitored. Cases of persistent lateness will be dealt with following the same approach as persistent absenteeism.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence: This includes Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen and Circus People. Absence can be authorised for families identified within this group when travelling for occupational purposes and when this has been agreed with school. However, they are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school. There is also an expectation that pupils can be registered with more than one school so that absence can be significantly reduced for those undertaking extensive travelling in any academic year.

Leave of Absence in Term Time, including Holidays The headteacher is not permitted to grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. **The application must be made at least seven days prior to the proposed absence and must be requested in writing using the 'Parent Request for Absence' form available from the school office and published on our school website.** The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave.



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The DFE identifies exceptional circumstances as follows:

- Family needs arising from service in the armed forces or from a parent working abroad;
- Family bereavements;
- Exceptional family ceremonies;
- A holiday necessitated due to disability or illness in the family.

If the request is for a family holiday not considered to be identified as exceptional circumstances, and you nevertheless take your child out of school for the leave of absence this **will be recorded as unauthorised leave. All unauthorised absences, including holidays that have not been sanctioned by the headteacher, are accumulated and parents who fail to ensure regular attendance of their children at school can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. The amount of £60 (per parent per child) if paid within 21 days and £120 (per parent per child) if paid between 21 and 28 days. Failure to pay a Penalty Notice will result in prosecution, except in limited circumstances.**

In considering the decision whether to authorise, the following will be taken into account, however, it is unlikely that any term time holiday will be authorised:

- Reasons given for the holiday;
- Any holiday leave taken in previous academic years (authorised or unauthorised);
- Your child's previous attendance record; this includes attendance in the current academic year – which should be over 96% - as well as attendance in previous academic years;
- Whether your child will miss any tests/examinations (or important preparation for their tests);
- Whether your child is making good progress; is on track to achieve age related expectations; and how the absence might impact attainment and progress.

All leave of absence requests must be completed on the official form. Letters and emails will not be accepted. All requests must be made prior to the leave being taken as leave cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The impact of poor attendance has been extensively researched in the UK. Pupil absence figures and both GCSE and primary school test results highlight the importance of clamping down on pupil absence to ensure more pupils regularly attend school, and ultimately leave with the qualifications needed to succeed in modern Britain. A Department of Education report published in 2015 clearly outlined the impact of low attendance: *'Primary pupils with no absence are around 1.5 times more likely to achieve the expected level of attainment and 4.5 times more likely to achieve above the expected level than pupils that missed 15-20% of key stage 2.'*

Parents will be informed in writing of decisions about whether planned absences are to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Schools are advised that the cost of holidays, work rotas of parents and working in tourism or farming can no longer be considered to be exceptional reasons.

We do have concerns, as do other Headteachers, that families may feel they cannot share with schools that they plan to take time off during term time. This could mean that children will not be able to share any experiences they may have had and it could even encourage them to lie about their absence. This is not a situation we would want any of our families or children to be in.



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Not sharing planned absence from school could also lead to safeguarding issues. If families have not informed school and school cannot contact them for an explanation of absence; school may need to take all necessary steps to ensure the children and family are safe and well.

Chair of governors:

Date approved by Full Governing Board : 28.11.2023