



Attendance Policy –2023-24

School Aims

At Grange Moor Primary School, we are committed to managing and improving attendance throughout the school.

The purpose of this policy aims to ensure pupils attend school regularly and arrive at school on time through:

Promoting good attendance

Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence

Supporting and promoting punctuality in attending school so pupils arrive prepared for the school day

Acting early to address patterns of absence

Building strong relationships with families ensures pupils have support in place to attend school and barriers to attending school are removed.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the **Working Together to improve school attendance** from the Department for Education (DfE) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance> , and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on **School attendance parental responsibility measures** <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/parental-responsibility-measures-for-behaviour-and-attendance>. These documents are drawn from the following legislations setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

Part 6 of The Education Act 1996

[https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II#:~:text=\(6\)Where%20a%20maintained%20F4,the%20child%20to%20the%20school](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/part/VI/chapter/II#:~:text=(6)Where%20a%20maintained%20F4,the%20child%20to%20the%20school)

Part 3 of The Education Act 2002

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/part/3>

Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/40/contents>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010,2011,2013,2016 amendments)

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2016/792/contents/made>

This policy also refers to the: **DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.**

Roles and Responsibilities

The Head Teacher

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Speaks with parents regarding attendance issues
- Supports staff with monitoring the attendance
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies alongside the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- Making referrals to Kirklees safeguarding team, including providing information that may result in fixed penalty notices or prosecution.

Senior Leaders in School

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families alongside our nominated Kirklees safeguarding officer.

School Business Manager

- Checks the registers for any absences not authorised
- Takes calls from Parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and records it on the school management information system, Integris
- Contacts parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend, and no message has been received to explain the absence
- Produces regular attendance reports to take to the Senior leadership team meetings for attendance monitoring across the school
- Arranges calls/meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues alongside the Headteacher
- Liaising with education welfare officers / Kirklees safeguarding officers to tackle persistent absences

Class Teachers

- Record attendance daily, using the correct codes and submitting the information to the school office via Integris

Parents / Carers

- Make sure children arrive at school by 8:55am, fully equipped for the day.
- Call the school absence line or email the office to report their child's absence by 8:50am on the first day of absence
- Call the school with regular updates following the first day of absence and when they expect their child to return to school
- If their child presents as unwell in the morning but starts to improve to bring the child into school for the remainder of the day if they are no longer displaying signs of illness
- Provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Pupils

- Attend school every day on time
- Arrive at school with all equipment required for the school day
- Arrive at school in correct uniform appropriate for the weather conditions
- If arriving after 8:55am, enter through the main entrance door and report to the office.

Registration and Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register.

Registration is taken at 9:00am and closes at 9:10am each morning and 1:00pm closing at 1:10pm for the Afternoon session.

When a Teacher records attendance on the register they will enter a mark for the child being present or a (N) if the child is absent and no other code has already been entered onto the register by the business manager.

The business manager, at the first opportunity following the close of the register, will then make any amendments for absences entering and explanation where required; the mark given will show if the absence is authorised or not.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for a minimum of 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Punctuality and Lateness

Pupils must arrive at school on time each school day. Arriving at school after the register closes can affect your child's progress as it leads to them missing out on the teacher's input for the first session, which can cause significant disadvantages. During registrations, Teachers can often plan interventions and activities that support areas of learning that children require; by children arriving late, prevents them from accessing this and causes disruption to the rest of the class.

Children arriving late to school will receive a late mark on the register; if they arrive after the gate has closed but before the register closes, they will be recorded as an (L) mark; for children arriving after the register closes, they will receive a (U) mark which is an unauthorised absence for the morning session and will lower your child's overall attendance.

Lateness will be monitored, and frequent lateness will trigger a letter to parents to remind them of their responsibilities; if lateness does not improve, this will then be referred to Kirklees safeguarding team, who will arrange a meeting in school with Parents and a member of the Senior leadership team to discuss.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for absence on the first day of an unplanned absence before the start of the school day or as soon as possible by calling the school absence line, in person or by email. If you leave a message or send an email and further information is required, a staff member will call for more information as part of our safeguarding procedures.

Absences due to illness will be marked as authorised unless the school is genuinely concerned about the illness's authenticity.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents/carers will be informed of this decision and the reason why. It is at the Head teacher's discretion to record any absence as authorised, not a Parents.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent /carer notifies school in advance of the appointment and provide evidence of the appointment, this can be in the format of a letter, text message, email or screen print from an App.

We encourage parents / carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible so that learning time is not affected; where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum necessary time.

Parents/ carers must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible for the requested absence (see the section on authorised and unauthorised absence for information regarding term-time absences that the school can authorise).

Following up on the unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend or stops attending without reason, the school will:

- Contact the pupil's parent/carers on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason.
- As a matter of safeguarding, staff in school will follow the steps outlined in our first-day calling procedures outlined in Appendix 2 if no initial contact is made. By following this procedure, pupil absence will be closely monitored, ensuring that all pupils are accounted for in their absence from school and have not become unsafe or vulnerable.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or noted
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for the absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carers each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will involve the Kirklees safeguarding team.
- After 10 days of absence, and if no contact is made by the parent/ carer, a referral will be made to the children missing in the education (CME) team; this referral may be completed earlier depending on each individual case.
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Reporting to parents/carers

The school regularly informs parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.

Attendance will be reported to parents at least three times per academic year through parent consultation meetings and school reports or attendance letters sent out at the end or start of the term. Attendance will be reported as a percentage in line with that set by the DfE and Kirklees:

- 100%-99% Excellent attendance; well done!
- 97% to 98% - Expected attendance; keep it up!
- 96% to 92% - Below expected attendance; Attendance needs to improve!
- Below 92% - Attendance must improve!
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The senior leadership team will monitor each child's attendance individually and may offer support if attendance drops below expected. We will regularly report attendance to these children's parents, as part of the support process and celebrate improved attendance.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Authorised absences

The Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances. A leave of absence is granted at the Head Teacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- Part-time timetables as a temporary, short-term solution, e.g. when a pupil's medical condition prevents them from attending full-time. This is only used in exceptional circumstances when it is in the pupil's best interests and has to be agreed with the Kirklees safeguarding team.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family
- To attend a funeral of a person close to the family
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above reasons, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Kirklees safeguarding team before any authorisation being given to the parent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind requests. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head teacher's discretion. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible at least 2 weeks before the absence and in accordance with the leave of absence request form, available from the school office and website. A senior leadership team member may request additional evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence may include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (where these cannot be arranged outside of school hours)
- Religious observance, where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. As advised by the LA and DfE, absence for religious observance can be authorised for up to a maximum of 3 days per academic year.

Unauthorised absences

An absence without a valid reason or for which no explanation has been given is treated as **unauthorised**, e.g. being late after the register has closed, failing to report an absence to school in a timely manner, term time holiday.

Term time holidays

In line with Kirklees attendance guidelines, we do not authorise leave of absence for term time family holidays. If a parent/carer takes their child out of school during term time, and this has not been authorised by the Headteacher, each parent may be fined £60.00 if paid within 21 days of the penalty notice being issued, raising to £120.00 if paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the fixed penalty notice will result in the matter being referred to the Magistrates Court, where the maximum penalty for an offence is £1000.00.

Parents/carers who also choose to repeatedly take their children on unauthorised leave of absence (3 or more occasions in their time as a student at Grange Moor Primary School) may be directly prosecuted under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty, you will have a criminal record and may face a fine of up to £1000.00

Parents/carers choosing to take their child out of school during term time must complete the 'Leave of Absence Request Form' and return to school before making travel arrangements. The form is available to request via email from the school office or on the school website. Leave of absence due to term time holidays will be recorded as unauthorised. The Headteacher may only authorise this type of leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers must understand That by taking children out of school, they are making a choice to miss out on part of their Child's education. Taking such a 'Leave of Absence' in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence; we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in term time. There is not automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time for ANY reason.

- All leave of absence due to term time holidays will be treated as unauthorised
- School will be unable to set work during the leave of absence.

Removal from roll

A pupil's name can only be removed from roll in certain circumstances, for example:

- On the say that it is confirmed a child starts at another educational provision
- Where a pupil has taken a leave of absence and fails to return on the date advised.

School will follow the following procedures for a requested leave of absence:

- We cannot take children off roll while they are on requested leave of absence, unless the leave of absence exceeds 21 school days, After the 21st day of unauthorised term time absence, a child will be taken off roll, even if the school have been informed of a future return date as this is an avoidable absence.
- If a child does not return on the date given to school, school will use first day calling procedures. First day calling procedures will be followed and Kirklees safeguarding team will support with home visits.
- A referral to the Child Missing in Education (CME) team will be made as soon as possible, after an unsuccessful home visit.

School will follow the following procedures for an unrequested leave of absence:

- Staff will follow First day calling procedures and refer to (CME) if the parent cannot be contacted and provide proof that they have taken an unrequested leave of absence.
- Within 21 school days, if the child has not returned, the decision to take the child of roll will be taken.
- School will issue penalty notices to the parents of these children.
- Staff will follow the Kirklees LA Guideline's for children Lost of Missing in Education.

Legal Sanctions

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 £60.00 within 21 days or £120.00 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Head teacher, the local authority or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issues a penalty notice may consider:

- 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 or where days for illness have been marked as unauthorised if medical evidence has not been provided when requested.
- 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.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% of more schooling across the year for whatever reason. Absence at this level or below causes considerable damage to children's educational attainment and we expect parents / carers full support and co-operation to tackle this.

The School will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Meet with Kirklees safe guarding officers to monitor attendance of pupils that are already or at risk of becoming persistent absentees to create personalised support plans to be agreed and implemented by school and parents following the meetings.
- Remind parents about school policy about taking term time holidays
- Regularly communicate with parents via email, telephone and meetings.
- Promote strategies to parents and pupils to increase attendance.
- Make referrals to the relevant support agencies e.g. Locala children health team, CAMHS where required.
- Work alongside the local authority to use legal action to enforce school attendance as a last resort if other forms of support have not worked.

Review

This policy will be reviewed September 2023

Signed Chair of Governors _____ H Myers_____

Signed Headteacher _____ M Rodgers_____