

# **GREENBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**



**March 2022**

# Attendance Policy

## 1. Aims

This school aims to ensure that every child will want to attend school. This is achieved by creating a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where pupils feel valued. A stimulating and accessible curriculum is delivered in a physically clean, bright and attractive environment.

We believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils so that they can benefit from what our school has to offer. We aim to help parents and pupils appreciate the importance of good school attendance.

## 2. Registration/Lateness

- School opens at 8.45am and starts at 9.00am.
- Latecomers will have to use the main school door.
- Lateness will be recorded by the administrator.
- If a child is frequently late, the Headteacher, School Mentors or Education Welfare Officer will contact the parents.

If a child does oversleep, parents are urged to send them to school as quickly as possible after they get up.

## 3. Notification of Absence

Parents are asked to contact school on the first day of absence with the reason for a child's absence. This may be by a phone, email or in writing. Parents are asked to contact school daily for the duration of the absence to inform the school on any updates around the absence.

The school administrator will add a message about the absence on the register for the class teacher. In addition to this the Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher, Children's Welfare Officer are made aware of the absences.

If no reason is given for an absence, the administrator will use Truancy Call (i.e. contact the parent's mobile phone) or phone the family on the first day of absence, wherever possible to find out the reason for the absence. Where parents cannot be contacted by phone, a letter requesting an explanation will be sent to the parents.

If school is not made aware of the reason for an absence a Home Visit is likely to be undertaken on Day 2.

At the end of the week if no reason for absence has been received, then school will send a letter requesting a reason to be provided. School will also contact the Education Welfare Officer.

## 4. Authorised absence

It is noted that only the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher (in the Headteacher's absence) can authorise absence.

### Illness or medical/dental appointments

- If a child is ill an authorised absence will be awarded. This will be reviewed dependent on the reason for the illness and the number of days a child is off school.
- All medical and dental appointments should where possible be arranged outside the hours of the school day or during the holidays.

- If a medical or dental appointment has to take place during the school day this absence will only be authorised if evidence of the appointment can be shown to school eg: appointment card, email or text showing appointment details.
- Parents should be encouraged to bring children to school if there is time before the appointment, and return them to school as soon as possible afterwards.
- School will challenge parents where a child has missed a whole day of school due to a medical appointment.
- If a teacher doubts whether the absence was genuinely due to illness, the school administrator or the Headteacher should be informed.

### Religious observance

Absence for religious observance will be authorised. The Headteacher will tell the children how many days they can take for Eid following guidance from the Local Authority and school community.

## **5. Unauthorised absence**

The following are not considered acceptable reasons for absence from school:

- Minding the house
- Looking after younger siblings
- Shopping during school hours
- Going for a haircut
- Visiting relatives
- Going on holiday
- Going to a wedding
- Trips to the airport
- Staying off due to an appointment for a parent or sibling.
- Staying off when a parent is feeling unwell and is not able to bring the child to school.
- Not realising the date a new term at school starts

The Headteacher will only authorise absence in exceptional circumstances.

If a child is ill and has more than two days off school then in some circumstances this may be an unauthorised absence unless school is shown evidence that the child is ill eg: attends a doctor's appointment or receives over the counter medication from the chemist.

Children who miss 10 days or more without permission will at this point be referred to the Children Missing in Education Team.

School opens at 8:45am and children need to be in school by 9:00am at the latest to ensure they are not late. School finishes at 3:00pm. **Parents/Carers should not be requesting to collect their children before 3:00pm unless a child has a medical appointment. If your child has an appointment and proof can be shown this does not mean other siblings can be taken out of school early – alternative arrangements must be made for collecting siblings at 3:00pm.** The above list of unauthorised absences including collecting other siblings from other schools due to similar school finishing times are not acceptable reasons. If families collect their children earlier than 3:00pm without a valid reason then the Educational Welfare Team in the Local Authority will be informed.

## 6. Holidays in term time

Head teachers have discretion to grant leave during school term time, but this is not an automatic entitlement. The law governing such leave of absences was tightened up from September 2013.

Under the new regulations, head teachers may not grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

[Department for Education guidance](#) summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance, and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

***Unauthorised leave of 5 or more school days will result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued to each parent/carer with Parental Responsibility, this includes parents who have not travelled with the child.***

***Parents are notified that Unauthorised Leave in excess of 20 school days will result in the loss of the child's school place. A referral will also be made to Local Authority's Children Missing Education Team.***

The Penalty Notice for each child is a fine of £60 for each parent, which rises to £120 each if you do not pay within 21 days. If you do not pay the fine after 28 days you may be prosecuted for your child's absence from school.

**For example: 2 children absent for 5 days will receive a Penalty Notice of £240 due to both parents receiving a £60 Penalty Notice for each child.**

School procedures for holidays in term time also include the following:

- School holiday dates are sent out promptly to parents before the start of the school year, with a reminder that trips abroad should be planned for school holiday times.
- All parents have to complete an Extended Visit Form and arrange to see the Headteacher to discuss their child's absence from school, **before flights are booked**. The Headteacher should explain the possible damaging effect of long absence on the child's education.
- Parents must give a definite return date. The Headteacher may stipulate an earlier return date.
- Parents are informed that if their child is absence for more than **20 school days** the child will lose his/her place in school, unless a suitable reason for continued absence has been given.
- Parents are given permission in writing, stating departure and return dates, and reminding them of the issues involved.
- If parents fail to obtain permission from the Headteacher, the holiday period will be recorded as unauthorised.
- If a child fails to return on the due date, a letter will be sent, asking the parents to contact school by a given date and indicating and that if they do not make a response by this date, the child's name may be removed from the register and a referral will be made to the Local Authority's Children Missing in Education Team.

Parents are also reminded that they should not take children who are in Year 2 or Year 6 out of school, nor should they take any child during out of school in May – this is due to children in these year groups taking part in SATs.

## **7. Lateness**

School opens at 8:45am. Lateness is classed as any child arriving after 9:00am. All children arriving at after 9:00am need to report to the school office where children will sign in and receive a late card. Your child's register mark will be recorded as late.

Registers close at 9:30am. If your child arrives after this time your child will receive an unauthorised absence mark for that session. Persistent levels of unauthorised absence due to lateness may result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

Lateness is monitored weekly and letters are sent home to parents informing them of the loss of lesson time and disruption caused to their child and the class as a whole. Persistent lateness will result in a referral to the Education Welfare Officer.

## **8. Persistent absentees**

A child who has an attendance figure below the 90% threshold is classed as a Persistent Absentee and will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

Parents of Persistent Absentees will be invited to an Attendance Meeting with the Education Welfare Officer and the headteacher to discuss their child's attendance.

Parents who fail to attend an Attendance Meeting will receive a follow up visit from school.

Where the absences continue parents may be served with a Penalty Notice which may lead to court action.

A child who has an attendance percentage below 90% will be closely monitored and the Education Welfare Officer will be informed. Greenbank Primary and the Education Welfare Service will monitor all children who are deemed to be Persistent Absentees and will challenge all absences including: illnesses and medical appointments.

## **9. Working with parents**

We will communicate our Attendance Policy to parents through our school website, communication App – ParentMail, newsletters, informal contacts, Parents' Evenings and specific letters concerned with lateness or absence.

We will stress the need for good attendance so that children can make optimum progress. At all times, parents will be encouraged to approach school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their children to school. Each child's attendance will be entered on their school report.

### **Rewarding good attendance**

We will celebrate good attendance at Greenbank in a variety of ways;

- Class Attendance Certificates are awarded weekly for the best attendance and punctuality.
- Every child who has 100% attendance and 100% punctuality receives a raffle ticket for a weekly prize draw. The raffles will be drawn in the weekly assemblies.
- Children with 100% attendance at the end of half term will receive a certificate.

- Children with 100% attendance for the whole school year receive a certificate and a prize.

## **SYMBOLS**

Authorised absence should be shown in the register by 'O' with a supplementary symbol inside the letter to record the reason for absence.

Unauthorised absence by 'O' with no additional symbol inside the letter.

## **ATTENDANCE CODES**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>SCHOOL MEANING</b>	<b>STATISTICAL MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site	Approved Educational Activity
<b>C</b>	Other authorised circumstances	Authorised absence
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Authorised absence
<b>*G</b>	Extended family leave (not agreed or days in excess)	Unauthorised absence
<b>*H</b>	Family Leave (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (not med/dental appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>L</b>	Late (before reg closed) 9:01-9:29am	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed) at 9:30am	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity

\* Please leave any holidays as 'O' on the register – the office will put in the appropriate code



## GREENBANK PRIMARY SCHOOL

### Attendance guidelines for parents

At Greenbank we believe it is very important that your children come to school every day, so that they can learn properly and make good progress.

#### **Children can miss school when:**

- They are ill but will be challenged if the illness is longer than 2 days and no proof of medical evidence.
- They have an **unavoidable** doctor's or dentist's appointment that cannot be made after school or during the school holidays. (They should come to school before and after their appointments whenever possible.)
- Hospital appointment.

***This is called authorised absence***

#### **The following are called unauthorised absences. Children are not allowed to miss school for:**

- Minding the house
- Looking after younger siblings
- Shopping during school hours
- Going for a haircut
- Visiting relatives
- Going on holiday
- Going to a wedding
- Trips to the airport
- Staying off due to an appointment for a parent or sibling
- Staying off when a parent is feeling unwell and is not able to bring the child to school.
- Not realising the date a new term at school starts.

#### **Rewards for good attendance:**

Children with 100% attendance at the end of half term are rewarded and their individual name goes on a class certificate. Class attendance certificates are awarded weekly for the best attendance and punctuality. Every child who has 100% attendance and 100% punctuality receives a raffle ticket for a weekly prize draw. Children with 100% attendance for the whole school year receive a prize and certificate. We all want the children to do well!

#### **If your child cannot come to school:**

Please tell school as soon as possible. You can telephone the school, send a note or come in and see us. Our school number is 01706 647923.

**If your child wakes up late:**

If on the rare occasion your child may get up late, bring your child into school as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of a parent/carer to ensure that children go to bed on time, have enough sleep and get up each morning in good time to arrive at school on time. It is important that your child does not miss a whole day of school or morning.

**If your child has an appointment:**

Try to bring your child in for school before the appointment, and after the appointment if possible, so that they do not miss too much school. Appointment cards and letters should be brought to the office so a copy can be made for the child's file and school can show proof to the Educational Welfare Officer.

**If you have a lot of unauthorised absence:**

The Headteacher will pass your details to the Education Welfare Service and an officer will come and visit you. The Education Welfare Officer now has new powers to impose fines of up to £2500 per child.

**Time off during the school Term**

By law, parents must make sure that their children attend school every day. Parents have no automatic right to take children out of school for holidays.

Parents are expected to arrange holidays during school holiday periods when children can enjoy them without their education being disrupted. The Government's policy is that holidays in term time will not be agreed as they have a detrimental effect on children's education.

However, we understand that at very rare times there are extenuating circumstances. The Headteacher will look at your child's progress and previous attendance before she decides if permission will be given but this will only be in **exceptional circumstances**.

**Special guidelines if you are thinking about taking your child out of school for exceptional circumstances:**

- See the Headteacher to discuss your plans **before you book your tickets**
- Parents must complete a form available from the school **at least 1 month in advance.** They should provide supporting evidence of the exceptional circumstances and why the leave must be taken in term time instead of school holidays.
- No visits allowed at all for children in Year 2 and Year 6, as they are doing SATs tests.
- No visits for any children in May because all the children are doing tests and assessments.

**What happens if you do not get permission first?**

**This is unauthorised absence and a penalty notice of £60 per child, per parent will be issued after 5 days** of unauthorised absence. The Education Welfare Officer may impose fines of from £60 to £2500 per child. Your child may, also lose their place at Greenbank Primary.



**What happens if the school is closed and you can't see the Headteacher?**

You must plan your trips so that you have plenty of time to see the Headteacher for permission, otherwise it will be treated as *unauthorised absence*.



# Greenbank Primary School

## GOVERNORS' POLICY ON HOLIDAYS AND LEAVE IN TERM TIME

### Holidays

Parents are expected to arrange holidays during school holiday periods when children can enjoy them without their education being disrupted. The Government's and Governors' policy is that holidays in term time will not be agreed as they have a detrimental effect on children's education.

### Other Reasons

Requests for leave in term time for other reasons should only be agreed in **very exceptional circumstances** for the shortest possible period.

The governing body has authorised the Headteacher to act on its behalf. The governors also expect applications for leave in term time other than for holidays to be refused. In very exceptional circumstances discretion may be appropriate, although this will very rarely happen and no more than 10 days will normally be agreed. If parents, take children on an unauthorised visit for 5 days or more a penalty notice will be issued. (See LEA Penalty Notice Protocol Section 4 part 4.1).

### Applications

Parents must complete a form available from the school **at least 1 month in advance**. They should provide supporting evidence of the exceptional circumstances and why the leave must be taken in term time instead of in the school holidays. All applications will be considered carefully, including how the pupil's educational progress could be affected. Please note that the cost of a holiday **is not** extenuating circumstances.

### Losing the school place

In addition to running the risk of a penalty notice and a possible criminal record; you also need to be aware that if you take your child/children on holiday during term time you risk losing your child/children's place at Greenbank Primary School. Greenbank is a very popular school and we have a waiting list in most year groups. Parents will have to re-apply for admission when they return but it may not be possible for the pupil to return to this school if there are no places available.

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I have read and understood the Government and Governors' policy above.

Name of Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Class: \_\_\_\_\_ Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Surname of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_ First Name of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of parent/carer: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_