



**Grove Vale Primary School**

# **Attendance Policy**

**September 2023**

**C.Dubidat**

**Next review September 2024**





## **OVERVIEW**

At Grove Vale School we strongly believe that Attendance and Punctuality are vital for a child to maximise their potential and create a feeling of belonging in their class/school community.

In promoting the belief that Attendance and Punctuality are important values we will be helping to ensure our children benefit fully from the Educational Opportunities available to them, to equip them for life and potentially impacting upon their futures as citizens, employees and employers.

We believe that;

- Repeated and consistent Lateness is an unsettling start to the school day for both the child and school.
- Prolonged and consistent Absence, in any year group, affects access to the curriculum ultimately impacting on progress.
- Unnecessary, parentally condoned and Unauthorised Absence should be challenged and both school and parents/carers held Responsible for the impact this may have on any pupils full attendance.

We are required to monitor and manage all Attendance and Absence in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations, to follow the Department for Education (DfE) guidelines in relation to Attendance and Absence and expect all parents/carers to work with us to ensure all pupils maintain an Attendance figure of at least 96% throughout the academic year.

The Government has identified that when any child's Attendance falls below 90% they are classed as a 'Persistent Absentee'.

Our School policy closely follows the guidance set out in following DfE document;

*'Working together to improve school attendance'*. Published May 2022

## **THE GOVERNING BOARD**

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Here at Grove Vale, the link governor for attendance, Mrs S.Gosal, will work closely with the school and the attendance lead to monitor and take action where necessary.

## **ATTENDANCE REGISTERS**



School Attendance Registers are 'legal documents' and as such are kept at Grove Vale in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations. At Grove Vale the Head teacher, Alison Connop is responsible for ensuring that the Attendance Registers are accurate and up to date – This is also monitored closely by the office staff and our attendance lead, Charlene Dubidat. (It is an offence in law not to do so).

Attendance Registers can and are viewed by School staff, Parents/Carers (for their own child/ren), Governors, Local Authority Officers, OfSTED and the Magistrates Court.

All Pupils are registered twice every day, once at the beginning of school in the morning and once in the afternoon.

Every half-day Registration mark will indicate if the pupil was Present or Absent.

All Absence from Grove Vale will be classified as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED** in accordance with the DfE Guidelines.

### **AUTHORISED ABSENCE**

An Authorised absence is defined as any half day Absence from school for which the parent/carer of a child has;

- a) Provided the Head teacher (in advance) with a reason for that Absence,
- b) Provided the Head teacher (in advance) with a reason for that Absence that can be accepted and/or is Allowed for the purposes of Authorisation and,
- c) That the Head teachers agrees the Pupil should not be in school for that half day session.

### **Note**

*Absences may be authorised for a medical appointment in school time, BUT, the school will ask parents/carers to ensure their child attends Registration, is collected from school and then returned after the appointment in order for the Absence to be Authorised. The timing of and venue of the appointment will need to be evidenced and discussed with the Head Teacher Alison Connop to agree arrangements.*

*In the case of emergency parents/carers should negotiate with the Head teacher on an individual basis. Parents will be advised on the amount of absence that the Head teacher can agree to Authorise in each instance. Any extension to the original agreement may not be authorised.*



**If the reason you have provided allows the Head teacher to Authorise the Absence no further action can or will be taken.**

### **UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Any half day Absence from school for which the parent/carer of the child has;

- a) not provided the Head Teacher (in advance) with a reason for that Absence,
- b) provided a reason but that reason is not, or cannot be accepted for the purpose of Authorisation and,
- c) The Head teacher is unable to agree that the Pupil should not be in school for that half day session.

### **Note**

*Late arrival in the Classroom for Registration, both in the morning and afternoon, can be recorded as Late and/or Unauthorised Absence for that half day session. (See Registration and Registers below)*

**If no reason for an Absence has been provided and/or if the reason provided is not or cannot be accepted for the purposes of Authorisation further action can or will be taken.**

### **REGISTRATION and REGISTERS**

#### **Registration**

Registration happens IN THE CLASSROOM.

#### **Mornings**

Registration for Juniors is at 8.45am and Infants at 8:50am.

#### **Afternoons**

Registration for Juniors opens at 1pm and for Infants at 1pm.

#### **Lateness**

School operates a soft start, this means that children can start entering school from 8.35am in the juniors and 8.40am in the infants. The playground gates are then locked at 8.45am in juniors and 8.50am in the infants. If a child has to enter school through the office after these times, they will be marked as 'L' AUTHORISED LATE.



Registers Close at 9.00am and 1pm and if a child arrives after this they will be marked 'U' UNAUTHORISED LATE.

The 'U' mark counts the same as an 'O' mark and is UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE on your child's Registration/Attendance Record for that half day session.

If a child arrives LATE more than 10 times in any school year the privilege of Grove Vale marking this LATE will be withdrawn and any late may be marked as 'U' UNAUTHORISED LATE.

**Unauthorised Lateness 'U' and/or Unauthorised Absence 'O' can lead to parents/carers being Referred to Sandwell Attendance and Prosecution service and parents/carers being liable to a penalty notice (the penalty notice is £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 per parent per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.) and/or be subject to further legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court (a fine of up to £2,500 plus costs and/or 3 months imprisonment)**

### Registers

All marks in the Register are made by the Head teacher or by someone delegated by the Head teacher to do so, but, the Head teacher remains responsible for all marks made.

It is the Head Teacher's (*Alison Connop*) Legal Responsibility to ensure that registers are kept up to date and accurate and in accordance with the Pupil Registration Regulations.

It is the Class Teachers responsibility to take Registration at a time identified by the Head teacher and to put a mark (Present /, \, or Absent O, U,) against all those on the Register who are IN THE CLASSROOM before Registration Closes.

Class teachers will ensure that they complete Registration accurately and in accordance with the Head teacher's instruction. Class teachers will close Registration at 9:00am and 1.00/1.30pm.





## **ATTENDANCE and ILLNESS**

Unfortunately, and from time to time children do suffer from illness. When this happens, at *Grove Vale*, the Head Teacher will make a judgement as to if that illness means the child is prevented from or is unable to attend school.

If a child has been unwell in the morning and shows signs of recovery the Head Teacher (*Alison Connop*) will encourage parents/carers to return their child to school later in the morning or after lunch.

At *Grove Vale* we acknowledge that Parents/carers are the best people to make the judgement and to decide if their child should stay at home but parents/carers must advise school BEFORE 9.15am of the circumstances and explain the reason for the Absence to avoid that Absence being recorded as Unauthorised. The school also encourages parents to make their decisions knowing that if you bring your child to school and advise us that they may be a little unwell we are happy to monitor their condition and agree with the parent/carer that should their child's health/condition deteriorate we will call you to let you know and ask you to collect them where necessary.

In instances where a child has been sent home from school for being sick, the parents should monitor their child from the time of leaving until the morning of the expected return. If the child has not been sick within this window and symptoms have improved, the child can then return to school the next day. However, parents and carers are advised not to send their child in if symptoms persist.

**The Absence for that half day session will be Authorised by the Head teacher and no further action will be taken.**

Reasons provided for any Absence and the frequency of previous Absence/Illness can/will determine if that Absence is recorded as Authorised or Unauthorised.

If the child is absent and the parent/carer does not call the school before 9.15am the Absence will be recorded as Unauthorised.

If the child is absent and a parent/carer has not contacted school before 9.15am a member of School staff will attempt to contact the child's parent/carer (via the contact details you are required to provide and to keep up to date). If the parent/carer does not respond to this contact or if the contact details are out of date the absence will be recorded as Unauthorised.



### **Safeguarding**

In some cases of Absence and/or lack of contact with parents/carers we may need to make contact with other Agencies (i.e. Social Care, the Police, etc.,) to meet our 'Safeguarding Children' responsibilities.

### **Medication**

Grove Vale would want parent/carers to know that in the case of a child being prescribed medicines that this does not automatically mean that the child should be absent from school or that this Absence will be Authorised. The school's medical policy allows us to support with the administer medicines, with written consent, which may result in there being no reason or necessity for any Absence.

### **Absence as a result of Illness**

Grove Vale can allow parents/carers up to a maximum of 7 days 14 half day sessions each Academic year (from September to the following July) when the Head teacher (Alison Connop) can/will agree to Authorise a child's Absence as a result of Illness when a parent/carer has contacted school before 9.15am and has provided an acceptable reason/evidence for that absence.

When your child has exceeded this level of Absence you may be asked to provide the (Head teacher) with some further information, detail or evidence (GP/hospital/appointment Letters or texts, GP/hospital Appointment card, School compliment slip stamped by the doctors, Any medicine prescribed, Prescriptions) that supports the parent/carer's view that their child was 'unfit' to attend school.

### **Note.**

Grove Vale would want parent/carers to be both clear in understanding and to appreciate that, if asked for some further information, detail or evidence, it does not mean that they are not believed when they say their child is unwell, but, it does provide school with the necessary information and detail which supports the Head teachers decision to continue to Authorise some Absence should Governors, the LA and/or OfSTED review or question schools Registration Procedures and/or Attendance figures.

The information provided can then be reviewed to consider if it would allow the Head teacher to continue to Authorise the Absence.

Any information or detail and any documentation provided by a parent/carer in support of their view that their child was 'unfit' to attend school may be recorded or filed in school to



support the Head teachers agreement, or otherwise, to continue to Authorise any further Absence.

If, when asked for, a parent/carer does not or cannot provide further information, detail or evidence that Absence will remain Unauthorised.

Grove Vale and parents/carers can work with the School Health Advisor and invite parents/carers/children to meet and discuss any unresolved issues.

### **LONG TERM SICKNESS ABSENCE**

If a child needs to be hospitalised for 3 days or more a member of Grove Vale staff can contact the Hospital Teaching Service so that, if it is medically appropriate/approved and possible they can work with the hospitalised child whilst they are not in school. This would be recorded as being educated off site and would be equivalent to an Attendance at school.

### **LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Since September 2013 Head teachers are no longer allowed to authorise any 'Leave of Absence' (sometimes previously known as 'term time holiday') unless a parent/carer makes an application, at least 4 weeks in advance, detailing the 'exceptional circumstances' they would want the Head teacher to consider.

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 absence **may not** be authorised unless:

- (a) An application has been made in advance to the proprietor (Head teacher) by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- (b) The proprietor (Head teacher), or a person authorised by the proprietor, considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the exceptional circumstances relating to that application.

### **Penalty Notices**

Parents/Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices should their child take any Leave of Absence if they have not requested this, in writing, to the Head teacher (and/or completed a Leave of Absence Application) detailing the 'exceptional circumstances' they would want the Head teacher to take into consideration in deciding if any Leave of Absence can be agreed and Authorised.

Parent/Carers can be issued with Penalty Notices should any Leave of Absence be taken without any Application/Request being made.





Parents/Carers should ensure that any Request/Application is made at least, **four weeks** in advance of any Leave of Absence to be taken.

Parents/Carers should consider ensuring that they know if any Leave of Absence requested can be authorised by the Head teacher before planning, booking or paying for any part of a Leave of Absence.

Legislation dictates that a Leave of Absence Requests/Application can only be considered if it is from a Parent/Carer with whom the pupil normally lives.

Leave of Absence Requests/Applications from a Parent/Carer that a pupil does not normally live with or from any other family member cannot be considered under any circumstances.

### **REPORTING TO PARENTS**

All pupils Attendance will be reported on a termly basis. This will accompany your child's termly effort report and will also be present in your child's end of year report.

### **ATTENDANCE MONITORING**

All pupils Attendance is monitored and reviewed on at least a weekly basis, but in some cases, there may be a need or requirement for more frequent monitoring.

Below are some triggers that will require further investigation and communications with parents/carers and Referral and involvement with other external Services.

The attendance lead will proactively work with families to understand why absences are occurring. If this is unsuccessful the school may make a home visit to establish the reason for absence and the welfare of the child and family.

#### **Pupil Attendance below 96% (Expected Minimum Attendance)**

If at any time a child's actual Attendance falls below 96% (the absence might be Authorised, Unauthorised or a combination of both) school will send a letter warning parents of their child's attendance level, School may also request a parent meeting.

#### **Pupil Attendance below 96%**

With no improvement after action above, school will request a parent meeting and ask for evidence to be provided for any further absence.

#### **Pupil Attendance below 93%**



If at any time your child's actual Attendance falls below 93% (the absence might be Authorised, Unauthorised or a combination of both) school will request a parent meeting and to complete a parent agreement.

Pupil Attendance below 90% (Persistent Absence)

If at any time your child's actual Attendance falls below 90% (the absence might be Authorised, Unauthorised or a combination of both) school will request a parent meeting and to complete/review a parent agreement.

Any 12 half day sessions of Unauthorised Absence (including Unauthorised lateness)

Referral to Education Investigation Service for issue of Warning Notice

Interview under caution

Fixed Penalty Notice

Any further 12 half days of Unauthorised Absence (including Unauthorised lateness)

Referral to the Attendance and Prosecution Service for issue of Penalty Notice (A fine of up to £120 per parent/carer per child, non-payment results in Magistrates Court with a fine of up to £1,000 plus costs)

Any further Unauthorised Absence (including Unauthorised lateness)

Referral to Education Investigation Service for possible Magistrates Court. (A fine of up to £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment plus costs)





## **Appendix A - Register Codes**

/ Present (am)

\Present (PM)

B Educated off site

C Other authorised circumstances

D Dual registration

E Excluded

G family holiday (not agreed)

H Family holiday (agreed)

I Illness

J Interview

L Late (before register closes)

M medical/Dental

N No reason yet provided for absence

O Unauthorised Abs

P Approved Sporting Activity

R Religious Observance

S Study leave

T Traveller absence

U Late (after registers closed)

V Educational visit or trip

W Work Experience

# Planned Whole school closure

Y Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances





X Non-Compulsory school age absence

Z Pupil not on roll

- All should attend/No mark recorded

## Appendix B – legal information for parents

### Legal Action

#### Information for Parents

##### **Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:**

Penalty Notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £60.

- If this is not paid within 21 days the amount rises to £120.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority may prosecute under Section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

##### **Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:**

“If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence.”

- The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or impose a Parenting Order.

##### **Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996:**

“If in the above circumstances you, the parent, know that your child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fail without reasonable justification to cause him/her to attend, you are guilty of an offence.”

- The court can fine you up to £2,500 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs, impose a Parenting Order and/or sentence you to a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

##### **Please note that:**

- Penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- “Parent” includes any person who is not a parent but who has parental responsibility for the child or who has care of him/her.

**These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.**



How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	Equals this number of days absent	Which is approximately this many weeks absent	Which means this number of lessons missed
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
80%	38 days	8 weeks	200 lessons
70%	57 days	11.5 weeks	290 lessons

