



Greatworth Primary School

Attendance Policy March 2020

Statutory Policy	Yes	
Published on Website	Yes	
Policy Ownership	Head Teacher	Yes
	Finance & Premises Committee	No
	Quality & Standards Committee	Yes
	Full Governing Board	Yes
Implementation Date	February 2020	
Review Period	Annually	
Planned Review Date	March 2021	

Whole School Attendance Target – 97%

Children's Personal Attendance Target – 100%

Introduction

This Attendance Policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department of Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures.

Regular attendance at school is not only a legal requirement but is vital, without regular attendance the learning process becomes fragmented and unsatisfactory. It is our policy that no child's attendance should fall below an acceptable level as we recognise that good attendance is central to raising standards and pupil achievement.

Aims

Greatworth Primary School aims to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality to enable all pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them to develop their full potential.

The aim of the Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff.

National data clearly shows a correlation between poor attendance and lower academic achievement. Greatworth Primary School aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Supporting pupils and parents/carers by promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensuring all pupils succeed and realise their full potential whilst at school
- Making parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

This policy explains attendance expectations, how we monitor attendance, what we are required to record about your child's attendance and how you can help. We explain what 'authorised' and 'unauthorised' absences are, the procedure and regulations for absence from school in term time and where to find help if you are worried.

It is a legal requirement for parents to send their child to school and for schools to ensure children receive an education. Legal action that may be taken by Northamptonshire County Council is set out in Appendix 1 of this policy.

Expectations

Parents/Carers:

- To ensure regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- To do all they can to ensure their child arrives **on time** for morning and afternoon school and prepared for the school day. School starts promptly at 8:45am and afternoon registration is at 1.15 p.m.
- If their child is ill, notify the school **on the first day before 8.45am and every day following** unless agreed not to with the school ;
- Get in touch at an early stage about any concerns they have about their child's attitude to school.
- Children must be collected promptly at 3.15pm.

In return the school will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and safe learning environment
- Keep regular and accurate records of individual attendance and punctuality
- Will monitor persistent late comers and inform parents of our concerns
- Contact home on day 1 of absence if no message has been received from home;
- Contact second contact if no success in response by 11am on the first day of absence
- If still no success, try other means of contact such as email
- If concerns raise of a safeguarding nature, follow reporting processes as detailed in the safeguarding children policy
- Contact home over any unexplained absences.
- Follow up promptly any concerns that parents pass on to us that may be affecting their child's attitude to, or feeling of wellbeing in school;
- Involve external services where appropriate to help pupils re-integrate into school after illness or other individual circumstances;
- Regularly and consistently remind students and parents of the importance of good attendance and punctuality;
- Reward good or improving attendance and action any concerns promptly.

Why attendance matters

98%	=	Less than 5 days absence
95%	=	~ 10 Days (two weeks) absence
90%	=	~ 20 Days (four weeks) absence
85%	=	~ 30 Days (six weeks) absence
80%	=	~ 40 Days or 8 weeks of education missed over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week

Registration and Attendance Procedures

Registers are important legal documents and we rely on accurate input in order to follow up any concerns as well as for data analysis.

The registers information will be checked every morning after registration. It is imperative that the data entered is accurate. Schools have a responsibility for safeguarding the children in their care and it is vital that the information we have is as accurate as possible.

The teacher marks the register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, any child not present to answer their name will be marked absent

Parents of children who arrive late are required to sign in the Late Registration Book and will be marked in the register as 'L' (late- authorised) before 9.15am. After 9.15am they will receive the unauthorised mark 'U' (arrived in school after registration has closed).

Teachers monitor attendance daily and record the reason for any absence, provided that written explanation has been received from parents. If no written explanation is received we must try to obtain this by contacting parents. If we do not receive a written response, we must classify the absence as unauthorised.

If we are concerned about a child's absence and we have not heard from parents, we will try to contact all contacts provided by the parents. Contact will be made on the first day of a pupils absence. Each of the contacts provided will be contacted until a reason for absence is provided and where a phone contact cannot be made we will make a home visit or potentially contact the police.

On the third day of absence and thereafter, parents will be contacted to request an update on the child. In addition where a child is absent for 5 days a home visit may be made and parents are required to provide medical evidence to cover the period of absence (for example, appointment card, copy of prescription or prescribed medication).

If patterns of absence are identified which may cause concern about the frequency or validity of absence, parents will be contacted to determine the reasons for the pattern of absence and to offer support for any school based problems or out of school problems. In all cases we aim to help the child re-establish a usual pattern of school life.

Parents of children who are persistently late may also be contacted by the school in order to address the issue.

Authorised Absences

The Department for Children and Families (DCSF) has issued guidelines to all schools detailing valid reasons for authorised or justified absences. Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence from school be granted as an Authorised absence. Examples of authorised absences are:

- When a child is ill or receiving medical attention. Absences of 5 days or longer will require medical evidence. (Greatworth School does not have a 48 hour stay away rule after bouts of sickness or diarrhoea).
- Bereavement of a close family member;
- Days of religious observance notified in advance;
- When prior consent has been obtained from the Head Teacher, for example for an educational trip, approved sporting activity or examination;
- Absence due to exceptional circumstances (at the Head Teacher's discretion).

We expect absences to be kept to a minimum: routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged **out of school hours**.

Unauthorised Absences

We cannot authorise any requests for children to be taken out of school during term time for any reason. Unauthorised absences are those where:

- No letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parent(s)/carers;
- The reason for the absence does not fall into one of the categories of authorised absence above.

We ask parents to **notify the school well in advance** (preferably 4 weeks notice), by completing an Application for Absence Form (found in **Appendix 2** of this policy), of any exceptional circumstances to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. Every decision made will be in the best educational interest of the children.

The following list provides some examples of Leave of Absence requests which will not be authorised:

- Staying at home to care for a sick relative
- Taking or preparing for a holiday in term time because of parental leave restrictions or availability of cheaper holidays / accommodation
- Holiday overlaps with the beginning or end of term
- Holiday dates booked by mistake or by another family member
- Attending birthdays, weddings or family celebrations;
- Family day visits out
- Extra days missed after illness or holidays

- Transportation issues getting to school
- Adult appointments affecting bringing a child to school or collecting on time
- Different term dates for children at schools in another local authority

The DfE guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the **school** that judges whether an absence is authorised or not.

We do not wish to record unnecessarily absence as 'unauthorised'. Please help us to avoid this by providing signed absence notes, or emails quickly and by supporting the school in promoting the importance of good attendance.

Parents should be aware that they may be fined by the Local Authority by means of a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absences or poor attendance. Please refer to **Appendix 1** of this policy which details Northamptonshire County Council's Code of Conduct regarding Penalty Notices to Address Absences and Poor Attendance at School.

Absences in Term Time

Government legislation dictates that we cannot authorise holidays being taken in term time for any reason as learning is disrupted and the lost time is detrimental to the educational progress of the child. Holidays taken during term time will be monitored and we have a duty to report these to the Local Authority who may take further action.

The school cannot legally authorise any absence unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. It is at the Head Teacher's discretion whether an absence is deemed under 'exceptional circumstances'.

An Application for Absence Form must be completed if you are planning to take holiday during term time. A meeting will then take place to discuss your application.

Parents should be aware that they may be fined by the Local Authority by means of a Penalty Notice for taking their child on holiday during term time. Please refer to **Appendix 1** of this policy which details Northamptonshire County Council's Code of Conduct regarding Penalty Notices to Address Absences and Poor Attendance at School.

Fines may be issued when a child misses five consecutive school days or the equivalent of five days within a six week period which are recorded as unauthorised absence.

The Process to Improve Attendance / Punctuality

The school will continue to promote initiatives that recognise and reward good attendance. This is currently promoted through the award of Attendance Certificates for high attendance for each term during Achievement Assemblies.

As part of our commitment to ensure pupils attend well at school, our strategy to improve attendance/punctuality will come into force when there is a concern over a child's level of attendance. The following tables explain at what points the process will be implemented:

Attendance level	Action
General Communication	Regular letters or communication through newsletter or parentmail will be sent to all parents reinforcing the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
Below 96% from December (below 90% for up to November)	The pupil is entered into the monitoring list. Parents will receive letters to report cumulative attendance below 96% on multiple occasions between September and July.
Below 92%	We will contact parents where cumulative attendance falls below 92%. Parents /Carers will be invited to attend an attendance surgery with the headteacher and / or the deputy safeguarding lead. The meeting will be an opportunity for parents/carers to talk about any issues or obstacles preventing their child from attending school regularly. A home/school action plan for a six week period will be created to support parent/carers to prevent further decline in absence. This meeting may also involve external agencies being present and could begin the process of formal proceedings where pupil attendance falls below an acceptable target.
If did not attend the meeting	Re-invite within 5 working days. If Parents do not attend the meeting, the school will set 6 week targets in the absence of parents. If parents do not attend the second meeting, refer to EIPT.
If no improvement made in 6 weeks	Refer to the EIPT and other intervention via Early Help Assessment if necessary. Repeat the Parent Surgery action plan.

When improvement has been made after a meeting to review	A letter to praise the achievement
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Punctuality	Action
Late to school on 4 Occasions	Initial letter sent from school to inform parents of lateness and the impact on learning. Improvement seen – sticker awarded in assembly and continue to monitor.
Late to school on 8 Occasions	Second letter to inform parents of a number of late arrivals and to reinforce the severity of regular late attendance. The letter will also outline what will happen next (meeting). Improvement seen – continue to attend school on time and postcard home and continue to monitor.
Late to school on 12 Occasions	Third letter to arrange a meeting to make an action plan for improvement in arriving at school on time. Improvement seen – continue to attend school on time for the whole of the term. Taken off the monitor list and certificate / reward given. Action plan implemented and monitored regularly. If improvement seen the above process is followed. If the number of lates does not improve, possible escalation and referral to the EITP.

Rewards and Education

Certificates, badges and other incentives are used to celebrate children's excellent attendance at the end of every term (all authorised absences).

98% Bronze

99% Silver

100% Gold

Lessons, assemblies, newsletter, posters and targeted, direct communication will be used to educate children on the importance of excellent attendance. Developing good routines and attitudes to this will not only impact on their outcomes and achievement at school but also their ability to perform in the workplace in the future.

Roles and Responsibilities

At Greatworth Primary School we believe that high attendance levels are achieved as a result of staff working closely together with parents and knowing where their responsibilities lie. The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Parents

Parents are expected:

- To ensure that children attend school regularly.
- To inform us by **calling the school by 8.45am each day** giving specific reason why their child is absent.
- To make medical appointments out of school time as far as possible.
- To avoid holidays during term time and to inform the Headteacher well in advance of any family holiday which needs to be taken in term time.
- When children have been ill, to ensure that they return to school as quickly as possible once they are no longer infectious.
- If a child's attendance falls below 92% to attend Attendance Meetings with the Head teacher to set a target for improvement and a plan of action to support their child's attendance.

The Governing Body

The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the school on at least a termly basis. Attendance data is reported via the Headteacher's report at each Full Governing Body meeting.

The Quality and Standards Committee have responsibility regarding monitoring attendance and punctuality and for the evaluation of the effectiveness of the school's attendance policy and procedures. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Head Teacher

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently and for monitoring absence and punctuality and reporting to Governors. It is therefore the Headteacher's responsibility:

- To ensure that effective systems are in place to accurately reflect individual pupil and group and whole school attendance patterns.
- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.

- To work closely with parents / carers to promote good attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and / or punctuality is an issue.
- To provide Governors with information to enable them to evaluate the success of policy and practice.
- To arrange contact with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.
- To keep detailed records of intervention work with parents and carers on attendance issues.

Class Teacher

Class Teachers are expected:

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence, if known, on the appropriate system.
- To respond promptly to any issue raised in the weekly analysis of registers by Office Staff.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness or through a temporary exclusion of up to five days.

Office Staff

Office Staff will provide support:

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact parents/carers on the first day of their child's absence to establish the reason. To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To collate and provide details to support the Head teacher in making a judgement whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.
- To meet with the Head teacher and provide updates on current attendance and punctuality.

Education Inclusion and Partnership Team (EIPT)

The school has to make registers regularly available to the local authority's Education Inclusion and Partnership Team , who may contact parents to seek clarification or follow up matters of concern. The role of the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team is to:

- Enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- Support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings and monitoring individual children's attendance.

Appendix 1



Northamptonshire County Council Code of Conduct

Penalty Notices to Address Absences and Poor Attendance at School or Alternative Provision

Rationale

1. The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to ensure that the associated powers are applied consistently and fairly across the Local Authority area and that suitable arrangements are in place for the administration of Penalty Notices.
2. Regular and punctual attendance at school, or alternative provision, is both a legal requirement and essential for children and young people to maximise their educational opportunities. Penalty Notices offer a swift intervention which Northamptonshire County Council (NCC) will use to deal with issues of unauthorised absence before they become entrenched.
3. An offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at school, or alternative provision, at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school, or alternative provision.
4. In addition a Penalty Notice can be used to help ensure parents fulfill their responsibilities to ensure their child is not out in a public place without reasonable justification during the first five days of every exclusion from school.

Authorisation

1. The primary responsibility for the issuing of Penalty Notices rests with the Local Authority. Educational Inclusion & Partnership Team (EIPT) of NCC will therefore issue Penalty Notices in Northamptonshire. This ensures consistency and will prevent conflict with other enforcement sanctions.
2. Although professionals other than those within the Local Authority (e.g. Head Teachers, the Police etc.) are accredited persons within the legislation, able to issue Penalty Notices, there is no requirement for them to do so. In Northamptonshire it has been agreed that the Police will not issue Penalty Notices. If a Head Teacher feels it is appropriate for a Penalty Notice to be issued they must refer to the EIPT. This will avoid a Penalty Notice being issued when the EIPT is instigating legal intervention proceedings for irregular school attendance or where a Penalty Notice is not deemed an appropriate form of intervention.

3. Penalty Notices will be issued by First Class post to satisfy evidential requirements.
4. EIPT will act upon requests to issue Penalty Notices from schools, academies, or alternative education providers and Northamptonshire Police, provided that;
 - a) All relevant information is supplied in the specified manner;
 - b) The circumstances of the pupil's absence meets the requirements of this Code of Conduct; and
 - c) The issuing of a Penalty Notice does not conflict with other interventions strategies in place or other enforcement sanctions already in process.

Criteria for Issuing Penalty Notices

1. Penalty Notices are issued to parents as defined under Section 576 of the Education Act 1996, in relation to children of compulsory school age. Under the Act the term "parent" includes;
 - All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
 - Any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility for a child or young person;
 - Any person although not a natural parent has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with a child.
 2. They may be issued for children at maintained schools, academies, free schools and alternative provision providers in Northamptonshire.
 3. In accordance with the definition of parent, and thereby parental responsibility for non-school attendance, more than one person may be liable for the offence. In such circumstances, separate notices will be issued to each person.
 4. Penalty Notices may be issued when:
 - Where there has been an unacceptable level of unauthorised absence from an educational establishment and enforcement is necessary to improve attendance. Unauthorised absence is absence without permission from a head teacher or other authorised representative from the school. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. The categories of authorised and unauthorised absence are explained in the Guidance to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.
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- A minimum of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 school week period will usually have occurred. However, a shorter period of time may be considered appropriate in some circumstances.
- In the case of a unauthorised holiday taken during term time, if;
 - Parents have not sought permission from the Head Teacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time.
 - The Head Teacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
 - A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation.
 - And there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 6 school week period.
 - Each case is considered on its own individual merits.
- A pupil is persistently late to school, i.e. arrives after the register has closed;
- Under truancy sweeps carried out under Crime and Disorder Act 1998 powers, a minimum of 5 sessions of unauthorised absence may generate a Penalty Notice, if these unauthorised absences occur in the 6 school weeks (maximum) after the child was stopped on a the truancy sweep; and
- When an excluded child is present in a public place during school hours on a day which is one of the first 5 school days to which the exclusion relates or, where that exclusion is for a fixed period of 5 days or less, any of the days to which the exclusion relates, under the protocol for Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

Alternative action may need to be considered if school attendance offences re-occur, in the light of advice from Legal Services.

Withdrawal of Penalty Notices

Once issued a Penalty Notice can only be withdrawn in the following circumstance;

- The Penalty Notice has not been issued in accordance with the Code of Conduct.

- Evidence has been established that the Penalty Notice was issued to the wrong person.
- There are material errors in the information leading to the issue of the Penalty Notice.
- The period for payment has expired and the Local Authority does not intend to institute legal proceedings for which the Penalty Notice relates.

Payment of Penalty Notices

The arrangements for the paying of Penalty Notices will be detailed on the Penalty Notice.

Revenue generated from the Penalty Notices will be used to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices, or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Non-Payment of Penalty Notices

The Penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice (assumed as 2 working days following the Notice being sent by first class mail), or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the Penalty Notice.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period, the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the Notice applies. The prosecution relates to irregular school attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Where a prosecution is an appropriate course of action a Caution may be offered by the Local Authority as an alternative method of disposal.

There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

A record will be kept of all prosecutions relating to offence for which a Penalty Notice was issued.

Legislation

1. Section 23 Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 empowers authorised officers of a Local Authority, Head Teachers (and Deputy and Assistant Head Teachers authorised by the Head) and Police Officers (including Community Support Officers) to issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence from school, or alternative provision.

2. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came into force on 27th February 2004.

3. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 require the Local Authority, in consultation with the above, to develop a code of conduct for issuing of Penalty Notices. Any person issue a Penalty Notice must do so within the terms of this code of conduct) the Code of Conduct”).
4. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2005 extends the issuing of Penalty Notices to alternative provision.
5. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2012 confirms the increase in the amount of penalty where the offence are alleged to have been wholly or partly committed after 1st September 2012.
6. Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 confirm that the penalty of £60 must be paid within 21 days or after that period increase to £120 to be paid within 28 days.
7. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 remove all reference to *family holiday* and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days. Amendments make clear that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head Teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school *if* the leave is granted.
8. The education provisions of the Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 apply to all parents who fall within the definition of parent as set out in Section 576 of the Education Act 1996.
9. Penalty Notices supplement existing sanctions currently available under Section 444 Education Act 1996 or Section 36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school or alternative provision.
10. Education and Inspections Act 2006; giving authorisation to Penalty Notices when a child has been excluded.
11. This Code of Conduct complies with the requirements set out in Sections 14-16 of the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.
12. The issuing of Penalty Notices must conform to all requirements of the Human Rights Act and Equal Opportunities legislation.

Appendix 2

APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME

Attached is an application form for you to request permission for your child/ren to be absent from school to take part in a family holiday. Before completing the application form, please read the School Attendance Policy and the information provided by the Department for Education School Attendance Document (November 2016) carefully:

Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm.

The application for leave must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Having read these notes, if you still wish to apply for a leave of absence for your child to accompany you on holiday during term time then please complete the application form. This form should be returned to the school office at least 4 school weeks before the holiday.



**APPLICATION BY PARENT/CARER FOR CHILD'S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL
DURING TERM TIME**

Pupil's Name Class
Pupil's Name..... Class
Pupil's Name..... Class

I wish to apply for my child/ren to be absent from school during the following dates:

Date of first day of leave from School

Date of return to School

Total number of school days missed

Reasons for absence from school:

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.....

I made this application for my child/ren named above to have authorised absence from school for the reasons stated. I understand that if this is not agreed then any absence will be treated as unauthorised and may lead to the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Name of Parent/Carer making application

Signed

Date

To be completed by the Head teacher

Leave Authorised – Yes/No

Comments.....
.....
.....

Signed..... Date.....