

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Green Lea First School

Principles

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The attendance and behaviour policy must include procedural referral agreements that are designed to promote and safeguard the welfare of pupils. Schools have a duty in law to refer any absence of 10 days or more where they have been unable to make contact with the parent/child or have general concerns about the absence to the Education Welfare Service.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Only school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- **parents keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **truancy before or during the school day**
- **absences which have never been properly explained**
- **children who arrive at school too late to get a mark**

Parents whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with the staff in resolving any problems. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Worker from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Workers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWW themselves to ask for help or

information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Parental Responsibility

Under section 444 of the Education Act of 1996 parents, or those who have parental responsibility for children of compulsory school age, are required to ensure that their children receive an efficient full time education. Children are required to attend and to stay at school.

This responsibility also extends to ensuring that the children arrive at school on time, suitably dressed and in a fit condition to learn.

It is also the parent's responsibility to inform school of the reasons for their child's non-attendance as soon as possible, preferably by 9.30am on the first day of absence.

Procedures for reporting absence

- By telephone – all parents have the school's telephone number.
- By e-mail office@greenlea.staffs.sch.uk
- By letter.
- In person.
- By showing an appointment card or letter.
- By filling in a holiday request form – in advance.

Authorised Absence

The Headteacher has the ultimate responsibility for authorised absences and will do so when a valid reason is given for the child's absence.

Procedures

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

In managing the attendance and punctuality of its pupils, the school will:

1. Keep appropriate attendance records.

Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marks are regularly entered on to the computerised register on the office computer. Accurate information on attendance is available to designated employees and data gathered will be used to inform the governing body of attendance and punctuality trends. This information will enable governors and senior staff to effectively target attendance and punctuality as necessary.

2. Monitor patterns of attendance.

The Headteacher in liaison with administrative staff and the Education Welfare Worker will regularly review registers in order to work with families whose patterns of attendance or punctuality are unsatisfactory. All parents will be informed, via the annual report, of their child's overall attendance and their attendance compared to the average for the school.

3. Involve the Education Welfare Worker.

The Headteacher through regular meetings with the EWW will discuss issues surrounding attendance and punctuality. If there is cause for concern, the following procedures will be followed:

- The Headteacher will speak to the parents of the child.
- A letter may be sent home raising the concerns by either the school or the Education Welfare Service as is most appropriate.
- Parents are invited into school to talk to the Headteacher and the EWW informally. If informal intervention is unsuccessful, then an official referral to the EWW will be made by the school. The EWW may visit the home.
- Throughout these procedures, the Headteacher and the EWW will regularly discuss ongoing cases.

Lateness

Parents are expected to bring their children punctually at 8.50am for the start of the school day. Registration is at 9.00am. Children arriving after 9.00am must report with their parents to the school office where they will be registered by the late book. They will receive a late mark in their class register. Children arriving after 9.30am without an adequate explanation from their parents will be given an unauthorised absence for the session. Families who regularly arrive late will be contacted by the Headteacher. The Education Welfare may become involved if the problem cannot be quickly resolved.

Days of Religious Observance

Attendance at a religious observance held by a religious body will be granted authorised absence. The Headteacher should be consulted in advance of the event. A maximum of two days absence during any academic year will be granted for religious observance.

Family Holidays

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended and came into force on 1st September 2013. The new amendments make clear that Headteachers may no longer grant or authorise any leave of absence during term time for holidays or day trips, and this includes requests for other leave of absence unless there are very exceptional circumstances. Even then, a request for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances will be at the Headteacher's discretion and is not a right.

If a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances is to be requested from the Headteacher, each application will be judged individually on its own merit. Parents will need to write to the Headteacher, outlining the date of the proposed leave of absence and detailing why the application is being made. When applying, parents should also state if their child has siblings at another school so that the Headteachers are able to make a joint decision for each family.

There is a penalty system which may be applied should parents decide to take their child/children out of school when a request has been rejected. They may be subject to a Penalty Notice and a fine of £60 from Staffordshire County Council.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under section 444, of the Education Act 1996 and section 36, of the Children's Act 1989, to enforce attendance at school where appropriate. A full copy of the Penalty Notice Protocol is available in the school office.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 90% in any term without good reason, a referral to the EWW will be made by the school. Following investigation any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s.444.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) or for medical appointments which must be in school time.

Information about individual school targets, projects and special initiatives

The school has adopted the following attendance targets and special projects:

There are a variety of rewards schemes at the school to encourage and promote good attendance and punctuality. The Home School Agreement which is signed by staff, parents and the pupil contains a section specifically relating to attendance and punctuality. This is discussed at open evenings and school community awareness of the attendance policy is raised at every opportunity.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Mrs K Wilson, Headteacher and Mrs D Hodgson, office manager are responsible for attendance matters at Green Lea. If a child has not arrived at school by 9.30 am without an adequate explanation from their parents or the person with parental responsibility, then the parents will be contacted by the Office Manager or if she isn't available the Headteacher.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. School staff are committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Staffordshire County Council Code of Conduct

For further information please see the attached link:

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

COVID-19

Children may have to miss school due to self- isolation, awaiting test results or illness from COVID-19. The codes recommend by Staffordshire CC will be used. Parents will not be penalised in such cases and support will be offered from school

October 2020

To be reviewed October 2021

Appendum 1 Attendance Policy

As required by the statutory guidance, Staffordshire County Council have taken account of Headteachers responses and of the views of Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner, and have amended the Code of Conduct in line with the proposed changes, these having secured the overwhelming support of schools.

The main changes made are:

Penalty Notice for leave of absence

Removing the requirement for attendance to be below 90% before a Penalty Notice can be issued.

Clarifying that a parent can now receive more than one Penalty Notice per academic year.

Confirming that ten sessions of unauthorised absence do not have to be consecutive and only two sessions have to be for unauthorised leave of absence

Confirming that the period for calculating the ten sessions will be based on the previous three school terms

Penalty Notice for persistent absence

Parents will now only receive one warning notice period for improvement in attendance in a single academic year. If attendance deteriorates again then no further formal warning notice will be issued and the Local Authority can automatically consider other statutory actions if unauthorised absence re-occurs.

The local Authority will continue to monitor all unauthorised absences from school and support head teachers in challenging parents who fail to meet their legal obligations.

Further detail and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices can be obtained from the SLN, (Pupil Support, Families First in School, Families First documents) The new Code of Conduct will come into operation on the 23 February 2015 and the new paperwork will be upload on that date. All existing penalty notice proceedings will continue under previous Code of Conduct. It is essential that prior to any requests from the school for action under the new Code of Conduct, that the school has informed its parents of these changes.

Appendum 2 Attendance Policy

Penalty Notice for leave of absence (holiday) in term time

From 1 January 2018 **any** period of unauthorised leave may result in a parent receiving a penalty notice fine. The head teacher will continue to be the only person able to authorise leave in term time, but this will apply only in exceptional circumstances. Any unauthorised absence will be referred by the head teacher to the local authority.

Penalty Notice for persistent lateness

Previously a pupil had to achieve 20 unauthorised late marks before a penalty notice warning could be issued. **This has now changed to 10 marks**, and late marks do not have to be one after the other in order for the penalty notice to be issued. Parents are therefore encouraged where possible to ensure that their child attends school on time. However, if a child is late you must inform the school of the reason(s) why, as they may be able to offer you some form of advice or support.

Period of time used to measure persistent absence and lateness

If a child has had 10 days unauthorised absence or is late 10 times over a twelve week period, a parent may receive a penalty warning notice and also potentially a fine.

These changes have been agreed with local head teachers and have been implemented to help promote and support good attendance to school. Further details and a copy of the revised Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices can be obtained from the council's website <https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/home.aspx>

The vast majority of children and young people in Staffordshire have an excellent record of school attendance, and the Local Authority recognise the efforts of so many parents to ensure their children attend school regularly.

The Local Authority will continue to take appropriate action for absences during term time when we are notified by head teachers, both to support them in their role and to ensure local children can continue to achieve the best possible outcomes from attending local schools.

October 2020

Signed _____
Chair of Governors

Date _____

Signed _____
Headteacher

Date _____

