

Grovelands C P School



Attendance Policy

This policy was adopted in
September 2021

This policy is due for review in
September 2022

Attendance Policy

AIMS

This policy reflects the vision and ethos of Grovelands Community Primary School by:

- Encouraging and supporting all members of our school community to maximise children's learning experience in order that all children reach their full potential
- Providing clear procedures for involving parents and carers relating to school attendance

INTRODUCTION

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to their learning. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

Promoting positive school attendance and punctuality is everyone's responsibility.

PARENT/CARER RESPONSIBILITIES

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Parents/Carers must also ensure that their child is collected promptly at the end of the school day.

A child not attending school is considered a safeguarding matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. The Attendance Officer will ensure that the DSL and DDSL Welfare is kept informed of attendance patterns, and where there are concerns for individual children, the response to this will be considered within the context of safeguarding.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact Grovelands Community Primary School as soon as possible on the first day of absence. Parents are asked to ring the school absence line on 01323 840062 option 1 before 9:30 a.m. and leave a message stating name, class and detailed reason for absence or send a message via the ParentMail App under Absence Reporting.

If your child is absent and we have had no contact from you we will:

- Telephone, text or email you on the first day of absence – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. **It is the responsibility of all parents to inform the school on a daily basis if your child is going to be absent from school that day.**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school, (not by the parents), as either Authorised or Unauthorised. 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 reason such as genuine 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
- holidays

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best managed between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is always best to avoid giving into pressure to excuse them from attending.

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Support, Behaviour & Attendance Service from the Local Authority. The Practitioner will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these Officers can use Legal Interventions on 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.

SCHOOL PROCEDURES

Late Collection:

Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after-school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

Lack of Contact with Parents/Carers:

If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start child missing in education procedures. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and home visits.

Punctuality:

- **The school day begins at 8:45am and all pupils are expected to be in school at this time**

- Pupils arriving after 8.55am must go through the office entrance and sign in using the e-signing tablet. Morning registration is at 8:55am and it closes at 9:20am. Any child who arrives between 8.55am and 9.20am will receive an L code in the register
- All lateness is recorded daily
- Arrival after the close of registration at 9.20am will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded U in-line with East Sussex County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an unauthorised absence
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence for that session, coded M. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments should be made outside of school hours or during school holidays

Parents/carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting at the school to discuss the problem and offer any support as needed. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or East Sussex County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with East Sussex County Council's Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools

If attendance due to unauthorised lates falls below 85% we can refer to ESBAS (Education, Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service).

Attendance:

We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education.

The following action is taken with support of ESBAS when a pupil's attendance becomes a concern. If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as persistent absentees:-

Attendance between 95-90% - Attendance Alert Letter – attendance target set

Attendance below 90% - informal attendance meeting – attendance target set

Should the attendance fall below 85% and there are 10 or more unauthorised absences in a ten week period a referral to ESBAS may be made who will monitor the attendance formally and further unauthorised absence may be subject to legal action.

A Penalty warning letter may be issued if there are 10 unauthorised session over a period of 10 school weeks. Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid East Sussex County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

If you wish to take your child out of school for any reason you must complete a withdrawal from learning form stating the dates and your reasons. It is down to the Executive Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and if it is for a holiday it is very unlikely to be approved.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in East County Council's Code of conduct, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling:

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must complete the withdrawal from learning form and contact the Executive Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Executive Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport:

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Executive Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Executive Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

KEY SCHOOL PERSONNEL

- Jon Goulding – Executive Headteacher
- Melinda Heasman – Attendance Officer
- Cath Adams – Inclusion Manager
- Sarah Coates – Pastoral DDSL
- Natalia Squires – Welfare DDSL
- Class Teachers