

# **Grayshott C of E Primary School**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Non-Statutory Policy**

**November 2018**



### **Review date:**

Autumn 2021 (thereafter 3 yearly)

## **Purpose of the policy**

The governors and staff at Grayshott Primary School seek to provide a welcoming environment for all pupils. Staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

## **Promoting good attendance and punctuality**

The school will establish an effective system of incentives and rewards to acknowledge the efforts of pupils in maintaining their attendance and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who do not prioritise attendance and punctuality.

The school will promote good attendance and punctuality through the school newsletter, the home school agreement and provide an exciting curriculum so children will want to be at school.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

- Parents are responsible for sending their children to school and for instilling the importance of punctuality.
- Teachers are responsible for the accurate recording of attendance through registers.
- Administrative staff are responsible for managing attendance through the SIMS system, generating termly attendance letters and providing monitoring reports for the headteacher as requested.
- The headteacher is responsible for monitoring attendance on a regular basis and for taking action to ensure the good attendance for every child. The headteacher is also responsible for the management of the issuing of penalty notices.
- Governors will receive reports from the headteacher about attendance through the headteacher's report.

## **Recording attendance**

### **Coding**

B	educated offsite
C	other authorised circumstances
D	duel registration
E	excluded
G	family holiday not agreed
H	family holiday agreed
I	illness
J	interview
L	<i>late – after 9am</i>
M	medical
N	non reason yet provided for absence
O	unauthorised absence
P	approved sporting activity
R	religious observance
S	study leave
T	traveller absence
U	late after registers closed
V	educational visit
W	work experience
Y	unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Parents will receive a letter each term with a record of their child's attendance.

### Parental concerns about attendance

If parents are having difficulties with getting children into school, they are advised to contact the school immediately for support. The school will investigate the child's well-being at school to ensure that there is nothing during the school day which is causing unnecessary anxiety. Other strategies can be discussed to support the parents and the child.

### Punctuality

*Children may come in to class from 8.45am. Registers are taken at 8:55am when classroom doors are closed. Children arriving after 8.55am need to be signed in at the office by a parent. This will be recorded as late (L). Children arriving after 9:20 will be recorded as unauthorised (U) unless the reason for lateness is authorised by the headteacher.*

Lateness will be monitored by the headteacher and parents will be contacted if there are concerns. More often than not children want to be in school on time so find arriving late in classroom unsettling and embarrassing. It is also disruptive for the other children.

### Reporting a child's absence

Parents are requested to leave a message on the school answerphone if their child is unwell. Medical appointments, where possible, should be made outside school hours. The school has the right to request proof of appointments.

If the school has not heard a reason for absence by 10am, the family will be contacted by a member of the administrative team. *The office will continue to try and contact the family throughout the day and following days until the **fourth day of absence**.* After this point the school will begin *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquires to known friends and wider family.

### After ten days absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have at least three up-to-date contact numbers.

### Requests for leave of absence

All requests for leave must be made in writing using the form which is located in the office. This form also serves as a penalty notice warning which can be found on the back of the form. Holidays may not be taken during term time unless the circumstances are exceptional and authorised by the headteacher.

### Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

#### Authorised:

If a pupil is absent, the absence must only be recorded as authorised if:

- the pupil has been granted leave of absence, ie the absence has been approved beforehand by the school, or
- the pupil is unable to attend:
  - either because of sickness or some other unavoidable cause, or
  - on a day that the pupil's parents/carers' religion sets aside for religious observance

### Unauthorised:

- If family holiday is taken without permission – this will generate an automatic penalty notice.
- If a child is absent from school and no reason is given.
- If a child is absent from school and the reason has not been approved by the headteacher.

### Penalty notices

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

### Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

- 1 The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance
- 2 The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- prosecution.

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from [www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties).

### Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Hampshire's *Code of conduct*

The *Code of conduct* states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes *G*, *U* or *O* on the register)
- **persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed \***
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

\*Local procedure – late for 10 mornings.

### **Legal measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parents/ carers' request for leave of absence**

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- 1 non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
- 2 a holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence (coded *G*) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued.

**If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded *O* and *U*) and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:**

- 1 10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or 10 lates which have not been authorised in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period**
- 2 one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

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 Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

**Please note:** If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: [www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties).

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

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the 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 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.

### **Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families**

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

*For further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families see Hampshire County Council guidance at: <http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>.*

*Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire County Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).*

### **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 headteacher's discretion 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 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.

### **Record preservation**

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies *(if schools are not SIMS centrally hosted and do not have secure electronic server back-up they must print hard copies of the official registers and bind into annual volumes)*.

## **Appendices**

## **The law**

The Education Act 1996, Part I, Section 7 states:

*“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:*

*a) to his age, ability and aptitude and*

*b) to any special needs he may have*

*either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”*

For educational purposes the term *parent* is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI, Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

## **Register and admission roll keeping**

The legal requirements are found in: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

## **Guidance documents on attendance**

The following Department for Education documents are used to guide attendance recording:

- *Absence and attendance codes* (guidance for schools and local authorities)
- *Keeping pupil registers* (guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations).

These and other guidance documents are available on the Department for Education website.

Hampshire County Council guidance is available on Hantsweb at:

[www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools).