

The Grange School

Attendance Policy

May 2019

To review *May* 2020 or sooner if required

ATTENDANCE POLICY

MISSION STATEMENT

The Grange School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not itself authorise an absence.

Only if the school is satisfied to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised (see below).

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving attendance at The Grange School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community, including pupils, parents, governors and staff. The school aims to have attendance levels at 96% and above.

PUPILS

All pupils are expected to attend school and all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Pupils who experience attendance difficulties will be offered prompt and sympathetic support, initially from their class teacher and the Attendance Manager.

What is an acceptable attendance rate?

We expect 96% attendance from all our pupils as a minimum. Sickness comes usually in a block of time over a continuous period; what we look for are unbroken weeks (i.e. those where a pupil is marked present on all ten sessions); pupils should NOT have more than one or two broken weeks in the course of an academic year. Regular broken weeks are a cause for concern and will be followed up by the school.

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PARENTS

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible either in writing, which is preferred, or by telephone call. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parents.

The following figures may be of interest to you when looking at your child's attendance

98-100% = Excellent

96-97% = Good Attendance

90-95% = Below Average Attendance

Below 90% = A Cause for Concern

Below 85% = May Result In Legal Action

Parents whose first language is not English, or who have literacy difficulties, will be offered appropriate support from the school in matters of communication.

SCHOOL

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and, liaising closely with parents, will promptly investigate all absenteeism. Staff will respond to all absenteeism firmly and consistently. There is a daily review of attendance. The ELSA supports children for whom attendance may be a barrier to learning; identifying and supporting the child to overcome issues.

A Designated Safeguarding Lead, a Pupil Premium Lead and the ELSA will meet regularly (at least once per term) with the Attendance Manager to review the attendance of all children. It is the duty of the Attendance Manager to alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead to any child without previous concerns, for whom poor attendance may now be the first indicator of a cause for concern.

Where there are indicators of poor attendance, the school will then support parents to improve the situation immediately. This will usually be as a result of the regular meetings between the Attendance Manager and the DSL, or as a result of any specific concerns raised at any other time.

When attendance falls below 96% - An initial letter will be sent to parents, alerting them to the fact that attendance has fallen below 96%. The school will offer any support necessary to help improve attendance. A Parenting Contract may be invoked at this stage.

When attendance falls below 90% - A letter will be sent to parents, alerting them to the fact that attendance has fallen below 90%. An initial conversation will take place between the school and the parent, ensuring that the parent is fully aware of the situation and the possible consequences of poor attendance. The school will support the parent to improve the child's attendance. A Parenting Contract may be invoked at this stage.

When attendance remains persistently below 90% - A letter will be sent to parents, arranging a face to face meeting and parents will be supported by the school in order to improve the child's attendance. A Parenting Contract will be invoked at this stage, unless there are exceptional reasons for absence.

When attendance falls below 85% - Parents will be invited to a face to face meeting with the Attendance Manager and a DSL, where a Parenting Contract will be invoked and support will be put into place to ensure an improvement in attendance. The Education Inclusion & Partnership Team may be used to support families.

When attendance remains persistently below 85% - It may be necessary to involve the Education Inclusion and Partnership Team and legal proceedings may ensue.

Each year the school is required to publish attendance data showing comparisons with national figures. This data will be published on the school website and is always available upon request. In addition, this report will also include the total number of school days lost to term-time holidays.

A record of a child's absences will be reported to the parents during both parents' evenings and as part of the annual report.

REGISTRATION

- Registers will be called promptly at 8.50am and at 1.15pm and will be marked in pen on the pupil registration form.
- Registers will close at 9.00am and at 1.20pm. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as absent. Pupils who arrive after the registers close should report to the main office with a parent and be signed in the school late book by the office staff who will issue a late slip to give to the class teacher. If a pupil is consistently late the year leader will contact the parents.
- Children who leave school during the day, for example because of illness or medical appointments will need to sign out and back in at the school office.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

There are clear guidelines about which type of absence can/cannot be authorised. The responsibility for authorising absence rests with the school.
Some examples:

Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Emergency medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances such as bereavement/serious illness
- Music/dance exams and special performances

On returning to school after absence, a child should bring a note from parents explaining the absence as well as telephoning on every day of absence.

Absence from school will not be authorised for:

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Minding the house
- Caring for relatives
- Holidays during Term Time
- Pop concerts
- Watching sports matches

- A day out

Please be aware that as a local authority school we adhere to Northamptonshire County Council's policies on absence management.

Government guidelines prevent headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday or celebration during term time does not fall into the category of "exceptional circumstances".

The criteria for issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised term time absence is 10 sessions (equivalent to 5 school days in a 6 week period)

Unauthorised absences are referred to the Educational Inclusion and Partnership Team for consideration of further action. The outcome could be a Penalty Notice, payable directly to the Local Authority. The Penalty Notice is £120 per parent/adult for each student to be paid within 28 days, decreasing to £60 if paid within 21 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority may instigate legal proceedings under section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £1000.

Please note that these fines are imposed by Northamptonshire County Council and income does not benefit the school.

We recognise that the majority of parents do not take family holidays in term time as they recognise the significant impact this can have on their child's education. We support the government's stance on trying to reduce the amount of school missed due to holidays and we hope that you will continue to support us by not planning a leave of absence during term time.