

# Attendance policy

Green Park School



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### 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

### 3. Roles and responsibilities

#### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the head teacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### **3.2 The head teacher**

The head teacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Communicating the vision, values and ethos for attendance
- Creating a culture of connectedness across the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues and put support in place where needed
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary via the local authority

### **3.3 The attendance officer**

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the head teacher
- Advises the head teacher about which families to contact around attendance concerns

### **3.4 Class teachers**

Class teachers should create a warm, nurturing environment where children feel they belong. Positive relationships are at the heart of our attendance policy and class teachers create a sense of connectedness in their classrooms.

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, ensuring the register is completed correctly, and submitting this information to the school office. Class teachers will discuss absence with parents at each parents evening and make parents aware of the number of days off if this is becoming a concern. Teachers should understand the barriers a child may be facing. They will offer support using the school's stepped approach if this is necessary.

### **3.5 School office staff**

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They also monitor Study Bugs and parents messages. Should any concerns around absence be noted, they will report this to the head teacher (e.g. if the child is anxious)

### **3.6 Parents**

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children attend school. Children must receive a full time education between the school term after their fifth birthday and the last Friday in June in the school year they turn 16 (Y11). If a child fails to attend school regularly parents may be guilty of a criminal offence and this could result in a prosecution.

Parents should inform the class teacher or head teacher if there are problems with their child attending or if issues arise so that early intervention can be put in place.

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register using SIMS.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day (8.45am) and once during the second session (12.55pm). On SIMS we will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. **Registers close at 8.50am.**

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.55pm and will be kept open until 1.00pm.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents can report on the absence line, by email, via Study Bugs or via the Facebook messenger if they wish.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

**If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.** We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Reporting absences should be by phone or email or in person.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents should make all efforts to ensure the child returns to school after the appointment.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### 4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If children are regularly late, this will be recorded as a concern on CPOMs and parents contacted by phone to discuss any issues. If lateness persists, this will be followed up by letter and a meeting arranged. Should no improvement be seen, the school attendance team at the LA will be contacted for further advice.

#### 4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by calling the parent/carer. If there is no answer, school staff will carry out a home visit to check the child is safe and find out why they are absent (if they have stopped attending)
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents in the annual report. Termly parents meetings are also used to discuss attendance issues.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

**The head teacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.** A leave of absence is granted at the head teacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as events that are out of a family's control – one off events that are unavoidable. These should be 'rare, significant and short' (NAHT definition)

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- Time away from school for children who have experienced trauma or SEND pupils who need family support for holidays etc.

- A family funeral or wedding or when a member of the family is extremely poorly and family need to attend

## 5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where pupils are absent on a regular basis (for reasons OTHER than unauthorised holidays), parents will be contacted directly:

- We will follow our 'attendance stepped approach'
- Parents will be contacted to explore what the issues are and try to resolve them with support (e.g. for EBSA – emotionally based school avoidance, continual medical issues etc.)
- They will receive an awareness letter highlighting the absences and their regularity (number of days)
- If attendance is improved a letter will be sent to highlight the improvement or a message via Study Bugs
- If no improvement, a meeting will be called to discuss issues and if any further support can be offered
- If the absences persist then a formal meeting will be called to explain expectations and what will happen if absences continue. Attendance support plan put in place
- LA attendance officer will be contacted to look at fining parents if the problem persists and this is appropriate

## 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a head teacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year (10 unauthorised sessions or 5 days over 12 school weeks)
- Previous years' attendance – is there a pattern of absence?
- Continual lateness – 10 unauthorised sessions or 5 days over 12 school weeks
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission (see 5.4). **This can be for any unauthorised holiday of 5 days or more**
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 5.4 Unauthorised holidays taken in term time

Schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school in term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances". If parents take a holiday which is not authorised by the school then we may refer the matter to the Local Authority who will consider the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice. Overall attendance is not relevant in these cases and we do not have to issue a warning.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) are issued to each parent and are for each child. A FPN is £60 if paid within 21 days, and £120 if paid between 22 and 28 days. If the fine is not paid, parents will be prosecuted in the magistrates' court.

If a FPN is issued, it will be one fine to cover the whole period of the absence. So the fine would be the same amount for an absence of five days or 10 days. [Please refer to the frequently asked questions for further information](#) and the [FPN alternative sanctions](#).

[https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/information-parents/school-attendance#:~:text=Fixed%20Penalty%20Notices%20\(FPN\)%20are,whole%20period%20of%20the%20absence.](https://www.milton-keynes.gov.uk/schools-and-lifelong-learning/information-parents/school-attendance#:~:text=Fixed%20Penalty%20Notices%20(FPN)%20are,whole%20period%20of%20the%20absence.)

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Green Park School, we promote attendance by:

1. Offering a clear vision for attendance, underpinned by high expectations and core values, which are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and families.
2. Making sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children safe.
3. Expecting good attendance and punctuality from all members of the school community and making sure that pupils understand its importance.
4. Conveying clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes.
5. Empowering all staff to take responsibility for attendance and to understand barriers to attendance.
6. Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.
7. Making sure there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
8. Liaising with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, for example, where a young person has a social worker or is otherwise vulnerable.
9. Modelling respectful relationships and appropriate communication for staff and pupils. This will help relationships between pupils and staff to reflect a positive and respectful culture. All staff members should:
  - treat pupils with dignity, build relationships rooted in mutual respect and observe proper boundaries
  - take into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
  - understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity
  - communicate effectively with families regarding pupils' attendance and well-being

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073619/Summary\\_table\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_for\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073619/Summary_table_of_responsibilities_for_school_attendance.pdf)

(DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance Sept 2022)

## 7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer/head teacher at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning (or via other allowable means) if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). We will contact parents regularly throughout the absence to check how the child is.

If a pupil's absence goes above 5 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this and to offer support.

If we think absence may be an indicator of a safeguarding issue, we will contact MASH for advice.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education attendance officer from the local authority. See stepped approach.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual **overall** absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Green Park School collects and stores attendance data to use for internal purposes:

- to track the attendance of individual pupils
- to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- to identify if absences are impacting on progress/attainment/well-being
- to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support
- to evaluate if families need support at home
- to evaluate if there may be a safeguarding concern

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the head teacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy



## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Not attending in circumstances relating to coronavirus (COVID-19) (This code is not counted as an absence in the school census) This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school

#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day
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