

Attendance @ The GROVE



1 Introduction

1.1 We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

1.2 Under the *Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995* the governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate the reason for an absence and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian, for example if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.

Therefore the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. This includes children who arrive after 9.15 am, when registers are closed. These absences will affect the child's overall attendance record which is monitored by the Education Welfare Service and remains on their school file.

2.3 Lateness

School starts at 8.55am. At this time children must be in their classroom, ready for registration. Children may enter their classrooms, via the outside classroom doors, from 8.45am. Doors close at 9.05 and a member of SLT will be on duty at the Community Door until 9.10.

It is important to be on time as the start of the school day is used for early morning learning as well as to give out instructions or organise school work for the rest of the day. If a child misses this short but vital session, their learning for the whole day may be affected. Late arrivals are disruptive to the whole class and often embarrassing for the child. We take the view there are no late children, only late parents.

Parents who arrive after 8.55, when the gates and classroom doors are closed, must bring their child to the Community Door where a member of SLT will be monitoring late arrivals. Parents must sign their child's name in the late book, giving a reason for the lateness. The child will be marked as 'L' (late) in the register. Parents may be invited to make an appointment with a member of SLT to discuss concerns

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regarding lateness in more detail.

Children who arrive **after** 9.15 am must be brought into school by their accompanying parent via the school office. Parents must sign their child's name in the late book, giving a valid reason for the lateness. Lateness after 9.15am will be marked as 'U' (unauthorised absence) and will count towards the child's overall attendance record.

The late book is monitored weekly by the Headteacher and Family Support Worker and in the case of repeated lateness (3 or more times in one week or a regular pattern of late arrivals over a half term), the FSW will phone parents will be asked to attend a meeting to discuss the reasons for this and to find a way forward, where needed.

3 What happens when a child is absent

3.1 When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, using an N. At 9.15 am each morning, office staff will check the class registers and begin contacting parents/carers of any child who is absent but whose absence has not been reported by that parent/carer. A text message will be sent by 9.45 each morning. The office will update the codes in the register in all cases

3.2 On the first day of a child's absence, parents are asked to contact the office to give the reason for the absence and to contact the office as early as possible on each subsequent day of absence.

3.3 If a child has a medical or other necessary appointment, parents should contact the office prior to the day of absence. If a child is absent due to illness for longer than 3 school days medical evidence may be requested.

3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The office staff will then be in contact as soon as possible with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child. If no contact is made with the parent/carer and there are concerns about the child's well-being, a home visit may take place or contact made with outside agencies.

4 Requests for exceptional leave of absence

4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we understand that there are circumstances where a parent may request leave of absence for a special reason. The 'Exceptional Leave Request Form' is available on the website or from the school office. The form should be completed by the parent and returned to the school office at least one week before the first day of requested absence. This does not guarantee that the absence will be granted however.

4.2 Requests for exceptional leave will always be looked at on an individual basis and a decision will be made based on whether it is considered to be exceptional and therefore whether or not it will be authorised. Taking additional leave than that which has been agreed will be marked as unauthorised and a Penalty Notice is likely to be issued. There is also a risk of the child being taken off the school roll.

4.3 If the school does not agree to the exceptional leave request and a child is still taken out of school, the absence will be unauthorised and will affect the child's overall attendance record. This absence will then be referred to the Education Welfare Officer and it may result in a Penalty Notice being issued. *The more time a child misses from school, the more difficult it is for them to catch up with their work. Valuable learning time is lost. A **good** understanding of the work can only take place when the pupil is in*

the classroom.

5 Repeated unauthorised absences

5.1 The school has adopted the three letter system, as recommended by Cambridgeshire County Council, but has adapted it to promote a strong partnership between parents and school as they believe this is a positive way to improve attendance.

Monthly, the Headteacher and the Family Support Worker will review the current attendance rates for the school and discuss any children whose attendance is below 95%. They will pay particular attention to those children whose attendance is below 90% (defined by the Government as Persistent Absenteeism.) Individual attendance reports will be reviewed to see if there has been a particular reason for the low attendance, e.g. chicken pox for a number of days, or whether the absences are sporadic or have a particular pattern.

Where there are concerns, the Family Support Worker will contact parents/carers to discuss their child's attendance. This may be a phonecall or face to face if preferred. The aim of this call is to highlight the school's concerns, to discuss any issues that arise and offer support and will be followed up in writing. The Family Support worker will monitor the child's attendance weekly for the next month to see an improvement. Contact will be maintained with the parents. This replaces Letter 1.

If the child's attendance does not improve then a phonecall, followed **Letter 2** is sent to the parents/carers asking them to meet with a member of the school attendance team to discuss the absence and identify any possible solutions. A target of 95% attendance over the following 6 weeks will be set and medical evidence will be required for any further absences. It also informs the parents/carers of the action which could be taken by the Local Authority if attendance does not improve. Enclosed with this letter are the Education Welfare 'School Attendance' Leaflet and a copy of the child's attendance record. This letter is recorded on the **record of letters sent** report. The school's Family Support Worker will monitor the child's attendance weekly and keep in touch with parents during the six week period.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance after 6 weeks and no satisfactory explanation for the absences, parents/carers are informed by a phonecall and then **Letter 3** that involvement of the EWO will be requested, who will arrange a meeting with them and a Penalty Notice or legal proceedings may be incurred.

5.2 In addition to the 3 letters, parents will be informed by teachers if their child's attendance is below 90% when they meet at Parent/Carers' Evenings and a discussion undertaken around how attendance could be improved.

5.3 Children with poor attendance may be invited to take part in a reward programme. Parents will be informed by phone if their child is going to take part in the programme.

5.4 The Headteacher has regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and school attendance officer and will involve the EWO to deal with repeated unauthorised absence, as well as low attendance rates.

6 Attendance monitoring

6.1 The Grove Primary monitors attendance carefully and considers the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting their own priorities for the coming year.

6.2 The Family Liaison Officer, Headteacher, Assistant Headteacher and attendance officer monitor the attendance of children whose attendance is falling below the 95% threshold due to unauthorised absences or a pattern of regular authorised absences and implement strategies to enable attendance to improve.

6.3 Through phonecalls, letters, the school website and consultation evenings, parents/carers are reminded about their responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly and the consequences of poor attendance.

6.4 Parents will be encouraged to understand the full implications for both their children's academic progress and their social groupings when they miss school.

6.5 Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for bringing any concerns to the attention of the Headteacher or Family Support Worker. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately.

6.6 The EWO monitors attendance regularly and meetings are arranged/letters sent home as appropriate to encourage good attendance and remind parents/carers of the effects of low attendance.

7 Reviewing attendance

7.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance. The Governing Body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that the school attendance figures are as high as they should be. The responsibility to authorise requests for absence has been delegated to the headteacher. Letters will be sent to all parents who request absence and the seriousness of unauthorised absence will be clearly explained.

7.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records.

7.3 A termly attendance report for governors and SLT will be compiled by the Headteacher. This will include numbers of and reasons for authorised and unauthorised absences; attendance figures for year groups and key groups with analysis of those figures and actions/review of actions for improving attendance in subsequent terms.

8 Celebrating good attendance

8.1 At The Grove we appreciate the commitment that the majority of parents have towards ensuring that their children attend school regularly and we celebrate good attendance in a number of ways.

8.2 The class achieving the highest attendance over a week have The Grove Owl in their room for a week and have a milkshake as a reward. (Milkshake Monday). This will be celebrated in Monday's whole school assembly.

8.3 Attendance will be celebrated, and reported upon, in the Headteacher's weekly newsletter.

8.4 All classes will have their attendance figure for the week noted in the weekly newsletter.

Code	Description	Code	Description
C	Other authorised circumstances	O	Unauthorised absence
E	Excluded	P	Approved sporting activity
I	Illness	R	Religious observance
L	Late (before registers closed)	V	Educational visit or trip
M	Medical/dental appointment	X	(Non-compulsory school age absence) Sept 2020 onwards – this indicates that a child is self isolating.
N	No reason yet provided for absence		