

Attendance @ The GROVE



2022-2025

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 9.15.

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

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 Liaison Officer (FLO) 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 FLO will contact parents 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 already been reported. Calls to parents/carers will be made by 10.15am. 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 a child is absent on 3 consecutive days without school having any contact with a parent or named contact, a home visit will be carried out by members of the attendance team. A safeguarding referral may be made if there is no response at the family home. Similarly, 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 available 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 FLO 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 FLO will contact parents/carers to discuss their child's attendance. This may be a phone call 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 FLO 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 **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 and a parent contract is drawn up. A target of 95% attendance over the following 8 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 FLO will monitor the child's attendance weekly and keep in touch with parents during the eight-week period.

If there is no significant improvement in attendance (at least 8 unauthorised absences over the 8-week monitoring period) and no satisfactory explanation for the absences, parents/carers are informed by a phone call and then **Letter 3**, that a referral for a Penalty Notice will be made.

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 Local Authority Attendance Officer and school attendance officer to discuss whole school attendance, as well as individual cases of persistent absence.

6 Young Carers

6.1 The school understands the difficulties that face young carers, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity. A caring and flexible approach will be taken to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate. The school, in conjunction with relevant authorities, will implement support for pupils who are young carers, to encourage their sustained and regular attendance at school in line with the school's expectations.

7 SEND

7.1 Attendance of pupils with SEND should be in line with that of all pupils.

7.2 Authorised reasons for non-attendance of children with SEND include the following:

- Medical appointment with own GP
- Medical appointment with specialist, either locally or out of town
- Ill health
- Child too tired through ill health to attend

7.3 Reasonable adjustments that can be made to avoid absence for children with SEND, which will be discussed with parents on a case by case basis, include the following:

- Making appointments with own GP before/after school
- Making appointments with specialist before/after school
- Bringing child to school before/after any appointments to limit non-attendance
- Bringing the child to school even if the child or parent is very tired

7.4 If attendance becomes or is likely to become an issue for a child with SEND, due to their specific needs, a meeting between parents and Assistant Head/SENCo will be held to formulate a suitable support plan. This plan will be reviewed on a termly basis or sooner if appropriate.

8 Children with additional health needs

8.1 Children who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs may include those with:

- Physical health issues.
- Physical injuries.
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues.
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal.
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

8.2 The LA must arrange suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would not receive suitable education without such provision. The school has a duty to support the LA in doing so.

The LA should:

- Provide such education as soon as it is clear that a pupil will be away from school for 15 days or more, whether consecutively or cumulatively. They should liaise with the appropriate medical professionals to ensure minimal delay in arranging appropriate provision for the pupil.
- Ensure the education pupils receive is of good quality, allows them to take appropriate qualifications, prevents them from falling behind their peers in school, and allows them to reintegrate successfully back into school as soon as possible.
- Address the needs of individual pupils in arranging provision.
- Have a named officer responsible for the education of pupils with additional health needs and ensure

parents know who this is.

- Have a written, publicly accessible policy statement on their arrangements to comply with their legal duty towards children with additional health needs.
- Review the provision offered regularly to ensure that it continues to be appropriate for each pupil and that it provides suitable education.
- Give clear policies on the provision of education for children and young people under and over compulsory school age.

The LA should not:

- Have processes or policies in place which prevent a child from getting the right type of provision and a good education.
- Withhold or reduce the provision, or type of provision, for a child because of how much it will cost.
- Have policies based upon the percentage of time a pupil is able to attend school rather than whether the pupil is receiving a suitable education during that attendance.
- Have lists of health conditions which dictate whether or not they will arrange education for children or inflexible policies which result in children going without suitable full-time education (or as much education as their health condition allows them to participate in).

8.3 The governing body is responsible for:

- Ensuring arrangements for pupils who cannot attend school as a result of their medical needs are in place and are effectively implemented.
- Ensuring the termly review of the arrangements made for pupils who cannot attend school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in the arrangements to support the needs of pupils are clear and understood by all.
- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents, for both on- and off-site activities.
- Ensuring staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with additional health needs are appropriately trained.
- Approving and reviewing this policy on an annual basis.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Working with the governing board to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting pupils with additional health needs.
- Working collaboratively with parents and other professionals to develop arrangements to meet the best interests of pupils.
- Ensuring the arrangements put in place to meet pupils' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing a named member of staff who is responsible for pupils with additional health needs and liaises with parents, pupils, the LA, key workers and others involved in the pupil's care.
- Ensuring the support put in place focusses on and meets the needs of individual pupils.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting pupils with additional health needs.
- Providing teachers who support pupils with additional health needs with suitable information relating to a pupil's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the pupil.
- Providing annual reports to the governing board on the effectiveness of the arrangements in place to meet the health needs of pupils.
- Notifying the LA when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs.

The named member of staff is responsible for:

- Dealing with pupils who are unable to attend school because of their health needs.
- Actively monitoring pupil progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying pupils' education providers with information about pupils' capabilities, progress and

outcomes.

- Liaising with the headteacher, education providers and parents to determine pupils' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school.
- Keeping pupils informed about school events and encouraging communication with their peers.
- Providing a link between pupils and their parents, and the LA.

Teachers and support staff are responsible for:

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of pupils' health needs.
- Designing lessons and activities in a way that allows those with additional health needs to participate fully and ensuring pupils are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason.
- Understanding their role in supporting pupils with additional health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their pupils through the appropriate and lawful sharing of individual pupils' health needs.
- Ensuring they are aware of the signs, symptoms and triggers of common life-threatening medical conditions and know what to do in an emergency.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school.

Parents are expected to:

- Ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
Notify the school of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.
- Attend meetings to discuss how support for their child should be planned.

8.3 The school will provide support to pupils who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days by liaising with the pupil's parents to arrange schoolwork, as soon as the pupil is able to cope with it, or part-time education at school. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the pupil, their parents and relevant members of staff.

8.4 For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the named member of staff with responsibility for pupils with additional health needs will notify the LA, who will take responsibility for the pupil and their education.

8.5 Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the pupil's absence.

8.6 For hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA regarding the programme that should be followed while the pupil is in hospital. The LA will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the pupil which will allow the school, the LA and the provider of the pupil's education to work together.

8.7 The school will monitor pupil attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a pupil is, or should be, receiving education other than at school.

8.8 The school will only remove a pupil who is unable to attend school because of additional health needs from the school roll where:

- The pupil has been certified by the school's medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school; and
- Neither the pupil nor their parent has indicated to the school the intention to continue to attend the school.

A pupil unable to attend school because of their health needs will not be removed from the school

register without parental consent and certification from the school's medical officer, even if the LA has become responsible for the pupil's education.

8.9 Where a pupil has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the pupil's needs and how these may be best met with the LA, relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the pupil.

8.10 The LA expects the school to support pupils with additional health needs to attend full-time education wherever possible, or for the school to make reasonable adjustments to pupils' programmes of study where medical evidence supports the need for those adjustments. The school will make reasonable adjustments under pupils' ASPs, in accordance with the Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy.

8.11 Pupils admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned. During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the pupil's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

8.12 Whilst a pupil is away from school, the school will work with the LA to ensure the pupil can successfully remain in touch with their school using the following methods:

- School newsletters
- Emails
- Invitations to school events
- Cards or letters from peers and staff

8.13 Where appropriate, the school will provide the pupil's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources.

8.14 To help ensure a pupil with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the named staff member
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to the curriculum from home
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms
- Places to rest at school
- Special assessment arrangements to manage anxiety or fatigue

8.15 When a pupil is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan in collaboration with the LA.

8.16 If appropriate, the school nursing team will be involved in the development of the pupil's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the pupil.

8.17 The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the pupil.

8.18 The school is aware that some pupils will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the pupil, their parents and key staff about concerns, medical issues, timing and the preferred pace of return.

The reintegration plan will include:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known.

- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration.
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the pupil.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow-up procedures.

8.19 The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage pupils and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period.

8.20 Following reintegration, the school will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil regarding the effectiveness of the process.

8.21 Once a pupil's return date has been confirmed, staff will be provided with relevant training one week before the pupil's anticipated return. Healthcare professionals should be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required. Parents of pupils with additional health needs may provide specific advice but will not be the sole trainer of staff.

9 Child Missing from Education

9.1 See attached: Cambridgeshire County Council Children Missing from Education Policy

10 Attendance monitoring

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

10.2 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.

10.3 Through phone calls, 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.

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

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

11 Reviewing attendance

11.1 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.

11.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records.

11.3 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.

12 Celebrating good attendance

12.1 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.

12.2 The class achieving the highest attendance over a week have The Grove Owl in their room for a week.

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

12.4 Children who achieve of 95%+, 98%+ 99% and 100% attendance over the term will receive a certificate.

13 Register Codes

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		

14 Monitoring and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years by the governing body and the headteacher.

Signed on behalf of the Governing body:

Head teacher
Miss Ellie Shaw

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February 2022

Chair of Governors
Mr Gordon Deane

Assistant Head (Inclusion)
Mrs Kathryn Hardy

Date: February 2022

Date plan to be reviewed: February 2025