

Attendance & Punctuality Policy (including Family Holidays)

Philosophy

Greensted Infant School and Nursery is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils. Our attendance target for 2016/7 is 95%. Any pupil with attendance below this figure is regarded as having poor attendance. We expect children to be on time every day.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in our partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

Definitions

Authorised Absence:

By authorising a pupils' absence the School is condoning it and saying they agree it is a good reason for that child to be absent.

Unauthorised Absence:

By not authorising the absence, the School is saying that either a reason has not been provided, or the reason provided is not acceptable.

Principles & Strategies

Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive informal in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 10 minutes of the start of the session.

Any child coming into School after 9.00am is recorded as 'Late' in the register, and the parent signs the Late Book in the School foyer.

Registers close at 9.30am. Any child who comes to School after 9.30am is recorded as 'Late' in the Late Book in the School foyer, and is recorded as 'Late after the Register Closes' for that session in the register.

Encourage parents/carers to contact staff early on the first day of absence.

Display attendance rates around the school and reward good and improved attendance of all pupils.

Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.

Consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent he/she will be missed.

Evaluate regularly attendance procedures by senior managers and the school governors.

Termly newsletters to parents and pupils include attendance related issues.

Work with the Investigating Officer – this is now limited as the Missing Education & Child Employment Service (MECES) is now operating as a traded service which schools have to buy into.

First Day Calling & Call Back. For identified families, ring back at 11.30am to see if child is any better & can come back for the afternoon session.

Social Care is alerted on the morning of the absence of identified children on the child protection register.

The Headteacher highlights the importance of regular attendance at Parent Meetings for prospective parents of Reception and Nursery children. The Investigating Officer attends these assemblies where-ever possible.

The School has a 'late' book which has to be signed by the parent if a child is late into School or late being picked up. A reason for the lateness must be given. The late book is then monitored, and letters sent to parents if a pattern emerges.

Monitoring of attendance – identification of children 90% or less and action taken.

Pupils highlighted for poorer attendance are tracked on a 3 weekly basis to look for improvement / further difficulties.

In house School Attendance Meetings led by Headteacher for families who are causing concern, which set short term aims that are regularly reviewed. If there is no improvement, the case is referred to the Investigating Officer.

Where children with poor attendance are on the SEN register, the SENCo may also meet with the family to talk through the additional support the child is accessing at School and highlight the importance of attendance if academic progress is to be made.

Teachers have the latest attendance figures for the year at Parents Evening appointments and highlight the importance of regular attendance to parents.

Attendance Assemblies – 'On Time Teddy' given to the class who have the highest punctuality percentage, Attendance Trophies given to the 2 classes with the highest attendance percentage for the previous week. Winning class rewarded with biscuits – if 100%, then chocolate biscuits are given.

Attendance statistics displayed on board in Hall, on parent noticeboards around the School grounds and on the school website.

'100% Certificates' and '95%+ Certificates' to children for each term and then for the whole year. The names of children receiving certificates are also highlighted in the newsletter.

Cartoon Club – children who have over 95% attendance over a half term period will be invited to a 'Cartoon Club' in school time, where they can watch a cartoon & have a snack. This will act as a reward and also an incentive to inspire good attendance.

In line with Government regulations (Sept 2013), no Leave of Absence requests will be authorised by the Headteacher unless the parent can independently prove 'exceptional circumstances' which are agreed by the Headteacher. Parents have no automatic right to have leave of absence authorised, and school are encouraged not to approve any absences.

Have procedures which allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

Procedure

If no contact is received from the parents/carers of an absent pupil on the first morning of absence will:

Contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unobtainable, after 3 days of unexplained absence, write a letter requesting information.

If the above actions do not elicit an explanation for the absence, a second letter will be sent. After three days of unexplained absence, the school Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be consulted.

If the absence continues the case will be further discussed with the Education Welfare Officer for the school and further action planned.

A formal referral will be made to the EWO, and formal intervention planned.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the system. In the event of a pupil returning after long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

In order for this policy to be successful, every member of the school staff, by their behaviour, must make attendance a priority and convey to the pupils the importance of their education.

Performance

The targets for improved attendance will be set when the policy is at the developmental stage. It is important to set realistic targets; these targets will be set in consultation with the school community. Have these targets been met, if not, why not? Percentages for attendance and punctuality are monitored weekly by the Clerical Assistant and the Headteacher.

Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful. Has the attendance of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved? Has the school ethos improved? Has the behaviour of pupils improved?

How successful have pupil reintegration plans been?

Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the local community?

How well informed are new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?

Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) lessons, or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

Are there any patterns of absence? For instance, is a child absent every Friday? Is a child regularly late on a Monday after the weekend?

It is essential to keep the policy alive. Consultation and communication are key factors; they are flesh and blood of the bare bones of the policy. The policy should grow with each evaluation procedure.

First day contact

First day contact is an integral part of the Whole School Attendance Policy. Research shows clearly that if pupils know that their absence will be noted and acted upon swiftly they are more reluctant to absent themselves. First day contact sends a clear message to pupils and parents that attendance is very important.

- The system must emphasise the responsibility of parents to inform the school of reasons for absence. Parents need to be aware of what is expected of them and challenged if they fail to inform the school of the reasons for absence, or if the reasons given for the absence are unacceptable.
- The procedure will be most effective if it is applied to every unexplained absence and gives a clear message that absences are not allowed for reasons other than those determined by the law.
- The procedure and the need for it are understood by all.
- The telephone is the preferred method of contact. Letters arrive too late and can be intercepted. Letters do not demand an instant response and quickly lose their effect.

First day contact works by:

- raising awareness of the importance of full attendance;
- addressing problems before they grow;
- improving home-school links;
- sending a clear message to parents and pupils that if a child is absent they will be missed;
- alerting parents who may be unaware that their child is not at school;
- requiring and promoting a high level of communication within the school; staff working as a team;
- reducing the number of pupils who have short-term absence, thereby reducing the overall absence rate;
- assisting parents and pupils to develop habits that reduce casual absence and encouraging early contact from parents.