

# Attendance policy

Greenfields Community Primary School and Nursery



**Approved by: Full Governing Body**

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- › Promoting good attendance
- › Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- › Ensuring every child has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- › Acting early to address patterns of absence
- › Building strong relationships with families to ensure child have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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 \(Child Registration\) \(England\) 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:

- › Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- › Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- › Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- › Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- › Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- › Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- › Implementation of this policy at the school
- › Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- › Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual child
- › Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- › Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- › Leading attendance across the school
- › Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- › Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- › Having an oversight of data analysis
- › Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- › Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- › Delivering targeted intervention and support to child and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Richard Minton and he can be contacted via [office@greenfieldscps.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@greenfieldscps.kent.sch.uk) or 01622758538

### 3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- › Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- › Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- › Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- › Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- › Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is Richard Minton and can be contacted via [office@greenfieldscps.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@greenfieldscps.kent.sch.uk) or 01622758538

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording the attendance of each child on a twice-daily basis and submitting this information by 8.55am and again at 1.05pm.

### 3.6 School office staff

School office staff will:

- › Take calls, collect answerphone messages, process School Gateway messages and access emails from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- › Commence the First-Day Calling process each day by 9.30am (see Appendix 2)
- › Notify parents promptly if medical evidence is required to authorise an illness absence
- › Collate and file medical evidence provided by parents and update school records accordingly
- › Record the arrival time and reasons for children who are late (see Appendix 1 for details)
- › Advise parents to refer to this policy and the associated documentation on the school website when considering their child's attendance and the likely consequences of an absence
- › Process and distribute letters to parents regarding their child's attendance status
- › Transfer calls from parents to the Senior Leadership team or Pastoral Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance
- › Work in collaboration with the Attendance office to ensure children's absences have been coded accurately

### 3.7 Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time and no later than 8.55am (8.45am for Nursery morning sessions)
- Call, message or email the school to report their child's absence before 8.55am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence) and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and ensure these are kept up to date
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- Provide medical evidence if requested for medical absences (see Appendix 3)
- Seek support proactively if barriers develop to maintaining their child's school attendance (see Appendix 4)
- Accept and act upon support provided by the school and other agencies (see Appendix 4)
- Do everything possible to ensure their child is attending school, including;
  - Make appropriate arrangements for their child to attend and be collected from school safely by an appropriate adult (minimum age of 16 years old) if they are unable to do this due to planned or unplanned events
  - Alternatively, book their child into our Extended Schools facility (breakfast or after school club) to ensure school attendance can be maintained
- Read and ensure they understand (seeking advice from school if they do not) this policy and any other materials or information that they are sent or signposted to, such as warning letters, meeting invitations and records or attendance contracts

### 3.8 Childs

Childs are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time
- Demonstrate our school values in maintaining Outstanding attendance through the year
- Support and encourage siblings and friends to maintain Outstanding attendance through the year

## 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all child onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. It will mark whether every child 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 also record:

- › Whether the absence is authorised or not
- › The nature of the activity if a child is attending an approved educational activity
- › The nature of circumstances where a child is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- › The information provided by parents to explain the child's absence

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

Childs must arrive in school by 8.55am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50am and will be kept open until 8.55am. Any children arriving after 8.55am will be recorded as Late; after 9.30am will be recorded as Late after the register (see Appendix 1) The register for the second session will be taken at 1.00pm and will be kept open until 1.05pm.

## 4.2 Unplanned absence

The child's parent or carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.55am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office, sending an informative message via School Gateway or an email to [office@greenfieldscps.kent.sch.uk](mailto:office@greenfieldscps.kent.sch.uk) (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Parents and carers will be notified in writing if medical evidence is to be requested for future illness absences.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the child's parent or carer to provide medical evidence (see Appendix 3). 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 or carers will be notified of this in advance in writing.

## 4.3 Planned absence

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

Planned absences due to a medical or dental appointment should be communicated to the school office by letter, phone call, School Gateway message or email. Parents or carers may be asked to provide proof of the appointment taking place.

However, we encourage parents or carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the child should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The child's parent or 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 child who arrives late:

- › Before the register has closed at 9.30am will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- › After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- › Children who are persistently late or who have a pattern of lateness, will be sent a warning letter stating how many minutes of school have been missed through lateness.
- › Families of children who are persistently or regularly late will be offered Pastoral support by the school to reduce the barriers to arriving on time.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence (see Appendix 2)**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- › A school comms message shall be sent to the first name on the contact list asking for a call to school to notify and confirm the reason for the child's absence.
- › If there is no response to the message by 10am, school will telephone the first name on the contact list.
- › If there is no response, school will ring each of the numbers on the contact list, until a reply is received.
- › At this point, the Safeguarding and Inclusion team will be contacted to explain the context of the absence
- › If we have had no response, we will send a second school comms and a home visit will be made if possible, by either school staff (Safeguarding and Inclusion team) or other agencies working with the family.
- › If no contact has been made in-person, via phone or School Gateway, the Safeguarding team will make a judgement as to whether other agencies should be engaged and if a house visit is appropriate.
- › Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- › Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained
- › We will call the parent or carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents and carers**

Parents or carers can request to know their child's current attendance figure via their class teacher or the school office at any point in the year.

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via phone calls, letters home and School Gateway messages. A more detailed explanation of their attendance figure is contained within their End of Year school report. Children maintaining the school's expectation of 100% or those with Outstanding attendance will be acknowledged on a regular basis.

Children will be made aware of their classes attendance regularly through Celebration Assembly and class-based discussion.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a child during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the child is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as those which are unavoidable, outside of the control of parents and carers or the child and for which no options exist for the child to attend school.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A child's current attendance level and attendance history is also considered. The school may also decide to consult with support services to ascertain whether authorisation is appropriate.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. The Headteacher is not obliged to authorise an absence. The decision to authorise or unauthorise a request will be communicated in writing.

Valid reasons for authorised absence **could** 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 child's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- › Traveller child 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 child is attending educational provision
- › Competitive sporting activity or Performance activity linked to a significant talent of the child is due to be absent. Parents and carers will be expected to make arrangements for any siblings not participating in the activity to attend school.
- › Compassionate leave to attend a Funeral ceremony for an immediate family member or a Wedding ceremony of an immediate family member.

All of the above reasons are not automatically authorised and requests are considered on an individual case basis.

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

As part of its duties, the school is expected to refer children with regular unauthorised absences or if an unauthorised term-time holiday has been taken. The 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 are issued by the 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

- › One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- › Where an excluded child 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.

The school does not benefit financially from any penalty notice and is not involved in the decision to issue.



## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Greenfields Community Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement for all pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. All children who attend regularly are celebrated during weekly assemblies. All children who attend regularly have access to a wide range of enriching curriculum and extra-curriculum opportunities on a daily, weekly and termly basis. These include school-based events and visits across the county and further afield. All pupils who maintain the schools expectation of 100% will be acknowledged and celebrated.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- › Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual child level
- › Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Child-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.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- › Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify children or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these children and their families (see Appendix 4)
- › Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns
- › Report on the data to the Full Governing body throughout the year.

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- › Provide regular attendance reports to Senior Leaders, Pastoral Support staff and Class teachers to facilitate discussions with children and families
- › Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### 7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a child misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a child misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- › Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- › Hold regular informal and formal meetings with the parents of children who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable of becoming persistently absent and agree actions for the family, the child and the school to prevent this from happening (see Appendix 4)
- › Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance. Families and children will be expected to engage with the support offered and will be expected to make a reasonable effort to attend school before any wider support has been initiated (see Appendix 4 and Appendix 6)

- › Engage with local authority attendance service as soon as possible to prevent a child from becoming persistently absent or to support agreed actions aimed at reduce overall absence below the 10% threshold.

## 8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once a year by the designated Senior Leader and the Headteacher. 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
- › First-Aid policy
- › SEND policy

### Appendix 1: Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance and may be used on a child's registration certificate through the year.

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Child has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 child is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Child from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Child 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 child's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Child arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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 child is in custody
Z	Child not on admission register	Register set up but child has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Appendix 2: School First-Day calling process

This procedure needs to be completed for all 'N' codes present on attendance registers, unless information regarding the absence has already been obtained. Collate names all unregistered children by 9.30am.

1. A School Gateway message shall be sent to the first name on the contact list asking for a call or message to school to notify and confirm the reason for absence.
2. If there is no response to the message by 10am, telephone the first name on the contact list.
3. If there is no response, ring each of the numbers on the contact list, until a reply is received.
4. At this point, Safeguarding and Inclusion team must be informed.
5. If we have had no response, send a second School Gateway message and a home visit will be made if possible, by either school staff (Safeguarding and Inclusion team) or other agencies working with the family.

## Appendix 3: What is medical evidence?

Guidance from Kent Local Authority (LA) 2017 states that parent/carers can provide evidence in the form of:

- a prescription or medication with the child's name and date that links appropriately to the dates of absence
- an appointment card, screenshot or photo of an online booking or phone log to show a call to the GP
- a text message or appointment reminder from a GP surgery or medical centre
- letters from a GP surgery, medical centre or hospital related to the stated reasons for absence
- proof of consultation at a pharmacy

School will NOT expect or accept photos of a child or a child's bodily fluids as medical evidence and any images of this nature will be immediately deleted.

## Appendix 4: School attendance strategy and sanctions

The table below demonstrates how school will respond to a child's attendance level, depending on the figure. The table also demonstrates what families are expected to do in conjunction with school.

Attendance figure	Rating	School response	Solutions for families
<b>98%+</b>	<b>Outstanding attendance</b> Your child has the best chance to succeed at school		n/a
<b>96% to 97.9%</b>	<b>Good attendance</b> Your child has a good chance to succeed at school		n/a
<b>93% to 95.9%</b>	<b>Attendance requires improvement</b> Concern as this level of attendance will have a negative effect on your child's progress	School will notify you about your child's attendance figure by School Gateway message. School staff will be notified that your child has entered this category. Informal contact from your teacher; informal meeting offered with Pastoral Manager and child.	Take immediate steps to improve your child's school attendance. Seek and use support from school if you feel there are barriers to your child attending school.
<b>90% to 92.9%</b>		School will notify you about your child's attendance figure by phone and in writing. School staff will be notified that your child has entered this category. A formal meeting offered with Class Teacher, Deputy Headteacher and child.	Discuss attendance warning letters with your child. Take immediate steps to improve your child's school attendance. Ask and make use of Teacher, Pastoral or Wellbeing support from school.
<b>85% to 89.9%</b>	<b>Inadequate attendance</b> This is a serious concern as this level attendance will have a very negative impact on your child's progress	School will notify you about your child's attendance figure by phone and in writing. School staff will be notified that your child has entered this category. A formal meeting offered with Deputy Headteacher and child. An Attendance Improvement contract will be completed. School will engage with the Local Authority Attendance service to discuss ongoing support.	Discuss attendance warning letters with your child. Take immediate steps to improve your child's school attendance. Requirement for family to attend school Attendance meeting and sign improvement contract. Ask for and make use of Pastoral or Wellbeing support from school.

<p><b>80% to 84.9%</b></p>	<p><b>Inadequate attendance</b></p> <p>This is a serious concern as this level attendance will have a very negative impact on your child's progress</p>	<p>School will notify you about your child's attendance figure by phone and in writing. School staff will be notified that your child has entered this category. A formal meeting offered with Deputy Headteacher, Attendance Service and child. An Attendance Improvement contract will be completed. Existing contracts will be reviewed and updated.</p>	<p>Take immediate steps to improve your child's school attendance. Requirement for family to attend school Attendance meeting and sign improvement contract.</p>
<p><b>Below 80%</b></p>	<p><b>Unacceptable attendance</b></p> <p>This level of attendance is having a very serious impact on your child's progress and life chances</p>	<p>School will notify you about your child's attendance figure by phone and in writing. School staff will be notified that your child has entered this category. A formal meeting offered with Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher, Attendance Service and child. Formal sanctions will be considered in conjunction with the Local Authority.</p>	<p>Take immediate steps to improve your child's school attendance. Requirement for family to attend school Attendance meeting and sign improvement contract.</p>

## Appendix 5: Fixed Penalty Notices

All information is taken from <https://www.kelsi.org.uk/pru-inclusion-and-attendance-service-pias/attendance/penalty-notice>

[Section 444A of the Education Act 1996](#) empowers designated local authority officers, Headteachers (and deputy and assistant Headteachers authorised by them) and the police to issue fixed penalty notices.

A Fixed-Penalty Notice can be issued when:

- Overt truancy (including pupils caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave for the purpose of a family holiday in term-time
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the school register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion

Appendix 6: Attendance Improvement Contract

**Greenfields Community Primary School**  
**Attendance Improvement contract**



Child's name:		
Child's address:		
Date of meeting:		
Location of meeting:		
Attendees:		
Names of parents agreeing to contract:	Name: Address: Phone:	Name: Address: Phone:
	Name: Address: Phone:	Name: Address: Phone:
Targets and timeframe agreed:	By the end of...	
	By the end of...	
	By the end of...	
Supporting actions:	I will:  Parents will:  Teachers will:	
Attendance target:	By the end of...	
Review date:		
I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present (sign below):		
.....	Parent/carer	
.....	Pupil	
.....	School	
.....	<u>Other</u> Agency	
.....	date	



