

Attendance policy

Greenmount Primary 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 headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

We have a designated governor, **Mr Curren** who meets termly with the attendance officer and Headteacher to review the Persistence Absentees and the work of the attendance officer.

3.2 The Headteacher – Mrs Dixon

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 pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer – Mrs Pickering

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher and Safeguarding team
- Works with JESS Cluster and School Attendance Service to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Family Support Team- Mrs Benatmane and Mrs Khattun

The Family Support Team:

- Support the AIO with pupils and families that are discussed in the inclusion meeting and a need for interventions has been discussed.

3.4 Class Teachers & Admin Support Staff

The school attendance officer:

- Record attendance daily, using correct codes and submitting this information to the office
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Attendance Officer

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It 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.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.25am. The second sessions are depending on year group due to staggered lunch times.

	Reception	Years 1	Years 2	Years 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6
PM registration	12.25pm	12.40pm	12.40pm	12.45pm	1.30pm	1.10pm	1.30pm

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 09.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

You can report the absence by calling the school office on 01132760771 or you can email attendance@greenmountprimary.co.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness or if the pupil's attendance is below 90%, proof of illness may be required to authorise.

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 if the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and appointment evidence is supplied.

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.

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

Our Attendance officer and Family Support Team will review lateness and punctuality. Parents will be contacted to discuss if any support is needed and to discuss solutions to improve punctuality. A monitoring period will be agreed.

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 doing first day contact phone calls
- 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

- Every half term a traffic light letter is emailed to all parents.
- Exact percentages and days missed are discussed in parents consultation in October and March.
- If attendance is a concern, parents will be contacted and this will be discussed in detail in an attendance meeting or phone call.
- At the start of each term a text message is sent out to parents of pupils under 95%. 'Fresh Start' approach initiative.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher 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 headteacher's discretion.

'Exceptional circumstances' will depend on specific circumstances, length of absence and evidence provided.

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
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the heateacher may grant term-time holiday.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

- A pupil is classed as Persistently Absent when their attendance is 90% or below. Our Attendance Officer performs several half- termly data reports including Persistent Absentee report.
- Traffic light system letters used to communicate to parents every half term where their child is in terms of attendance.
- Persistent Absentees receive a letter/phone call to discuss and are put on closer monitoring sheet for the term. Children may be given a reward chart.
- Report done to identify any pupils for 'Fasttrack'.
- Inclusion meetings are held with the Head Teacher, Designated Safeguarding Lead and Family Support workers to discuss any complex cases and review Persistent Absentees.
- School is a member of the JESS Cluster who offer family support services such as Early Help Plans. Information on JESS can be found at <https://jesscluster.org/>.

The DFE category for Persistent Absentees is as follows:-

Classification of a Persistent Absentee at the end of each half term.	
Half Term 1 (Sept - October 1/2 term)	7 sessions missed from Sept –End HT1
Half Term 2 (November - Christmas Holiday)	14 sessions missed from Sept –End HT2
Half Term 3 (January - February 1/2 term)	20 sessions missed from Sept –End HT3
Half Term 4 (February - Easter Holiday)	25 sessions missed from Sept –End HT4
Half Term 5 (Easter - May 1/2 term)	31 sessions missed from Sept –End HT5
Half Term 6 (May - Summer Holidays)	38 sessions missed from Sept –End HT6 (HT5 - This is the figure reported for the year.)

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 headteacher, 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 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 Managing Absences Stage Process

These are procedures we must follow to manage school attendance. Due to our restorative approach we have never had to get to the stage of legal proceedings. The only fines that have been issued have been due to unauthorised leave.

Stage1-School Interventions- 'Fasttrack', Attendance Meeting 1, offering Family support /JESS Cluster, reward charts- More information please contact Mrs Pickering.

Stage2- School Attendance Panel Meeting- This will be with the Attendance Officer and a member of the Senior Leader Team.

Stage 3- Referral to school attendance services for legal proceedings.

Stage 4- Legal Proceedings- This could be a Penalty Fine, Parental Order , Education Supervision Order.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- 100% attendance club- the pupils names are posted outside the class of all of those that achieved 100% attendance that week.
- Attendance trophy goes to the class with the highest attendance for that week in the assembly. Assemblies are very important as attendance is discussed and celebrated.
- Weekly attendance figures are posted on twitter and on the school website.
- At the end of the year any pupils who have achieved 96% receive a certificate and prize and are put into a year group draw to win one of the big prizes.
- We have a Breakfast club for working and vulnerable families. This starts at 8am and is free.
- Individual teachers may have their own reward scheme.
- The attendance officer scrutinises and tracks the attendance of all learners daily by recording late and managing the registers.
- All office staff challenge poor excuses for nonattendance.
- Teachers will pass on concerns of children with poor attendance to the AIO and FS.

- Parents are called and/or texted on the first day of absence and three or more absences without explanation may result in a home visit. This may be carried out on day 1,2 or 3 of absence depending on circumstances.
- Attendance is discussed at pupil progress meetings and parent's evening.
- Regular meetings are held in school with parents/carers whose children have continuing poor attendance. This will be with the Attendance Improvement Officer and the Family Support.
- Individual Reward charts are given to identified Persistent Absentee pupils to improve attendance.
- Throughout the year we run 'Give it 100%' incentive for a set period of time to improve whole school attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 Daily Monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence daily.

- A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).
- A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.
- 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.
- All parents/carers whose children are absent without any communication with the school will then be contacted by the attendance improvement officer to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- If a pupil is absent for three or more days without explanation, then school will endeavour to carry out a home visit. This may be on the first, second or third day of absence depending on circumstances.
- All absences will then be added to the electronic database with the appropriate code attached.
- All absences will fall into the category of authorised or unauthorised absence.

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.

7.2 Fasttrack

All schools will identify children who meet the Fast Track criteria of 10 (or more) unauthorised absences in the last 12 weeks.

Schools will complete the initial stages of the Fast Track Process.

Parents/Carers who fail on the Fast Track may receive a Penalty Notice.

7.3 Holidays

Holidays in school term time are not allowed.

Unauthorised absences due to holidays may result in a Penalty Notice being issued under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 (as amended) which means that both parents will be fined for their child's absence. Please refer to Appendix 3.

Exceptional circumstances may be considered but there are strict guidelines that the Head Teacher must adhere to. A parent can submit a 'request for exceptional circumstance' by obtaining this request form from the AIO.

If a holiday is taken, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised**

7.4 Extended Leave

Extended leave is not permitted.

8. Removing from school role

There are strict guidelines on the circumstances under which a pupil may be removed from the school roll. These are detailed in Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 (as amended 1997) and the Schools Administration Handbook (Section A2).

8.1 Safeguarding and Children Missing Education (CME)

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff will follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future (Keeping Children Safe in Education (updated September 2020) and Children Missing in Education Nov 2013, updated Sept 2016). All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children Missing Education (CME) are children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education

- When a child's absence is unexplained we will contact the parents on the first day of absence
- If the absence remains unexplained we will undertake a home visit within two days to establish the child's safety and whereabouts. This will be changed to day one if there are any safeguarding concerns or existing safeguarding issues.
- We will make reasonable enquiries such as ringing all emergency contacts and checking with neighbours and friends in school

We will make a CME referral as soon as possible but no later than when the child has been missing from school for 20 days in the following circumstances:

1. A child has left the country **regardless** of if a new address and/or new school information has been provided
2. A child is rumoured to have moved out of the area
3. A child has moved to a different Local Authority and is not on the roll of a new school **within 20 days** of leaving your school

8.2 Elective Home Education (EHE)

The school must delete the child's name from their admissions register upon receipt of written notification from the parents that the pupil is receiving education otherwise than at school. However, schools should not wait for parents to give written notification that they are withdrawing their child from school before advising their local authority. Schools must make a return (giving the child's name, address and the ground upon which their name is to be deleted from the register) to the local authority as soon as the ground for deletion is met, and no later than deleting the pupil's name from the register. They should also copy parents into the notice to the local authority.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 2 years by Mrs Dixon, HeadTeacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Jess Cluster Attendance Policy
- Managing Attendance 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
Authorised absence		
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

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil 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 pupil is in custody
Z	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