

Greenmount Primary School Attendance Policy



Aspirational Targets
Caring Community
Positive attitude

Policy reviewed: Mar 2018

Next review: Mar 2020

Authorised Signature.....

STRENGTHS OF OUR SCHOOL

Our Mission statement

At Greenmount primary school we believe all children are entitled to develop to their full potential - socially, academically, emotionally, physically, morally, spiritually, enabling each child to grow in confidence and able to participate in the wider community.

- We aim to provide a safe, secure learning environment
- We aim to offer opportunities for learning – to develop self-esteem, independence and knowledge and enable every child to reach their potential.
- We aim to foster an enjoyment in learning
- We aim to help pupils develop personal, spiritual and moral values, an understanding of religious and beliefs, a tolerance for others and their ways of life.
- We aim to promote equal opportunities for all children.
- We aim to promote positive and respectful relationships and a respect for self, others and peers.
- We aim to raise achievement through active independent learning and then vital support of parents.
- We aim to provide a quality education in an inclusive environment

At Greenmount Primary School we strive to ensure all children can fulfil their potential.

We value honesty and encourage good manners and courteous behaviour always.

We hope that the time spent at Greenmount Primary will furnish them with happy memories and we endeavour to offer them the best possible teaching and to emphasise that good effort and high standards are expected from everyone in school.

We aim to have a happy atmosphere in and around school, so that 'our' children can learn to live, work and play well together.

We hope that you will help us by giving us your full support, co-operation and confidence.

Introduction and Purpose of the policy

Greenmount Primary School acknowledges that irregular attendance disrupts the continuity of learning, can lead to underachievement and low attainment and impedes the child's ability to develop friendships which are essential to their social and emotional wellbeing.

The purpose of this policy is for all people connected with Greenmount Primary School to understand why attendance is so important, how we will address poor attendance and promote good attendance.

1. Adoption

The Headteacher, Attendance Improvement Officer and Family Support Worker on **13th March 2018** adopted this policy. This is to be reviewed bi-annually or sooner if changes are to be made to reflect current guidance. This will also be reviewed by the governors at the next governors meeting.

2. Aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance

- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of good attendance.
- Ensure that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.
- Work closely with parents/carers and other agencies to ensure all pupils maintain a minimum level of 96% attendance

3. What parents/carers can expect from the school

- A quality education.
- To give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- Regular and efficient recording of attendance within the guidance of the 1995 Education Act.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate confidential action on any problem notified to us.
- Excellent home/school communication.

4. What we expect from parents/carers

- To ensure that their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed, with the right equipment and condition to learn.
- To provide the school with a reason for any period of absence on the first day or, where possible, before the absence.
- To provide the school with a reason for lateness.
- To work closely with the school to resolve any problems that may impede their child's attendance.
- To take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in exceptional circumstances.
- To support their child and recognise their successes and achievements.

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. They have the legal responsibility to ensure their children attend school unless there is an acceptable explanation given for their absence which the school may then authorise.

The school day **begins** at 8.50am Mr Potts opens the school gates at 8.45am.

Break is at: 10.30am – 10.45am Years 1, 2, 3 & 4

10.45am - 11.00am Years 5&6

Lunch is at: 12.00pm - 1.00pm KS1 and Reception

12.30pm – 1.30pm KS2

School **closes** at 3.15pm

5. Procedure for Recording and Monitoring Attendance

- Pupils should arrive in the school playground by 8.45am.
- School begins at 8.50am and class teachers will mark the registers from that time.
- Parents must accompany their children to the office if they are late and sign their child in with the reason for their late arrival. All late arrivals must report to the school office.
- Any Pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked late and a suitable reason for late arrival must be given.
- 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.
- 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.

An authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as a satisfactory reason for absence.

The following may be reasons for authorised absences:

- Illness.
- Family bereavement.
- Medical and dental appointments where proof is available.
- Days of religious observance.
- Fixed term exclusion.
- Permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.
- Unavoidable School closures; e.g. Severe weather conditions; circumstances that could make it dangerous for children to attend.

Absences will not be authorised without medical evidence if a pupil's attendance is below 90% or they have had 3 or more illnesses in one term.

All other absences will be regarded as unauthorised.

Family 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**.

Extended Leave

Extended leave is not permitted.

6. Removal from the 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).

Children Missing Education (CME)

If a child leaves the country for any reason other than a fixed term holiday, this will be reported to the Attendance Advisor and Children Missing in Education Team for further investigation. A child will not be removed from role until these investigations have been carried out and the Attendance Improvement Officer has passed the case to the CME team.

If a child is offered a place in Reception and fails to take up this place, then this will warrant further investigation. If that child has not accepted a place at another school, then this will be reported to the CME team.

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.

7. Strategies used to promote good attendance and punctuality

See appendix:

1. School incentives and strategies
2. Stage 1 intervention

Appendix 1: School incentives and strategies

- 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 costs 50p per day.
- Individual teachers have their own reward scheme.
- All these celebrations take place during assemblies to further raise awareness.
- The attendance officer scrutinises and tracks the attendance of all learners daily by recording late and managing the registers.
- All classes monitor and discuss attendance and late daily.
- 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.
- 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.
- Nursery children with 96% attendance receive a certificate and a prize 3 times a year and they receive these from Teddy Bear and Draco the Dragon.
- All attendance incentives to be agreed with school council.

New incentives and strategies to be discussed and agreed

1. House points
Weekly- everyone in the class with highest attendance gets a point.
Weekly-class with 0 late gets a point for each pupil.
Half Termly- Every pupil who has 96% above gets 3 points??
2. Race- Every week the class with highest % gets a token towards the Pizza party end of school July. Class with most tokens at the end of year has Pizza party.
3. Attendance Mascot?
4. Punctuality- yrs. 1-6 late without acceptable reason- stay in during break for catch
5. Congratulation texts to parents for the 96% and above.... Termly?? Attendance text updates

Appendix 2: Stage 1 intervention

- Target group monitoring and letters/ meeting arranged if necessary e.g. Late arrivals, reception children, Year 6 etc.
- Reminders at parent's events, curriculum meetings, coffee mornings and texting about the importance of attendance.
- Walking bus for vulnerable families.
- Early morning texts/ calls are sent to parents whose children have had 5 or more late in the previous term.
- Pupils with less than 90% attendance will be monitored half termly and meetings or home visits will be arranged if deemed necessary.
- A home visit may be made if a pupil is absent for three or more days without explanation.
- supportive approach so 'late' children don't stay at home.
- Parents must accompany children into school if they are late and sign in with reason for late arrival.
- Parents who do not accompany their children into school when they are late will be contacted, initially by letter, to inform them of the school policy.
- Establish reasons for non-attendance and whether absences should be authorised or un-authorised.
- Meetings in school with teachers, AIO, and FS and the Head Teacher if needed.
- Home visits where necessary.
- Accurate records of school-based intervention in actions to complete the stage one procedures without delay.
- Support given to families from AIO and FS to discuss and resolve any problems.
- Engagement of other professionals through multi-agency meetings or Early Help.
- Use of parenting contracts where appropriate.
- In instances of persistent absenteeism, cases are to be monitored, dealt with accordingly and recorded accurately ready to present in court for further action.
- Referrals to school nursing team if necessary; if research of absences identifies a trend.
- Constant monitoring of all procedures and policy for amendment and revision where necessary.
- A reintegration procedure for persistent absentees returning to school after a long period of absence. Children who are absent and believed to be on holiday without prior notification to the school will receive a letter requiring an explanation for this absence.
- All holidays taken in term time will be referred to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice of £60 per child per parent.



Penalty notices - Information for parents and carers
Issued for non-attendance at school including holidays taken in term-time

Introduction

Regular attendance at school is vital to help children achieve and get the best possible start in life.

All children aged between 5 and 16 are required by law to receive an education, and it is the duty of parents and carers to ensure that they are supported to do so.

All schools in Leeds have their own attendance policies and are responsible for keeping accurate records of pupil attendance. They will contact parents directly if they have any concerns about a child's attendance.

What is a penalty notice?

A penalty notice is a fine to parents or carers if they fail to ensure that their children attend school regularly. It is an alternative to prosecution in the magistrate's court and paying the fine means that court can be avoided and the possibility of a criminal record.

When might a penalty notice be issued?

Penalty notices are issued for unauthorised absences from school. This includes holidays in term time and sessions where your child arrived late after the register closed.

What is the government legislation covering the use of penalty notices?

The Education Act 1996 s444 (as amended).

Who decides whether my child's absence should be authorised?

Authorised absence from school is at the head teacher's discretion. From 1 September 2013, a change to government legislation means that schools are no longer allowed to authorise requests for children to be taken out of school for a holiday during term time.

Why are penalty notices issued for unauthorised absence from school?

Parents/carers are required by law to make sure their children attend school regularly for 190 days a year. Penalty notices were introduced in 2007 and have been amended several times since then, with the latest change coming in September 2013 when the time that parents have to pay fines was reduced.

Children who frequently miss school often fall behind. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results.

Who issues penalty notices?

Leeds City Council is responsible for issuing penalty notices on behalf of schools in the city.

How are they issued?

Penalty notices are issued by post to your home.

Will I receive a penalty notice for each child?

Yes, a penalty notice will be issued to parents or carers of each child with an unauthorised absence.

Will my partner be issued with a penalty notice?

Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer for each child. A parent is classed as anyone with parental responsibility, including partners who live in the same household. Cases involving separated parents will be judged individually. The law has always allowed each parent to be fined for the same child's absence.

What should I do if I get a fine?

Once you have received a penalty notice you have the following options:

Option 1

Pay £60 per penalty notice **within 21 days** of the date of issue. Details of how to pay will be included on the back of the penalty notice. The fine has to be paid in full - part payment or payment by installments cannot be accepted.

Option 2

Pay £120 per penalty notice **between 21 and 28 days** of the date of issue as stated on the penalty notice. Details of how to pay will be included on the back of the penalty notice. The fine has to be paid in full - part payment or payment by installments cannot be accepted.

Option 3

If you decide not to pay the penalty, you will be summonsed to appear in court for the offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 of failing to ensure the regular attendance at school of a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil there. A guilty verdict can lead to a fine of up to £1000, a Parenting Order, and a criminal record which can affect employment.

If I pay the penalty do I have to go to court?

If you pay the penalty(s) as stated in Option 1 or Option 2, you will not have to attend court and you will not have a criminal conviction recorded against you. This discharges any and all liability on your behalf concerning the non-attendance of your child for the period quoted on the penalty notice.

What happens if I do not pay?

If you do not pay the Penalty as stated in Option 1 or Option 2 and the time period of 28 days expires the council is required to commence proceedings in the Magistrates Court. A guilty verdict can lead to a fine of up to £1000, a Parenting Order, and a criminal record which can affect employment opportunities.

Is there an appeals process?

There is no statutory right of appeal once a notice has been issued.

Who can I contact about a penalty notice that has already been issued?

Contact the penalty notice officer on: **0113 3784895**

**2 weeks absence across a school year can leave a child 20% less likely to achieve 5 A*-Cs including English and maths at GCSE when compared to a child with full attendance*

** 2 weeks absence across a school year can leave a child 9% less likely to gain level 4+ in English and maths at KS2 when compared to a child with full attendance*