

Grazeley Parochial Primary School

“Be courageous. Be strong. Do everything in love.”

1 Corinthians 16 v13-14

We are a loving community of courageous learners, building resilience and hope for the future based on our caring Christian foundation.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

DATE OF LAST REVIEW :

September 2023

REVIEWED BY :

Headteacher

APPROVED BY:

FGB

DATE OF NEXT REVIEW :

September 2025

Version	DATE	DESCRIPTION
7	26/8/23	Changes to terminology and procedures

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1 Introduction and Statutory Framework

Grazeley Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement as well as that of other pupils in the class. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved. In addition, parents are regularly reminded of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create happy, rewarding and safe environment for all children where the children want to come. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in the school life and to share and support their children's learning. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

2 Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day using SIMS. The register is taken at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by the Attendance Officer. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the Attendance Officer checks reported absences. If a pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted, then the Attendance Officer will telephone parents to check why a pupil is not in school by 10am.

Attendance data is held electronically on the SIMS Management Information System, accessible by the Attendance Officer, Headteacher and SENDCO who are able to check on the attendance of individual children and provide comprehensive attendance records.

The Headteacher monitors the attendance of pupils in a meeting at the beginning of each month with the Attendance Officer and Family Support Advisor (the attendance team) At this meeting the attendance of all children is reviewed and actions agreed. Actions may include asking the class teacher to speak to parents to highlight that attendance is low, the Family Support Advisor contacting the parents to discuss the reasons for the low attendance or the Headteacher writing to parents The agreed actions depend on the circumstances of the absences. Where these steps have been taken and absence remains below 90%, the next step is for an attendance action plan (AAP) to be put in place for the family outlining how attendance is to be improved.

An Attendance Action Plan (AAP) is put in place where a child is classed as 'persistently absent' (below 90%) and there are not good reasons for this e.g. extended period of illness. Parents are invited by the Headteacher to meet to agree the plan together. If parents do not attend, the plan is written and shared with them. The AAP is reviewed by the Headteacher and parents at least termly.

This may be delegated to the Family Support Advisor where there is a positive improvement in attendance. The plan will only come to an end if attendance returns to above 90%.

The attendance team meets three times per year with the Education Welfare Officer assigned to the school. The attendance of all pupils with attendance below 90% is reviewed at these meetings and actions agreed.

The School will refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Service (EWS) if a child's attendance continues to cause concern.

Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

3 Punctuality and lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Headteacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time.

The gate is opened at 8.35 and FS and KS1 doors are opened. FS and KS1 children are supervised in class between 8.35 and 8.45. KS2 children who arrive at this time are supervised on the playground. KS2 doors are opened between 8.45 and 8.55. The gate is closed at 9.00.

Registers close for FS and KS1 at 9.00 and for KS2 at 9.10am and children arriving after the close of registration will be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Headteacher will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement, the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the Education Welfare Service (EWS).

4 Authorised and unauthorised attendance

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence and it is a statutory requirement for the headteacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g. medical, dental) outside of school time.

If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, by email or by telephone as soon as possible. The normal routine is to telephone the school on the first morning of absence and every morning thereafter unless advised to the contrary by the Attendance Administrator. Such calls are always logged and the class teacher informed.

At Grazeley Primary School, if a child has become ill with sickness or diarrhoea, the child should remain off school for 48 hours following the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This period of absence will always be authorised by the school. The school reserves the right to increase this time in the context of an epidemic.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school received no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

5 Leave of Absence

The Government issued revised regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Headteachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances being defined as being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave
- Headteachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by a parent or guardian with parental responsibility.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- Penalty Notices are usually issued when a child has been absent (unauthorised) for five days or more within one academic year. Penalty notices are served per parent per child.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Wokingham County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' 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

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Grazeley Primary School understands that holidays are generally less expensive during term time but this does NOT count as an exceptional circumstance. Leave which is taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- Availability of cheaper holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather experienced in school holidays
- Overlap with beginning or end of term
- Booked the wrong dates by mistake
- Booked by another family member
- Attending a wedding that is not immediate family
- Family birthdays

6 Strategies for promoting attendance

Why attendance matters:

Less than 5 days absence = 98%+ attendance

- 14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

At Grazeley Primary School the staff and Governors endeavour to support parents in the responsibility of attendance by:-

- creating an environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken
- making every effort to match learning tasks to pupils' needs
- collating attendance data termly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice
- parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, parents' evenings etc) of the importance of good attendance
- The Headteacher will make a termly report to governors on attendance
- the Headteacher and SENCO may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties
- All secondary schools make links with the school and the Year 6 pupils to help with a smooth transfer to their school. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.

The benefits of school attendance are regularly shared with parents through school newsletter and other communications:

Benefits of school attendance

Good attendance at school is not just valuable, it's essential. Going to school is directly linked to improved exam performance which should in turn lead to further learning opportunities and better job prospects. As well as this, going to school helps to develop:

- friendships
- social skills
- team values
- life skills
- cultural awareness
- career pathways

7 Role of the Governing Board

The Headteacher will regularly report on the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups (Pupil Premium, FSM, SEN etc). The governing board will ensure that this policy is being followed.

8 Data Analysis

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (SIMs). The school provides attendance data to the DFE, using SIMs to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

9 Other related policies

Preventing Radicalisation and Extremism policy

Safeguarding Policy

Behaviour Policy

