

# Grovelands Primary School

## Attendance Policy

<b>Date of approval:</b>	July 2018
<b>Next review date:</b>	Summer Term 2020
<b>Responsible staff member:</b>	Sarah Harrison
<b>Policy reviewed by:</b>	Sarah Harrison
<b>Sources used for review:</b>	Surrey Guidance
<b>Committee/GB responsible:</b>	Teaching and Learning
<b>Signed by the Chair of the Governing Body:</b>	 <hr style="width: 100%;"/> Mr Dean Furber

**Impact: Children will achieve maximum possible attendance, any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly.**

Grovelands Primary School, along with other local schools and Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial and to this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their maximum possible attendance. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance however when absence is unavoidable, parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

### **Expectations**

#### We expect that all pupils will:

- attend school regularly. At Grovelands, we expect every child to attend 100% of the time.
- attend school punctually.
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day.
- discuss with their class teacher or headteacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

#### We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given.
- contact the school by 9.30 am on every day of absence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- provide the school with a medical certificate, appointment card or prescription document if absence due to illness extends beyond 2 days.

#### School staff will:

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily.
- monitor every pupil's attendance.
- contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- encourage good attendance.
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children, a safe learning environment and a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.
- make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance.
- refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the school's attached Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

## Requests for leave of absence during term time

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance by Surrey County Council and we ask parents to take due consideration of these prior to booking a holiday, to ensure their child does not miss out on education during term time.

If a family feels leave during term time is unavoidable due to special circumstances, then a letter must be written directly to the headteacher explaining the reason for the request prior to the leave date and preferably at least two weeks before. The headteacher will then decide whether or not to grant leave of absence.

Parents are not entitled to leave of absence for their children as a right, each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for the absence. A letter will be sent to parents informing them of the decision.

Leave of absence for medical or religious observance will only be considered when supported by an official letter such as a hospital letter.

## Encouraging Attendance

At Grovelands we encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- by responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils.
- by accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see lateness).
- by publishing attendance statistics.
- by celebrating good and improved attendance.
- by monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance and arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if the irregular attendance continues.

## Lateness

Registers open at 8.45 am and close at 9.00 am. If pupils arrive at school after 9.00am a late mark will be recorded and if a child arrives after 9.20am without a valid explanation, it will be recorded 'as late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session. The pupil's name will be recorded in the late book in case of a fire drill.

## Responding To Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school we will respond in the following manner:

- on the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent / carer by 9.30am, the school will endeavour to contact them that day by phone, text message or e mail.
- if there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent / carer. If, by the end of the third day there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers or invite them into school to discuss the child's absence. The school will inform parents that, if the absence persists a referral will be made to the EWO.
- failure to comply with the expectations set by the EWO may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution
- Refer to 'School Attendance Staged Intervention Model' attached

## Deletion from Registers

If a pupil fails to return to school within 10 days of the agreed return date the school will, in the first instance check that the pupil does not have a good reason for the absence. The school and the Local Authority will then make reasonable enquiries to locate the pupil and having done so advise the family in writing that they will need to provide evidence of why the return has been delayed ie. medical evidence, within the next 10 days or the child will be removed from the school roll.

If, after taking these steps the child has not returned or suitable evidence has not been provided then the child's name will be removed from the roll and the pupil's information will be sent to the Lost Pupil Database.

If parents request their child to be absent for more than 20 days they should be aware that their child's name will be removed from the school roll, effective from the date of the first day of absence. Parents will then need to re-apply for a place at the school on their return however, due to demand for places this may not be possible.

## Penalty Notices

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Education Welfare Officer. Penalty Notices will be issued where at least 10 sessions (5 school days) have been lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil during a 6 week period or where attendance falls below 90%. This includes children who are late after the close of the registration period on at least 7 occasions during any 6 week period.

Penalty Notices may be issued when a pupil is stopped by a Truancy Patrol. When pupils are stopped their pattern of school attendance is investigated. If there is a minimum of 10 sessions (10 half days) unauthorised absence in the preceding 4 months, a warning letter may be sent to the parents / carers. If there is no significant improvement in attendance in the subsequent 15 school days, a Penalty Notice will be issued to each parent/carer by Surrey County Council.

When leave of absence has not been granted and a pupil is taken out of school regardless, the school has the right to request that a Penalty Notice is issued to each parent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

## Changing School

It is important that if families decide to send the child in their care to a different school that they inform the headteacher as soon possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the dates the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- the address of the new school
- the new home address, if it is known

School staff will then confirm with the parents the leaving date for their child. Following this date the pupil's school records will be sent on to the new school as soon as possible and within ten days of the child leaving. The Pupil Tracking Office at County Hall will also be sent appropriate information within ten days of anyone leaving or joining the school. If no notification is received from a new school then the child's name will not be removed from the school roll until after an investigation by Education Welfare.

### **Organisation**

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the school has the following responsibilities:

#### Headteacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:

- adopt the whole policy
- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently in line with current legislation and that appropriate resources are provided
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence
- liaise and follow-up work with EWO an appropriate access to attendance data
- consult and liaise closely with the EWO on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
  
- to work in close collaboration with EWO during their termly/half termly register analysis
- set whole school attendance targets
- monitor and evaluate attendance with EWO

#### Office staff to:

- to oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- liaise with Education Welfare regularly
- reinforce good practice
- share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non attendance with the Educational Welfare Officer
- manage the school's scheme for contacting parents/cares on the first day of absence

#### Class teachers to:

- complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- record all reasons for absences and lateness in the register
- inform the headteacher of concerns
- be alert to signs of disaffection that may lead to non attendance and report them to the headteacher.