

Grassington CE (VC) Primary School

Attendance Policy

Rationale

We at Grassington CE (VC) Primary School believe that attendance at school is important and that absence can lead to poor progress and poor attainment thereby preventing children achieving their full potential.

By law every parent of a child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that their child attends full-time education (section 7 of the Education Act 1996).

The aim of this policy is to outline how we will:-

- Support all pupils to achieve their maximum attendance;
- Ensure the safety of all pupils by recording attendance and lateness;
- Work closely with parents and other agencies such as the Education Welfare Service to promote attendance.

School will support pupils attendance by:-

- Ensuring a broad and balanced curriculum that provides children with the best possible learning opportunities and experiences;
- Providing a welcoming, safe and caring environment in which each pupil is valued and supported;
- Building and maintaining effective partnerships between the school and its parents, external support agencies and the wider community.

Pupils should support their own attendance by:

- Attending school regularly;
- Arriving on time, appropriately dressed and prepared for the day;
- Respecting themselves and others;
- By informing a trusted adult if they feel that they are worried about anything or are being bullied;
- By being happy and encouraging others to feel happy.

Parents should support pupil attendance by:

- Encouraging their children to attend school regularly and arrive on time;
- Contact the office as soon as possible whenever their child is unable to attend and send a note to the teacher on return;
- Ensure their child is appropriately dressed, taking account of school dress code;
- Ensure their child arrives in school on time well prepared for the school day with homework completed;
- Keep health appointments and holidays out of school hours wherever possible.

Arrival in School

The teachers are responsible for the children from 8.45am onwards and pupils are not allowed in classrooms prior to this time. Before 8.45am care of the children remains the responsibility of parents.

A member of staff will welcome children in to school from 8.45am. The exception is children travelling on the dedicated school bus who are supervised by school staff on arrival in the building.

If you have an unusual early appointment and need our support we will do our best to make an arrangement with you.

It is very important that staff have time to prepare for lessons so that pupils can enter the classroom and be on task immediately.

Registration

The register is taken twice a day. A day counts as 2 attendances.

Morning registration starts at 8.55am when the school door will be closed. If a child arrives after the door is closed he/she will be marked in as **Late (L code)**.

The register closes at 9.20am. If a child arrives after the register closes he/she will be marked in as an **Unauthorised Absence (U code)**.

The afternoon register is taken at 1.00pm.

It is very important that your child is punctual and arrives in school on time. Not only does it make for a good start to the day but it also shows consideration for everyone else in the class and avoids repetition of instructions and teaching.

Procedures for non-attendance and lateness

The school office should be informed before 9.20am of the first day of a child's absence through illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence. A letter from parents/carers confirming the reason for absence is required on the pupil's return.

- If the parents/carers do not make contact with the school by 9.20 am regarding a child's absence from school then we will make contact by telephone to establish a pupil's safety.
- If there are several occurrences of non-attendance or lateness, then the Education Welfare Officer will be alerted by the Headteacher and home visits may be carried out.

Parents may be prosecuted if a child does not attend school regularly and punctually. This will be done under the 1996 Education Act and aims to ensure that parents carry out their duty to secure suitable education for their children.

If a child is in the care of foster parents or in a residential home, it is important that the carers recognise their parenting role where attendance to school is concerned. They will be supported by close co-operation between the school, education welfare services and the social services where such a child's attendance is irregular.

Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance

- Registers will be completed accurately at the start of each day
- Daily monitoring by class teachers who will contact the school administrator to raise concerns where appropriate
- Regular monitoring by the Headteacher on attendance and punctuality
- Certificates to pupils with annual 100% attendance and children who have gone over 98% attendances in an academic year
- Headteacher and Education Welfare Officer to have discussions if attendance falls below 80%

Registers are checked regularly by the Education Welfare officer to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absences.

The school will submit termly absence returns through School Census. Pupil attendance figures will be published with the termly academic reports.

Arriving and leaving school outside normal hours

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a parent/guardian outside the normal hours are signed in or out from the office. The Absence Register in the office is used in the case of fire.

Illness and medical appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. Medical appointments will be recorded as "authorised absence" in the register.

If a child has a medical condition which affects their attendance, the school requires medical evidence.

Parental Requests for Holidays during Term Time

Families taking holidays during term time is a cause of absence which has been highlighted nationally as a disruptive factor in pupil's education

The Department for Education requires Local Authorities to implement government amendments to the regulations regarding the taking of Leave of Absence in term-time, which came into force on the 1st September 2013. The new law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time.

This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested.

Parents/carers must obtain the schools permission **before making any arrangements for leave in exceptional circumstances, otherwise the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence as of right. The Education regulations state that applications for leave must be made in advance by a parent with whom the child lives and can only be authorised by the school in exceptional circumstances. Each application is considered individually by the school. Application forms are available from the school office and on our school website This form should be completed by the parent/carer and returned to the school as far in advance as possible and at least **6 weeks** before the first date of the period of leave being requested.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional':

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the organisation/company
- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis

Please note: Headteachers would not be expected to class any term time holiday as exceptional

This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher must consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Where a Headteacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which do not fit the criteria, they may refer to the local authority for advice.

The decision of the Headteacher is final. Parents who take a child on leave in term time without the permission of the school risk being issued with a penalty notice fine for unauthorised absences.

Taking a pupil on leave during term time interrupts teaching and learning and can disrupt educational progress. Before completing this application parent/carers are asked to consider the effect on their child's continuity of education.

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences.

Penalties can be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school.

Responsibility

In order for this policy to be successful every member of the school community must make attendance a high priority. We must share our enthusiasm for education; communicate its importance to pupils and all members of the school community.