



The Grove Junior School

Attendance Policy

Date adopted by the Governing Body: November 2008

Date amended: September 2015

Date for review: September 2017

Headteacher: Maggie Clifford

Chair of Governors: Sharon Wyper

Held by: School Improvement Committee.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 The Government expects all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can 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 make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.3 The governing body hereby delegates the duty outlined in paragraph 1.2 to the head teacher, who will report back to the governing body on this each term.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent or guardian contacts the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- The child is ill;
- The child had to attend a medical appointment;
- For a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the child's family belongs; or
- at the discretion of the head teacher, for an exceptional circumstance such as a family bereavement, close family wedding or to take an external examination or special sporting event/training session.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/guardian.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent/guardian.

Absence is **unauthorised** if:

- No explanation is forthcoming
- The explanation for absence is unsatisfactory and does not meet criteria for authorisation
- The child stays at home to look after other members of the family.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 Notification should be sent to the school prior to the day of planned absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.3 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

4 Requests for leave of absence during term time

- 4.1 Government regulations state that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are a few circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents to contact the school, where possible, 2 weeks in advance to discuss this request.
- 4.2 Parents are expected to arrange family holidays during school holidays.
- 4.3 Parents do not have an automatic right to withdraw their child during term time.
- 4.4 Parents wishing to apply to take a child out of school during term time should apply in writing to the Headteacher.
- 4.5 Written applications will be considered on an individual basis and parents may be required to attend an interview with the Headteacher to discuss their request. Authorisation is not guaranteed.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the Attendance Improvement Officer, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special head teacher certificates for any child who has 100 per cent attendance for a whole year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA link inspector as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the Headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the Headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 9.4 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Addendum (from Keeping Children Safe in Education)

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. As local authorities have a duty to establish the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area, effective information sharing between parents, schools, colleges and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children are safe and receiving suitable education.

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect and such children are at risk of being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation. We follow clear procedures for unauthorised absence and 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 going missing in future.

We have in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. We expect all staff to be alert to the signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when

considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, female genital mutilation and forced marriage. Further information about children at risk of missing education can be found in the Children Missing Education guidance.

We have an admission register and an attendance register and all pupils are on both registers. We place pupils on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which we have agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, we will notify the local authority at the earliest opportunity to prevent the child from going missing from education.

Our admission register is accurate and kept up to date and we regularly encourage parents to inform us of any changes whenever they occur. This can assist the school and local authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

We monitor attendance and address it when it is poor or irregular and will inform the local authority if a child has been absent from school for a continuous period of 10 school days or more without permission.

Where a child is removed from the admission roll the local authority is informed.

When making returns, we highlight to the local authority where we have been unable to obtain the necessary information from the parent, for example in cases where the child's destination school or address is unknown. We will also consider whether it is appropriate to highlight any contextual information of a vulnerable child who is missing education, such as any safeguarding concerns.

We use the school2school system to transfer pupil information to another school when the child moves. We send a Common Transfer File.