



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Approved by: Governing Body **Date:** 15th September 2020

Review schedule: Annual

Next review due by: July 2021

(N.B. School opens at 8.40 a.m., registration is at 8.55 a.m. and lessons start at 9.00 a.m.)

Contents:

1. Aims and Objectives
2. Legislation Covering Attendance
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Dealing with Attendance Problems (including lateness and additional holidays)
5. Partnership with Parents
6. Role of the Governors
7. Links with Other Agencies, Organisations and Support Services
8. Evaluating Success

1. Aims and Objectives

Having a good education will help to give children the best possible start in life. At Great Tew Primary School we aim to work in partnership with parents and guardians to ensure that attendance at school, by each child is regular and punctual. With this aim in mind, the objectives of the Attendance Policy will be:

- To at least match the national average attendance figure for all primary schools as found in DfE Guidance (96.0% in 2016-17) To restrict days taken as leave of absence during term time.
- To support systems for monitoring and reporting attendance.
- To maintain excellent working practices and relationships to ensure that we have effective strategies for dealing with attendance problems including monitoring lateness so the school can take early action for persistent lateness.
- To promote and reward excellent attendance whilst being mindful that we do not wish sick children to come to school nor punish children for being unwell.

- To instigate further action when all possible supportive measures have been exhausted. This may involve legal proceedings in the form of fixed penalty notices. These will be issued by the Attendance and Engagement Team in line with Oxfordshire County Council's Statutory Code of Conduct on Issuing Penalty Notices for Unauthorised Absence from Schools 2016. See Section 4.6 below.

2. Legislation Covering Attendance:

The current legislation that covers attendance is:

The Education Act 1996 -sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 437

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

3. Roles and Responsibilities

3.2 Parents / Guardians are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school every day on time. Registration will be taken punctually each day at 8:55am and 1:00pm. The morning registration period is from 8:55a.m. to 9.30a.m. Children arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be recorded as late (before registration closes). Children arriving after 9.30 a.m. will be recorded as late (after registration closes) ie an unauthorised absence.
- Ensuring that their child arrives at school well prepared for the school day including having the necessary equipment & clothing, having completed the necessary homework and having had enough sleep.
- Contacting the school on the first day of absence and any subsequent days, to explain the absence. This may take the form of a phone call, email, letter or chat to the class teacher while dropping off siblings.
- If a child has not arrived at school by 9:30a.m. and no contact has been made by the parent/guardian, the school secretary will contact the parent/guardian to establish the reason for non attendance. If no satisfactory explanation is given for absence/lateness after 9.30a.m., the child may be marked as unauthorised absence.
- Submitting a written request to the headteacher if they have exceptional circumstances which necessitates the absence of the child from school during term time.

3.2 Pupils are responsible for:

- Trying to be on time for school – and taking increasing responsibility for this commensurate with their maturity.
- Providing the school with a satisfactory reason for lateness (after registration closes) or for absence.

3.3 Teachers are responsible for:

- Marking the register each morning and afternoon using the symbols established at the front of the register.
- Informing the Headteacher of any lateness or absence issues or patterns causing concern.

3.4 The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Monitoring the attendance of the students in all years and contacting parents to discuss concerns.
- In particular, pupils with attendance rates of less than 90% are a cause for concern and considered persistent absentees. These children will be identified and, where appropriate, contact made with parents to discover the reasons and offer support to ensure regular attendance.
- Devising any support package and reviewing this regularly. The Local Authority advise a period of review after 20 days.
- Bringing serious attendance problems to the notice of the Attendance and Engagement Team.
- Referring serious cases of non attendance to the Attendance and Engagement Team and notifying the Chair of Governors of their action.
- Participating in Non-Attendance Panels if appropriate.
- Considering whether any requests for leave in term time meet the bar of exceptional circumstances.
- Reporting attendance figures termly to the FGB.
- Working closely with Partnership schools to ensure consistency of approach towards authorisation of absence.

3.5 The School Secretary is responsible for:

- Processing registers and maintaining an accurate and up to date computerised record of attendance using the correct absence codes provided by OCC and listed in the appendix.
- Actively 'chasing up' absent or missing pupils by contacting parents / the police / Social Services / Attendance and Engagement Team as appropriate.
- Reporting absence issues and patterns of poor attendance / lateness to relevant staff.
- Liaising with the Attendance and Engagement Team
- Collating attendance figures a fortnight before the first FGB meeting of the term, for the headteacher's report.

4. Dealing with attendance problems

4.1 Problems may be:

- Many days of medical absence covered by a note from parents
- Inappropriate holidays taken in school time

- Persistent lateness backed by excuses such as, 'late to bed', 'traffic', general 'tiredness' (see below)
- Pupils being taken out of school for inappropriate reasons e.g. shopping, hairdressers, sporting events
- Unexplained absences
- Truancy

In each circumstance it is our policy to ask the class teacher to have an informal chat with parents before contacting parents by phone or letter to express our concerns and ask for parental co-operation in dealing with the presenting problems and underlying issues.

4.2 Lateness:

- Pupils are late (before the registration period closes) if they arrive after registration has taken place at 9am but before 9.30 a.m. Pupils are late (after registration period closes) if they arrive after 9.30 a.m and this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Details of any pupil recording more than 3 episodes of lateness (before the register closes) each 'new' term will be passed to the head teacher for consideration. Where there are no known extenuating circumstances, a letter will be sent home to the parent. See Appendix 1 for an example.
- Should the lateness still persist, the head teacher will contact the parent to try to resolve the issue. Extreme cases will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team.

4.3 Categorisation of Absence

- Any pupil who is on roll but not present in the school at the time of registration must be recorded within one of these categories:

[i] Unauthorised Absence;

[ii] Authorised Absence;

[iii] Approved Educational Activity.

i. Unauthorised Absence

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without a valid reason.

ii. Authorised Absence

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

iii. Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school. This would include:

- Field trips and educational visits;

- Sporting activities;
- Link courses or approved education off site;
- Most types of dual registration.

Note: Pupils recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

4.4 Leave of absence in term time:

- Where possible parents should make any application for term time leave in writing at least a fortnight in advance.
- Parents will need to explain what is exceptional about their circumstances because headteachers are not permitted to grant leave of absence except in exceptional circumstances.
- The headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave.
- Where leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.
- Any leave of absence taken without the headteacher's permission will be classed as unauthorised absence.

4.5 Frequent Absence

- It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.
- In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s. The Headteacher will liaise with the Attendance and Engagement Officer to ensure necessary action is taken when incidents of poor attendance and/or punctuality are identified.
- Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

4.6 Procedure for Unexplained Absence from School

It is of paramount importance that the school knows the whereabouts of all children and the reasons for any absence from school.

If the school has not heard from the parent/carer by 9.30am the school will attempt to make contact via all contact numbers provided in order to gain an explanation for the absence. If it is still not possible to ascertain the whereabouts of a child the school will

attempt to make a home visit. In the case of no response, it will be reported to the police as the child will be classed as a 'missing child'.

4.7 Penalty Notices and Legal Action

The Law

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

- [a] To his age, ability and aptitude and
 - [b] To any special needs he may have.
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

In cases of persistent absenteeism, the school reserves the right to ask the Attendance and Engagement Team to either issue a Penalty Notice Warning which could result in a fine or further legal action through the courts.

A Penalty Notice is a fine that the Attendance and Engagement Team may decide to issue instead of taking legal action through the Magistrates' Court system.

A Parent/Carer can be issued with a penalty notice if:

- they fail to ensure that their child attends school, or other education provision regularly, usually defined as six or more unauthorised absence sessions over a six week period;
- they allow their child to take leave of absence during term time without the school's authorisation;
- they fail to return their child to school on the agreed date after a period of authorised leave of absence;
- their child persistently arrives late for school after registration is closed.

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' (PA) when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to

any child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

The school monitors all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark **or** is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully by the school and a parenting contract meeting will be offered between parent, pupil and school to try and help resolve any issues. All PA cases will be referred to the Attendance and Engagement Team and if necessary, they have a range of legal powers open to them to enforce attendance including parenting orders, education supervision orders and prosecutions. If convicted of an offence a parent could face a fine of up to £2,500 per parent and/or 3 months imprisonment.

5. Partnership with Parents

A copy of our Attendance Policy is available to all parents and pupils. It can be found on the school website or in the school secretary's office.

6. Role of Governors

- The governors monitor attendance rates through statistics provided by the Headteacher and outside sources such as Analyse School Performance, FFT Aspire or any LA data.
- Attendance is an item on the agenda for termly meetings of the FGB. The latest annual figures of authorised and unauthorised absence for all classes, the whole school and for groups such as SEN and girls and boys should be provided to the FGB. The following tables could be used.

This table shows attendance and lateness statistics from.....to.....				
Absence	Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence	Total Absence	% of pupils absent for 15% or more sessions
National primary school average	-	-		
National average for our FSM profile	-	-		
Whole school				
All girls				
All boys				
All SEN pupils				
Reception				
Yr 1/2				
Yr 3/4				
Yr 5/6				
Lateness	Instances of lateness	How many children have been late more than 3 times in a term?	How many families have been sent letters?	
Whole school				
Reception				
Yr 1/2				
Yr 3/4				
Yr 5/6				

The effectiveness of the policy will be analysed by FGB during the Summer Term. If action is required, it will form part of the SDP.

7. Links with Other Agencies, Organisations and Support Services

- We work with the Local Authority, the Attendance and Engagement Team and with the police.
- If a child's attendance is causing significant concern the school may make a formal referral to the Attendance and Engagement Team. Parents will be informed if this occurs.
- The school will then work in conjunction with the authorities to improve the child's attendance. We will follow Oxfordshire County Council advice and procedures.

8. Evaluating Success

- We collect and report attendance and lateness data, authorised and unauthorised absence figures for each year group and the whole school.
- Success can be measured by watching for a reduction in these headline figures, meeting or moving towards our attendance targets and by looking at improvement in the trends for individual pupils whose attendance has been identified as a concern. Success can also be measured by positive responses to our letters and approaches to parents.
- **Review:** The attendance policy will be reviewed annually at the summer meeting of the FGB.

Appendix 1 Model Lateness letter

Dear Parents/Guardians,

Re: Lateness

We are writing to ask for your co-operation in reducing lateness at Great Tew School.

The Governing Body has a duty to review and act upon the attendance statistics each term and is concerned about the many instances of children arriving at school after the official registration time of 8:55am.

The school understands that every parent has the occasional day when they may be unable to bring the children to school on time but it is persistent lateness, even if it is just a few minutes each day, which causes problems. Teachers cannot start the day's teaching on time and are continually interrupted when children arrive late, causing disruption to the entire class.

Educational social workers regularly come into school to monitor punctuality as well as attendance statistics and may contact families where persistent lateness continues to be a cause for concern.

The school has an attendance policy which can be found on the website www.greattewschool.co.uk. The policy states that any child who is late more than 3 times each term will receive a letter from the headteacher alerting the parent to the episodes of lateness. In this instance, our records show that..[name]... has been late on 3 occasions this term already.

There may be particular reasons for your child's lateness which you might wish to raise with your child's class teacher or head teacher. Both are very happy to talk about any issues you may have.

The school functions much more effectively if children can arrive on time and we would ask that you endeavour to bring your child to school by 8:55am – the start of registration. (Please note that the school opens at 8:40am).

We thank you in anticipation of your co-operation.

Appendix 2 – Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances