

# Great Barford Primary Academy

## Attendance Policy



### Purpose

We believe that we can improve the life chances of all pupils by ensuring that all staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of the importance of, and take responsibility for, regular attendance. We encourage children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:-

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting relationships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Head teacher, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

### Aims

At Great Barford Primary Academy we believe that it is important to provide an environment in which:

- Pupils are supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain the highest possible level.
- Everyone is valued, praised and rewarded.
- Positive relationships are promoted.
- Everyone feels safe.
- The curriculum is designed to reflect the interests and needs of the pupils ensuring engagement and enjoyment in their learning.
- There is an expectation that good attendance is the key to success.
- The monitoring and evaluation of individual attendance patterns supports the learning of individuals.

### The School Day

	Nursery	Reception	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Start of School	8.45am	8.55am	8.55am	8.55am
Morning Session	8.45am -11.45am	8.55am – 11.45am	8.55am – 11.45am	8.55am – 12.15pm
Break Time	N/A	N/A	10.30am	10.45am
Lunch Time	11.45am – 1.00pm	11.45am – 1.00pm	11.45am – 12.45pm	12.15pm – 1.15pm
Afternoon Session	1.00pm – 3.15pm	1.00pm - 3.15pm	12.45pm - 3.20pm	1.15pm - 3.20pm
End of School	3.15pm	3.15pm	3.20pm	3.20pm

8.55am - The school doors will close.

No parent or child should arrive at school before 8.45am unless prior arrangements are in place or they attend breakfast club.

Children should be supervised at all times on the school grounds unless they are safely in their classrooms or with a member of the school staff.

All pupils who arrive after 8.55am must report to the school office where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness recorded.

### **End of School Arrangements**

Parents or carers of children in Years 1 to 4 should pick up their children at the end of the day from the main playground.

Reception and Nursery should collect their children at the end of the school day from their child's playground.

Any child who has not been picked up promptly by the end of the school day will be taken to the school office. If they remain uncollected by 3.30pm they will be taken to after school club and parents will be charged accordingly.

If a child is not collected from school by 6pm and it is not possible to contact the parents, Children's Services and the police will be contacted as the child is technically classed as 'abandoned'.

### **Parental Responsibility**

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of all the educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes puts pupils at risk.

### **Illness and Medical Appointments**

When a child is unwell, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first day of absence; an email sent to [admin@gbpa.org.uk](mailto:admin@gbpa.org.uk). This is a safeguarding matter so that everyone knows that the child is safe. When a child is absent, the school office will record the absence in the register and record the reason left for the absence. If the school isn't contacted, an initial text will be sent to the parents and if no response is received, the parent will be contacted by phone.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If this is unavoidable:

1. An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required.
2. The child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If a child is absent due to vomiting, they should be off school for 24 hours after the last bout of sickness.

If a child is absent due to vomiting and diarrhoea, they should be off school for 48 hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

For more than three days of absence the school require a written explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced. Medical certificates are required for absence greater than 5 days.

### **The role of the School Staff**

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance register twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils, present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored half termly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

### **Attendance Officer – Mrs Lucy Woodworth**

It is the responsibility of the school attendance officer to ensure :

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- All absences not reported by parents are followed up.
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register.

### Action for Low Attendance

Low and non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However each case is different, and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. The school uses the following guide for attendance:

Percentage Attendance	Effect on Education
96-100%	No Concern Well Done!
92-96%	Concern
88 – 92%	Risk of Underachievement
60 – 88%	Severe risk of under achievement
0 – 60%?	Extreme Concern

Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from worsening. It is essential that parents are kept fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

Attendance	School Action
92-96%	Monitor attendance weekly
90-92%	Initial letter sent 2 <sup>nd</sup> letter If no improvement parent will be called into to school to discuss
88-92%	Letter to parent and medical proof of illnesses required If continues then a refer to Greys Medical If continues a meeting between the school Nurse and parent is organised to create a care plan to support the parent. Parent invited in for a parent contract meeting
60-88%	Educational Welfare Officer informed, and action will be taken

### Children Missing in Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head Teacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been informed by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority attendance service as missing.

### Lateness

The class register is taken at 8.55am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after 8.55am must enter via the main school entrance and report to reception where their name and reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil will be marked as late before registration has closed (code L).

The register will close at 9.10am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration has closed (Code U). This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at consultations and the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

### **Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness**

If there are 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term the school will make a referral to the Attendance Service for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter. The Penalty Notice Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded. If an unauthorised absence is recorded during 15-day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child). Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days of issue, the Attendance Service may investigate court proceedings.

### **Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

### **Authorised Absence**

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head teacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays which have not been agreed.

### **Authorising Absence**

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head teacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and the school. The follow reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised.

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. 'poorly/unwell'
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Parental illness (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school - emergencies excepted)
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Holiday absence

### **Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence**

Time off for family holidays cannot be authorised. Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise leave absence:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have a minimal disruption to the pupils education;

- When a family needs time to spend together during or after a crisis. Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead **MUST** be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date. Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Governing Body. Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above. The decision is final and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

### **Attendance and Lateness**

If a new pupil had poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held and targets for attendance will be set. For all children, the attendance officer will monitor absence and lateness following the procedure outlined, being approved. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. The attendance officer along with the Headteacher will use discretion and consider each case carefully considering the following:

- Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils
- The attendance officer will identify pupils with attendance below 92%, monitoring trends in pupil lateness and attendance. EWO support will be requested if necessary.
- Request from school to meet with parent/carer.
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access help from outside agencies.
- Referral to Attendance Service. Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When an Attendance referral is requested the child's Registration Certificate, copies of any correspondence and minutes of meetings **MUST** be attached to the referral form.

### **Working in Partnership**

It is vital for the school and parents to work together to achieve the best attendance possible for every child allowing them to fully take part in the rich curriculum activities that the school provide.

If parents have any concerns about their child's attendance, parents are asked to contact the School Attendance Officer or the Headteacher.

Regular communication between school and parents is essential so that any problems can be quickly identified.