Learner attendance policy

Greenside School

Approved by:		Date:
Last reviewed on:	October 2017	
Next review due by:	October 2020	

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1. Introduction

Good attendance helps the learners (children) in our school community to maximise their learning.

At Greenside School, we recognise that positive behaviour and good attendance are central to raising standards and pupil progress. Consequently, we are committed to promoting excellent levels of attendance in order to enable our pupils to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

2. Legislation and guidance

The following legistlation informs this policy:
- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- 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
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

A recent change that should be noted:

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

As a Hertfordshire School we follow guidance and requirements set by the Hertfordshire LA

3. Aims

This policy aims to support school, parents and learners to achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality.

In order that all pupils are assisted in reaching their potential Greenside School aims to:
- ➢ Encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance.
- ➢ Reduce Persistent Absence.

Greenside School believes that good school attendance assists learners and young people to achieving their personal targets and supports them in progress in their learning

4. Responsibilities & Expectations

4.1 School

- ➢ The school will provide a safe learning environment and maintain records of attendance according to legislation and guidance on a daily basis.
- ➢ Only the Headteacher (in their absence a Deputy Head) can authorise absence.
- ➢ The school will follow up all instances of poor attendance and punctuality.
- ➢ Details of poor attendance/punctuality will be reported to the ISL (Hertfordshire LA) Attendance Team

4.2 Parents

- ➢ Parents/Carers have a legal obligation to ensure their pupil attends school.
- ➢ Parents/Carers must inform the school on the 1st day of absence and give a reason for their pupil's absence. Parents/carers will also maintain daily contact with the school until pupil returns to school.
- ➢ Parents/Carers are expected to ensure their pupil attends school regularly, on time and appropriately dressed.
- ➢ Parents can only request to take learners on holiday during term time in exceptional circumstances.

5. Implementation

5.1 If a learner is absent the parent will:

- ➢ Notify the school by telephone as soon as possible before the start of the school Day, **preferably by 8.30 am** (leaving a message if there is no answer) for a new absence.
- ➢ Not to rely or expect transport to pass on details of the reason for absence.
- ➢ Give a reason for the absence.
- ➢ Give the expected return date.
- ➢ Provide, on request, evidence of offsite appointments – such as a hospital or dentist appointment letter/card.

5.2 If a learner is absent the school will:

➢ Record the telephone notification of absence.

➢ If notification is not received via telephone/in writing <u>by 10am</u> on the first day of Absence. School will ring parent/carer and record the outcome of the call.

➢ Maintain regular contact with parents/carers throughout the pupil's absence.

➢ Keep written notification from parents/carers on file.

➢ Write to parents/carers requesting a reason for absence if it has not been provided.

➢ Record any absences as authorised or unauthorised according to current DfE guidelines.

6. Absence due to illness

In most cases, absence is genuine and therefore is marked as authorised on the register. Notification must be provided for all absences from school and the school will always follow this up. Parents/Carers must give specific reasons for absence – being 'ill' is not enough. Parents/Carers may be asked to provide evidence stating that their pupil is too ill to attend school. Unless Parents/Carers have been given, by a doctor, a particular duration of 'absence through illness' they are expected to contact the school each day to report what is happening.

Parents/carers should think about the risks of spreading illness within the school when returning their learners to school. For example, when a learner has sickness and diarrhea, a '48-time' span should be maintained after the last bodily symptom.

7. Absence due to medical appointments

We would request that all medical appointments are made after school or in school holidays. If a medical appointment is known in advance, parents/carers must notify the school in advance (often in the Home/School Book) and, on request, provide evidence of the appointment.

If an emergency appointment is made please phone the school before 8.30am. A message may also be left on the school's 24 hour answer machine, which is checked regularly.

Notification must be given if a pupil needs to leave school during the day. In such cases, the parent/carer must report to the school reception team, who will arrange for the pupil to be brought to the parent. The parent/carer will be expected to sign the pupil "out", giving time and reason for the pupil leaving school early.

8. Term time holiday/leave

Although parents may make an application for leave of absence this can only be authorised in an exceptional circumstance.

The Headteacher will decide what determines an exceptional circumstance – however, guidance states that, in no circumstances will financial factors be considered to be exceptional.

Examples of Exceptional Circumstances include:

➢ The complexity and challenge of a pupil's special educational needs means that holidays can only be taken outside of the high season;

➢ Close family bereavement.

➢ Close family weddings taking place mid-week or a significant distance from the home;

> ➤ Limitations imposed by charity grants and/or Social Services involvement such as where a holiday package is funded by a charity but dates are pre-fixed as part of the package.

In all cases, leave needs to be requested using the 'Leave/Holiday Request Form' (Appendix 1) that can be found on the school website or from the school office. Parents/carers can request a form be sent home via the leaners Home/School Book.

The Head (or Deputy on his behalf) will make a decision on the leave request and return the form with one working week.

When decisions are being made regarding authortisation of extended leave, the school will consider the nature of the emergency, whether there are already concerns regarding the young person's attendance or concerns about their learning and progress.

Where holidays or leave are taken without permission form the school, because a request has been made or has been denied, these will be recorded on the young person's attendance record as 'unauthorised absence'. If a parent/carer is granted leave and the young person does not return on the specified return date, subsequent absences will be marked as a unauthorised. In these cases the school may refer to the Education Welfare Service and a Penalty Notice may be issued

9. Arriving at school procedure

Parents/carers should ensure that learners arrive at the school at 8.50, not before. This is to ensure that staffing is in place to support your learner.

When learners are dropped off after 9.10 then parents/carers need to ensure that a hand over takes place via the school office. This may include waiting in the entrance of school for a staff member to be released from class to collect your learner.

10. Leaving school procedure

The school day ends at 15.15. Due to our restrictions to access the car park, collection time is between 15.10 and 15.25. Parents/carers need to ensure their learner is picked up during this time, either by themselves or pre-arranged transport.

Learners leaving school during the school day is organised via the class team and the school office. The school office has to ensure a handover occurs and at times a wait may occur. At times office staff may ask for proof of identity to safeguard the learner.

When learners are not picked up after school the office or a member of teaching staff will ring the parent/carer to come and collect the learner. In most situation this could be a mix up in communication or traffic and will be accommodated by the remaining school staff on site. If this became a regular occurrence the school would contact ILS (Herts LA attendance services) for advice on the situation.

At times a 'medical decision' is made in relation to learner's ability to travel home on transport. This is led by SLT, with an input from the nursing time. This could be due to an extended seizure that has occurred at 15.00, meaning the learner cannot go on the transport as they could be too late leaving. In these times school will contact parent to arrange picking the learner up, parents/carers need to ensure contingency plans are in place in case of this occurrence.

If a learner is not collected and no contact can be made with a responsible guardian by 16.30, the school will ring Social Services for advice, in most cases this would be following safeguarding procedures.

11. Monitoring Attendance

Registers are taken by 9.30 each school day. A learner arriving after this time will recorded as being late. Registration details are transferred to an electronic register (SIMS). Parents/Carers whose learners are regularly late for over a period of two weeks, or clear patterns can be seen over a period of month, will be contacted to talk through the reasons for the lateness.

Leaner attendance is monitored on a daily occurrence, in relation to reason for absence/safeguarding by the office/class team.

SLT will monitor attendance at the end of each week and follow up any attendance that a reason for is not given or the learners attendance is below 80%.

Each month attendance will be monitored and parents/carers of learners with less than 90% will be notified in writing with any support that is available to support parents/carers with attendance.

Persistent absence can require a formal meeting to occur with the parent/carer in school, these can be requested after conversation with the parent/carer by a member of SLT.

12. Records

The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years. The rates of attendance will be reported via the school website and/or newsletters. A formal monitoring report is published and discussed by the governing body at the end of each academic year.

13. Integrated Working

Greenside School works with other agencies and professionals to ensure that our learners receive all the support available to achieve good attendance.

14. Exceptional Circumstances

The school will actively seek to work with parents/carers where there is a genuine difficulty with attendance.

Support strategies will be put in place for individual pupils where appropriate.

When a pupil has an illness that means he/she will be away from school for over five days and with the pupil's illness may bar them from engaging in learning activities - the school will endeavour to ensure that he or she can keep up with their school work.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the home education support service, so that arrangements can be made for the pupil to be given some tuition outside school.

15. Review of policy

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. This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every three years or earlier if deemed necessary.

Appendix 1

Request for Leave/Holiday Absence

October 2017 onwards

GREENSIDE SCHOOL

Full school attendance is vital for your child's educational progress. The Local Authority expects all parents/carers to ensure their children attend school whenever possible.

Absence during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.

If you feel your circumstance are exceptional please complete and return this form to the school **before making any travel arrangements**. Absence may only be authorised at the discretion of the school. The Head/Deputy may wish to meet with you to discuss the exact circumstances of your application.

PARENT/CARER SECTION

Child's Name

Date of Birth   /   /   **Class**

Name of Parent/Carer

Child' Address

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Contact telephone number(s)

Justification of absence (including destination)	Educational activities while away (work will not be provided by the school)

Start of absence   /   /   **Date of return to school**   /   /

Number of school days missed

Signature of Parent/Carer

SCHOOL SECTION

Current % Attendance   **No of previous applications**

Absence from school   **Approved**   **Not approved**

Signature of Headteacher