

Policy title:	Attendance Policy Green Lane Infant School
Purpose:	To ensure the consistent and regular attendance of pupils at Green Lane Infant School
Date ratified:	3 rd October 2022
Coordinator/s:	Headteacher: Mrs. Rebecca Conway (DSL) and Deputy Head Teacher: Miss K Lyall (Deputy DSL)
Signed:	Mr. Paul Archdeacon (Chair of Governors) 3 rd October 2022



Green Lane Infant School

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ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Green Lane Infant School

Introduction:

This policy sets out how we at Green Lane Infant School will work towards our aim of achieving excellent rates of attendance for our pupils. It should be considered alongside the government guidance document '*Working together to improve school attendance (2022)*'.

Green Lane Infant School seeks to ensure that all our children receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each child to realise his/her full potential. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and punctually. Any absence causes disruption to learning and should be avoided if at all possible. Improving attendance at Green Lane Infant School is the responsibility of everyone in our community – children, parents, governors and staff.

Although we have children on roll who are below statutory school age, it is our view that these children fall under the ethos of this policy, as it is important to encourage excellent attendance at school for all our pupils.

Links with other policies

- Equality
- SEND
- Child Protection
- Data Protection

AIMS

- To encourage and assist all children to achieve excellent levels of attendance of above **95%**
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the academy including children, parents, staff and governors.
- To maximise attendance across the school population and reduce persistent absenteeism (below 90%).
- To work together with parents/carers in both a supportive and challenging role to achieve high levels of attendance.

Department for Education Definition of Persistent Absence:

Persistent absence threshold is 10%

If a pupil's overall absence rate is 10% or higher, he/she is classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupils are classed as persistently absent based upon their individual absence level, not by a comparison to a national threshold.

See the Department for Education's (DfE) [guidance on pupil absence statistics](#), paragraph 3.2.2.

Children

All Children are expected to:

- Attend school regularly and to arrive on time. Morning registration will be taken at 8.30 (nursery) 8.45am (Reception and KS1). Afternoon registration is 12.15 Nursery, 12.30 Reception and 1.00pm KS1. Children arriving during registration will receive a late mark. Arrival more than **15** minutes after registers close will be recorded as unauthorised absence.
- Come to school properly equipped and prepared to learn.
- Will attend school through the office if the doors to the classroom are closed.
- Talk to a member of staff if there is a problem causing them to miss school.

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school in accordance with Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. They are expected to ensure that:

- Their child attends regularly and is punctual, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- They inform the school of the reason for any absence by telephone, e-mail or using the weduc app on each morning of absence. The school will then make the decision to either authorise or unauthorise the absence. If no reason is given the absence will be automatically unauthorised
- They know that they will not have holidays authorised during term time
- They make medical and dental appointments outside school time
- They give the school up to date information regarding diagnosed medical conditions which may affect attendance
- They provide the school with up to date contact details

Green Lane Infant School

The School will:

- Strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.
- We incentivise our pupils and families/carers to have full attendance, it is important to safeguard our children and maximise potential. We have a series of actions outlined in the 'Attendance guidance' at different stages and rates of attendance. We have weekly assemblies celebrating attendance for the highest class each week. There are attendance prizes for children with 100% attendance (monthly) and termly movie nights.
- Recognise all young people who fall below the Department for Education (DfE) threshold of 90% attendance as Persistent Absentees are therefore a vulnerable group.
- We will contact and support our children, families/carers at various rates of times if their attendance become of concern. This includes attendance of any pupil below 95% and particularly at or approaching 90% which is the threshold for **Persistent Absence**. For all cases at or below 90% attendance the school's HT, or a member of the SLT, will meet with families/carers to look at improving a pupil's attendance. We will support pupils with medical needs and request medical evidence to enable us to put in place the most effective support plan.
- At Green Lane Infant School we have clear day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence. See Attendance guidance (appendix 1)

Contacts:

School Headteacher – Rebecca Conway – 0116 2627050

Attendance lead – Claire Chauhan – 0116 2627050

Person responsible for first contact – Fatima Ismail/Claire Chauhan (Admin Team)

Contacting the school – 0116 2627050 or directly using the weduc app

Email: office@greenlane.leicester.sch.uk

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

The School's registers will be coded in accordance with the Department of Education mandatory codes – see appendix A.

All absences must be explained by a parent or carer on a daily basis. The school will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence. The view of the Department for Education attendance expert is that “some think they're being a good parent by keeping their child off school, if in doubt send them to school. There is a difference between minor ailments and the sort of illness that warrants a day off.”

Some examples of unauthorised absence are:

- Waiting on a delivery
- Going shopping or for a hair cut
- A family day out
- A child's birthday
- Sleeping in after a late night

Any unexplained absence will be unauthorised.

Absence *may* be authorised due to:

- Sickness (although you may need to provide medical evidence)
- Unavoidable hospital appointments
- Days of religious observance (maximum of one day per year)
- Exceptional circumstances

If a child's attendance becomes a cause for concern the school may ask parents to provide medical, or other suitable, evidence to substantiate their reasons before the absence can be authorised.

Holidays

Our policy is that **holidays in term time will not be authorised**. Unauthorised absence for holidays during term time **will** be referred to the Local Authority where a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.

Exceptional Leave

The school recognises that there may be times when a child requires exceptional leave during term time for short periods of time. In these circumstances' parents are asked to complete the 'Exceptional Leave Form' to request the absence. These requests will be considered by the Headteacher on an individual basis. Please ensure that the Headteacher is provided with all evidence and context to support your application for exceptional leave at the point of the initial application as further information provided at a later date will not be considered.

Exceptional leave will not be authorised during assessment periods.

- All requests must be considered on their own merits but there must be very particular and exceptional circumstances before the request will be granted
- Reduced cost of holidays in term time does not amount to exceptional circumstances
- Awkward flight times do not amount to exceptional circumstances
- Parental work patterns are unlikely to amount to exceptional circumstances
- Weddings, at home or abroad are unlikely to amount to exceptional circumstances

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

If a child is absent and no reason has been provided the school will contact parents and/or nominated emergency contacts, as part of the safeguarding procedure. This will be done within the first hour of any absence following the closure of registers.

Where a child is absent and the school cannot contact parents and/or nominated contacts the school will carry out a home welfare check: this will take place by the 2nd day of absence – or sooner.

When a student is persistently late or absent without good reason and the School's efforts to effect change have been unsuccessful a referral will be made to our Attendance & Welfare Officer for further action. This may also involve a home welfare check.

Persistent Absence

The law requires parents and carers to make sure that their children receive a full-time education suitable to their needs. Parents and pupils are supported at school to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

As a last resort, schools may request the local authority, through the Pupils Services Court Team, to use its statutory legal powers if parents/carers fail to ensure their child receives an education.

The following sections of the Education Act 1996 apply:

- Section 444(1): if "a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil fails to attend regularly" at the school. This leads to a fine of up to £1000 per parent.
- Section 444(1A): if "the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails to cause him to do so" without reasonable justification. This 'aggravated offence' leads to a fine of up to £2500 per parent and/or up to 3 months' imprisonment.

A penalty notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence. It would be considered appropriate to serve a notice in the following circumstances:

- parentally condoned absences
- unauthorised leave of absence / holidays in term-time
- excessive delay in returning from extended holidays without agreement
- persistent late arrival at school i.e. after the register has closed.

Children Missing Education (CME)

The Head Teacher will notify the Local Authority when a pupil is likely to be away from the school for a significant period of time due to their health needs. Academies (working with the Trust Attendance & Welfare Lead) will complete a Children Missing Education (CME) referral to the relevant Local Authority when a child's attendance cannot be confirmed after 10 days.

Supporting families

We will always seek to improve a child's attendance in a positive manner. We will seek to work with families and help provide support necessary, or where required to provide signposting and/or liaise with any external agencies and early help. Typically, we will set in place an *Attendance Improvement Plan* with each child/family.

Penalty (fixed) Notices & further actions

The school will consider a penalty notice as a last resort. We will always seek to find supportive ways to work with children and families. However, as set out in the appendix, there are regular points where we will consider this option (please note the receipt of any fines are NOT received by either the school or the Attenborough Learning Trust).

We will also consider working with families and local agencies in our children's best interests and reserve the right to consider all of the following actions where necessary:

- Parenting Contract
- Education Supervision Orders
- Attendance Prosecution
- Parenting Order
- Fixed Penalty Notice

Reviewing patterns of absence

When reviewing a child's patterns of absence, we will typically look at attendance over a 2-week time frame (through fortnightly attendance meetings between the Headteacher and the Attendance Lead) as well as attendance from the start of the academic year. However, where acute concerns arise (or during key periods such as the start of the school year) we may intervene after reviewing absence over a shorter period of time.

Appendix 1

Attendance Guidance

Good attendance is vital to ensure that children learn and reach their full potential

Children should be in school and ready to learn.

We value the support of parents in making sure that children are in school and arrive and leave on time. The Head Teacher of a school is no longer allowed to authorise holidays of any kind except in exceptional circumstances.

We welcome your children into our schools and do not advise elective home education (EHE) although we will always support families in their decisions.

Registers are taken twice daily; morning and afternoon.

Doors open at 8.40 am and children are registered at 8.45 am (Rec and KS1). In Nursery the register is taken at 8.30am.

The start of the afternoon session is 12.15pm in Nursery, 12.30pm in Reception and 1.00pm in KS1.

Any pupil arriving late will be marked late 'L'

However, children arriving more than 15 minutes late will receive a 'U' code this is an unauthorised absent mark

The attendance target for our school is **95%**

Appendix 2

Attendance Codes, Descriptions & Meanings

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)	<i>Not counted in possible attendances</i>
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised 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	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age/ Absence related to awaiting PCR	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

Codes in red are negative marks

Appendix 3 Key Attendance Benchmarks at Green Lane Infant School

Attendance	Action/Support
100%	Winning weekly class is awarded an extra day in Jungle Gym 100% attendance prize monthly 100% attendance movie night termly Attendance letter half termly
99%-95%	Courtesy attendance letter half termly- Attendance is good
90-95%	The is below target. Monitor and Review. Step One letter may be sent to parents if concerns/patterns are evident
Below 90%	Step One Attendance Letter sent to parents Step Two If attendance does not improve then meeting arranged with parents/ HT and attendance lead. Recorded onto CPOMS Step Three If absence continues to decrease then formal step three meeting arranged to set out plan to improve attendance. Support plan in place and recorded onto CPOMS. Step Four Referral to the EWO

100%	Actions /support Letter home and certificate of praise! (Individual school rewards)
99% - 97%	Courtesy letter (informing parents) Letter '1' Attendance is 'good'.
95-96%	This is below target. Monitor and review. Consider moving to Tier 1 concern?
91% - 95%	Tier 1 Concern Attendance letter – Letter '2' Conversation and/or meeting with parents/carers and HT Attendance Lead Recorded on Arbor/CPOMS
90% and below	Tier 2 Concern PA – Letter '3' Formal meeting with HT/ Attendance Lead and Trust representative & parents/carers to set out plan to improve attendance. Legal position considered. Support plan in place + Recorded on Arbor/CPOMS
85% and below	Tier 3 Concern Letter '4' Inviting parents in for a meeting with Trust Welfare and Attendance Lead Reviewing support plan; look at any early help & support. Review legal / medical position Letter 'Medical needs letter '5' Referring to LA Attendance Team by DC

New guidelines (2022) for attendance and use of penalty notices in schools

Circumstances under which Green Lane Infant School will consider the use of a penalty notice:

- 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (including lateness)
- Any incidence of unauthorised holiday in term time
- Any pattern or repeated absences without suitable evidence/justification
- Any unauthorised absence immediately following a leave of absence in term time.
- Any incidence of an excluded pupil being in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of exclusion
- Any child with 2 fines in a school year, should be considered for prosecution.

All absence must be suitably explained and evidenced (where appropriate).

The use of a penalty notice is at the discretion of the HT, or DHT in the absence of the HT.