

Attendance Policy

Grove Road Primary School



Approved by:	The Governing Board
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Working together to improve attendance (2024)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
 - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)

- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

Every child is entitled to a fulltime education. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and is essential if pupils are to maximise their expectation their educational opportunities. The expectation of Grove Road and Hounslow Local Authority is that children attend school every day the school is open.

The school works closely with families and the Local Authority to ensure each pupil's attendance is at least 96%.

See Appendix 2 for the School Action Flow Chart which explains this process.

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs

- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers

- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
 - Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
 - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mrs Parsons and can be contacted via the school office.

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data daily (see section 7)

- Contacting parents and carers if children are not attending school daily
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

The attendance officer is Mrs Cushen and can be contacted via the school office.

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office after morning and afternoon registration. The register closes at 9am daily, if children arrive after this time they will be marked as late.

3.6 School Office staff

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents / carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents / carers to the attendance officer in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents/carers

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Report their child's absence via telephone before 9am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- If medical reasons are given for children being off, evidence should be sent to the school office.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45am and will close at 9am. The register for the second session will be taken at after lunchtime.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by recording the absence by calling the school office(see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

In the event of an absence of more than 5 days, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending an essential medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and provides school with evidence of the appointment. A parent / carer should complete a *Request for Term Time Absence* form available from the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed (8.55- 9.10) will be marked as late, using the code L
- After the register has closed (anytime after 9.10) will be marked as absent, using the code U

Repeated lateness will be followed up by our attendance officer or a member of the Senior Team.

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact another agency such as Children's Services or the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 3 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer.
- If a child does not attend school for 3 days without any communication from parents or carers, a referral is made to the Children Missing in Education Team. This is to ensure children are safe.

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via a termly report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Pupils are not entitled to any leave of absence during term time. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by Hounslow Local Authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If attendance does not improve further legal action may be taken.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We promote good school attendance by

- Termly attendance certificates and other rewards
- Stickers and rewards for improved attendance
- Explaining what this would look like at parents' meetings, assemblies etc

7. Attendance monitoring

At Grove Road Primary School we review attendance on a weekly basis. We monitor individuals and groups of pupils to ensure that all pupils are accessing education.

7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 20% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold meetings with the parents / carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

- Liaise with the Schools Attendance Support Service (SASS) to support families and improve attendance

Stage	Attendance / Punctuality	Action Taken
No concerns	No concerns 96% – 100%	None required
Needs Improvement	91 % – 95%	Letter sent home Meeting with parents / carers – target set and support offered
Serious Concern	90% and below	Referral to Local Authority SASS

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and annually. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- SEND and inclusion policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#).

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study

		for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly	Every pupil absent as the school is closed

	closed	unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

REGULAR TRACKING/MONITORING OF ATTENDANCE (WEEKLY)

Attendance registers are completed daily and correct attendance codes are used. School staff will explore data to identify early patterns of absence.

Termly attendance, and network meetings with the School Attendance Support Officer will be held to review data, discuss early patterns of individual absence, and locality issues.

Each day a child is absent, and the parent/carers have failed to contact the school, absence enquiry calls, texts and emails are made. It may be necessary for school staff to conduct home visits, where the parent/carer continues not to respond, and the pupil fails to attend school. **If unauthorised absence continues and a Social Worker or other service is involved, they must be informed of the absences, and a TAC/F meeting can be considered to address the school concerns and identify barriers to attendance, and referrals made where required.**

Where attendance has declined and is below the school's expected levels of attendance, a letter of concern is sent to the parent/carers. **Attendance monitored weekly.**



ATTENDANCE FAILS TO IMPROVE

Where no improvements to attendance are made and unauthorised absence continues, an appointment letter is sent to parent/carers.

Attendance monitored weekly.



SUPPORT

Where barriers have been identified and support is required, school-based support is provided. Schools and parents can seek support and advice from the Early Help and Family Hubs, and any additional support services should be explored and offered.



SCHOOL MEETING

Parent/carers and pupil attend the school meeting. Parental responsibility in regard to school attendance is outlined. School-based and additional support services discussed, where identified referrals made. Depending on the service involved or required there may be a need for a multi-agency Team Around the Family/Child meeting, where professionals could be invited. A parenting contract and plan of support is completed, this will outline the support and agreement by all to improve school attendance. **The plan will include a 4-week 100% attendance target.**

Where the parent/carer have not attended the school meeting. The parent pupil contract/plan is completed in their absence and sent to the parent/carer. The plan will outline the school concerns and support, and include the **4-week 100% attendance target**. During the target period absence enquiry calls must continue. **Attendance monitored until the target review date.**



ATTENDANCE TARGET REVIEW - ACHIEVED

The school target is reviewed and has been achieved. If there are authorised reasons for absence or there has been an improvement but % levels are still a concern, an extended 4-week 100% attendance target letter would be issued. During the target period absence enquiry calls must continue and support offered. Where the improvements have not been sustained and attendance declined, depending on the length of time since the last target/meeting the school should consider a further meeting/target.



ATTENDANCE TARGET REVIEW – NOT ACHIEVED

The school attendance target is reviewed and has not been achieved and attendance is 90% or below with unauthorised absence. A referral is made to the School Attendance Support Service.



ATTENDANCE - DETERIORATED

The school attendance target was previously achieved, and has declined with unauthorised absence following a period of monitoring, depending on the length of time since the last target/meeting the school should consider a further meeting and a further 4-week 95% attendance target letter can be issued. During the target period absence enquiry calls must continue and support offered.

Where a pupil has a confirmed medical condition

Schools must monitor the attendance and liaise closely with the relevant medical professional (CAMHS, GP, hospital Consultant etc) to agree if the medical condition is preventing the pupil from attending school regularly, if so, the absences should be authorised. Where an agreement has been made not to authorise absences, the school non-attendance procedure should be followed (as above)

Where a pupil has a Special Educational Need/Disability (SEND)

Schools must monitor the attendance and liaise closely with the SEND officer, to inform of any attendance concerns. Where an agreement has been made not to authorise absences, the school non-attendance procedure should be followed (as above) School must adhere to their SEND policy.

Term Time Leave

Head teachers are strongly advised not to authorise term time leave unless there are “exceptional circumstances”, and an application is made in advance. The School Attendance Support Service recommends that when making a decision to authorise the absence, all circumstances should be considered, such as safeguarding risks, levels of attainment, history of attendance and also the previous 190 day’s (equivalent to 1 academic year), if attendance is

above the school's average i.e. 95% and they consider there to be exceptional circumstances, the Headteacher may be more likely to authorise the request as it is deemed that the pupil has "regular attendance".

Where term time leave is taken for 3 or more consecutive days, and not authorised by the Headteacher, a school letter must be sent to the parent/carer informing that the leave is not authorised.

Where the leave has been taken and the parents have returned, a referral can be made to SASS, the attendance threshold for the referral to be actioned is 92%.

Daily absence enquiries/SASS contact request

Where the pupil has failed to attend school with no contact from the parent/carer, the school should call the parent/carers numbers on each day of absence, if no response any additional contact numbers on file should be tried. School staff can also carry out home visits to establish the pupil's reason for absence. **Where there are other services involved such as Children's Social Care and Family Support, they should be contacted to discuss the absence and establish when the pupil was last seen.**

On the third consecutive day of school absence, the parent/carer has failed to respond to all enquires and the pupil's whereabouts are unknown, a referral should be made through the Portal requesting for the School Attendance Support Service (SASS) to make contact/home visit.

Once the referral has been received, the allocated officer will call, text WhatsApp and email the parent/carer and any additional contacts available, to establish the reason for absence. Where a response is received the school will be updated and the referral closed.

Where no response is received, a home visit is conducted.

5 days after the home visit is made and absence has continued the officer will conduct checks. The school process for non-attendance should be considered and proceed.

Where the school and Local Authority have exhausted all reasonable enquires to establish the whereabouts of a pupil, the school should consider if the criteria (Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006) have been met for the pupil to be removed from the school roll.