



Greatstone Primary School

Attendance Policy

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| Policy lead: | Fiona Roberts |
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| Review Date: | September 2022 |
| References: | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• KCC Guidance – Kelsi• KCC Penalty Notice Period• Covid-19 gov.uk publication 2021 to 2022 academic year |
| Governor Agreement | 22 nd September 2021 |
| To be read in conjunction with | Child Protection Policy Kelsi guidance |

Statement of Intent

Greatstone Primary School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them.

One of our basic principles is to celebrate success. Good attendance is fundamental to a successful and fulfilling school experience. We actively promote 100% attendance for all our pupils and we use a variety of weekly, termly and annual awards to promote good attendance and punctuality.

The Governors, Head of School and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Greatstone Primary School.

Parental Responsibility

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

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that children are safe. Telephone messages, emails and ParentMail communication from parents are recorded in an office file. If the school has not received notification we will phone parents and this will also be recorded in the file.

Gates open at 8.45. Pupils are expected to proceed to their class and be in school by 9am. All pupils that arrive late need to report, with their parent to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded. Parental Responsibility for annual holidays Any parent who takes a child out of school for term-time leave of 10 or more morning and afternoon sessions (therefore a total of 5 days) during any 100 possible school sessions or 50 school days, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances), may receive a Penalty Notice. The unauthorised term-time leave does not have to be consecutive for a parent to receive a Penalty Notice.

In deciding whether to refer a case for the sanction of a Penalty Notice, the Head of School should take into account whether there is known evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

Payment of a Penalty Notice within 28 days is £120 reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the Notice and payment applies for each parent per child.

The Role of the School Staff

At Greatstone there is a whole school responsibility and approach for improving school attendance, with specific staff taking individual responsibility. The Head of School has overall responsibility for attendance and their decision for making a penalty notice referral is final.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late.

It is the responsibility of school to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
 - If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence
 - Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is unauthorised
 - Where attendance becomes a concern, the Attendance Officer will contact parents and arrange an attendance review meeting with clear targets to be set alongside regular monitoring on the improvement of attendance.
 - The appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes)
 - Parents are informed of their child's attendance figures in their academic reports once a year.

Timeline of School Action for Poor Attendance

The Inclusion and Attendance Service is part of Early Help and Preventative Services within the Local Authority.

- 95 - 100% attendance - class teacher to investigate and notify our Attendance officer of any concerns
- 90 - 95% attendance - monitored through termly internal attendance reports with advice from the School Liaison Officer if there are concerns
- Where the level of absence has not improved and there are unauthorised absences, the school will make a referral to the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service using the Digital Front Door. If it is not clear a referral to the Service is appropriate, the school will consult with the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for advice.
 - For the cases that require intensive family support, the school may make an Early Help Notification. The School Liaison Officer deals with straightforward penalty notices and prosecution of parents where there are no underlying or more complex concerns. A referral can be made to the Early Help and Preventative Services team where it is felt that different action is needed. Referral forms can be found on Kelsi.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Head of School and the Inclusion and Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from

education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a Child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

Absence due to family holidays

We cannot and will not authorise absence for a family holiday. Where a child is absent for a family holiday, we will always refer for a penalty notice.

- From 1 September 2013, Head of Schools are unable to agree leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied there are exceptional circumstances
- Should absence be agreed, Head of Schools can specify the number of days a pupil will be allowed to be absent from school
- Where leave of absence is not agreed and the pupil is out of school or the pupil is away longer than was agreed or an application has not been made in advance, the absence is recorded as unauthorised
- Head of Schools cannot give retrospective approval

Lateness

At Greatstone Primary School the register is taken at 9:00am and 1:05pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main 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 9:15 am and 1:15 pm. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'U') and this will count as an unauthorised absence.

Frequent lateness will be discussed with parents at open evenings and may be referred to the School Liaison Officer. It can provide grounds for prosecution or Penalty Notice.

Attendance and Lateness

At Greatstone Primary School, we expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open and where there are more than 10 sessions or 5 days unauthorised absence in a 50 day period, the school may request a Penalty Notice.

If a new pupil has a history of poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held. The school has a 'five-step' approach to

monitoring absence and lateness. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. Responsible staff will use discretion and discuss each case carefully.

'Five Steps'

1. Where there has been no contact from parents, the school will call home on the first day of absence (first day calling) for all pupils.
2. Consultation with the School Liaison Officer to identify pupils with attendance below 90%, monitoring trends in pupil attendance and lateness.
3. Invitation to meet with school staff
4. Consider completing an Early Intervention notification form
5. Referral to School Liaison Officer leading to prosecution if there is no improvement.

Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When a referral to the School Liaison Officer is made, the administrator's log (SIMS) and school attendance meeting minutes will be available as evidence.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016, as revised in April 2017, when:

- 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed during any possible 100 school sessions leads to 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 unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period, a Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child)
- Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days of issue the Local Authority will instigate court proceedings

Authorising Absence

Only the Head of School can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the Head of School, on behalf of the governing body, should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head of School 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 school.

The following 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

- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Persistent unauthorised absence (10% or more of the school year) may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

When a referral is made, the child's Registration Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings need to be attached to the completed AS1 referral form with any other relevant information.

Local Authority Action may include:

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Fast Track to Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance

Penalty Notices are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016 and revised in April 2017.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions or period of 50 days of schooling – these do not need to be consecutive.
 - A Penalty Notice can also be issued where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
 - After the appropriate request for a Penalty Notice is received, the KCC Inclusion and Attendance Service will issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded
 - If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15- day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child)

Exceptional circumstances could include:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.

- Any strong personal reasons why a family might need to take a child away from school for a short break.

Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive. It is acceptable to take a pupil's previous record of attendance into account when the school is making decisions. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by 'unavoidable' it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. It is important to note that Head of Schools can agree the absence of a child in exceptional circumstances and this discretion can be used also to determine the length of the authorised absence.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days. Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each child. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent:

- with leave (the school has given permission)
- due to sickness or any unavoidable cause (the sickness or unavoidable cause must relate to the child, not the parent)
- religious observance
- failure by the Local Authority to provide transport

In law, these are the only acceptable reasons for a child being absent from school.

The Head of School may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head of School, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Head of School's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Inclusion and Attendance Service who may issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period will result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

COVID-19

Recording attendance in relation to COVID-19 during the 2021 to 2022 academic year

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2021-to-2022-academic-year>

Attendance is mandatory. The usual rules on attendance continue to apply.

Not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19

This category must be used to record sessions that take place where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19 from Public Health England (PHE), or its successor UK Health Security Agency (UKHSA), and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of COVID-19

This category must only be used to record where a pupil is not attending for the reasons set out above. It should not be used to record any other type of non-attendance or absence - for example, where a parent or pupil is anxious about attending school because of COVID-19.

Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances relating to COVID-19' could apply

In line with current legislation, and guidance from PHE (and its successor the UKHSA) and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

Pupils who have symptoms of COVID-19, or have had a positive lateral flow device (LFD) test, should self-isolate and get a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I (illness). Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. School will not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate in line with public health guidance. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed COVID-19

Pupils who are a close contact of someone who has tested positive for COVID-19 do not need to self-isolate. They should instead get a PCR test, and should only self-isolate if they test positive. If they do test positive, they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, the code X will be entered in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised

Clinically extremely vulnerable people are no longer advised to shield. All clinically extremely vulnerable pupils should attend unless they are one of the very small number of children and young people under paediatric or other specialist care who have been advised by their clinician or other specialist not to attend.

If shielding is advised nationally or in a local area again, by DHSC, PHE or UKHSA, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable may be advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from DHSC, PHE or UKHSA should be recorded as code X.

Pupils who are self-isolating but who have not had a PCR test

In line with public health advice, pupils with symptoms must self-isolate and we should strongly encourage pupils to take a PCR test. Where the pupil is unable to take a PCR test, the pupil will be registered as code X.

GPS will follow up with families if we are not satisfied with the reason as to why the pupil is not in school. Schools can request supporting evidence from the family.

Where we are not satisfied with the reason given for absence, we may record this using one of the unauthorised absence codes, in line with the [school attendance: guidance for schools](#).

Remote education

If a pupil is not attending school because their attendance would be contrary to government guidance or legislation around COVID-19, we will offer access to remote education. School will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with, this activity.

Kent School Referral Pathway – Pupil Attendance

