



GREENFIELDS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL,
NURSERY & PRE-SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

September 2025



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INTRODUCTION

The law states all children aged from 5 to 16 must receive an appropriate full-time education. Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all children can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated - children need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects Schools and Local Authorities to:

- ~ Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- ~ Act early to address patterns of absence.
- ~ Ensure every child has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- ~ Ensure parents and carers to perform their legal duty, by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school, attend regularly.
- ~ All children to be punctual to their lessons.

POLICY RATIONALE

At Greenfields we recognise that regular attendance and reliable punctuality are good habits to develop for the future and as a result, our attendance strategies begin as soon as children enter our school. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

Parents and pupils play a part in making our school successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

At Greenfields we are committed to:

- ~ Ensuring that all parents/carers and pupils are aware of the legal duty and importance of regular attendance through the home school agreement, but also as a part of our behaviour and attitude systems.
- ~ Ensure every child has access to an educational offer for the time to which they are entitled.
- ~ Ensure that all parents/carers are given appropriate information regarding school attendance and their child's attendance.



- ~ Encourage and promote greater communication between school and parents/carers to discuss concerns or issues and find ways to move forward to improve attendance.
- ~ Promote good attendance and punctuality.
- ~ Support and challenge where attendance and/or punctuality are a concern.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school will prepare them for the world of work when they are adults. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

THE ATTENDANCE REGISTER

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every child on the admission register is:

- ~ Present;
- ~ Attending an approved educational activity;
- ~ Absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Greenfields will follow up any absences to:

- ~ Ascertain the reason;
- ~ Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- ~ Identify whether the absence is authorised or not; and,
- ~ Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's register.

Registers are completed electronically by the member of staff responsible for the class at that time. Children will either be marked as present [/] or absent [N] (reason not yet authorised). Staff then add any reasons given, as and when they are provided. On a weekly basis, the Headteacher & Deputy Headteacher will review and either authorise or unauthorise all absences, using national codes designed to enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations.



COMMUNICATION WITH PARENTS & CARERS

We make sure that parents/carers are fully aware of their child's/children's attendance, for example sending home letters informing all parents/carers of their child's/children's attendance percentage. There is a 'First Day Response' procedure in place, whereby a member of staff with responsibility for attendance monitors daily the absences of all pupils and makes phone contact with the parents/carers of pupils who have a family partner, involvement with Children's Services, fall within the 'Persistent Absentee' category or are identified as 'vulnerable'. If we have not had a phone call, email or voice message to inform us of why your child is absent that day, a member of the school office will make contact with you after registration has closed.

PROMOTING GOOD AND IMPROVED ATTENDANCE

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement contains details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves 'good' attendance. At Greenfields 'good' attendance refers to attendance which is at least equal to the national average attendance for pupils.

We will do this by:

- ~ Supporting anxious attenders and encourage parents to take a responsible approach to attendance by following our school policy
- ~ Providing information to parents/carers on all matters related to attendance
- ~ Reporting to parents and carers on how their children are performing academically in school, what their attendance and punctuality percentage is and how this relates to their attainment.
- ~ Celebrate good and improved attendance in weekly celebration assemblies
- ~ Encourage healthy competition within classes by setting targets for the school and for classes for attendance



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

A member of the senior leadership team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

On a daily basis, a member of staff will call the parents of children who are absent in a 'First Day Response' call. They will ascertain what the reason for absence is and then, if the parent or carer needs any support regarding the absence, speak to relevant professionals as appropriate to share information and discuss ways forward to support the parent and child and improve attendance.

These calls are made in priority order:

- ~ Children on a child protection plan (CP) and other social care involvement including but not limited to children in need plans (CIN), children with a family partner and children with an Early Help Assessment (EHA).
- ~ Children who are persistently absent (PA).
- ~ Children who have been identified by the school as anxious attenders (AA).

Parents and carers whose children have an overall high level of attendance and who have not yet provided a reason for absence will be contacted via a phone call and asked to inform school of the reason for their child's absence.

Responsibilities of staff

- ~ Ensure that all children are registered accurately.
- ~ Promote 'good' and improved attendance with children at all appropriate opportunities.
- ~ Liaise with the Assistant Headteacher on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- ~ Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- ~ Support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.



Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

It is our expectation that parents will:

- ~ inform the school on the first day of absence
- ~ discuss with the class teacher any planned absences well in advance
- ~ support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- ~ make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable
- ~ avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- ~ only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance
- ~ make contact with school with any concerns so that school can support

Responsibilities of children:

- ~ Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- ~ Arrive in school on time.
- ~ Speak to staff if they have any concerns that might impact upon their attendance or punctuality.

We recognise that for a vast majority of our children the ability to arrive at school rests with their parent or carer. Ultimately this can indicate concerns that parents and carers are not able to meet their child's needs as a safeguarding concern.

Any communication with parents or carers which refers to absence will contain the phrase "was not brought" as opposed to "did not attend".

If your child is going to be absent for any reason, we need you to let the school office know before 10:00 am on each day of their absence.

Please telephone 0191 6250100 and select **Option 1** to report your child's absence.



THE ATTENDANCE 'TRAFFIC LIGHT' SYSTEM:

Red Zone - Persistent Absentees: A child is considered to be a 'Persistent Absentee' (PA) if they have missed 10% or more school time across the school year, for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. Whilst we monitor all absences rigorously; children who have reached the PA category, or are at risk of being in the PA category, are given priority. Parents/carers of children within the PA category may be asked to enter into a parenting contract with the school.

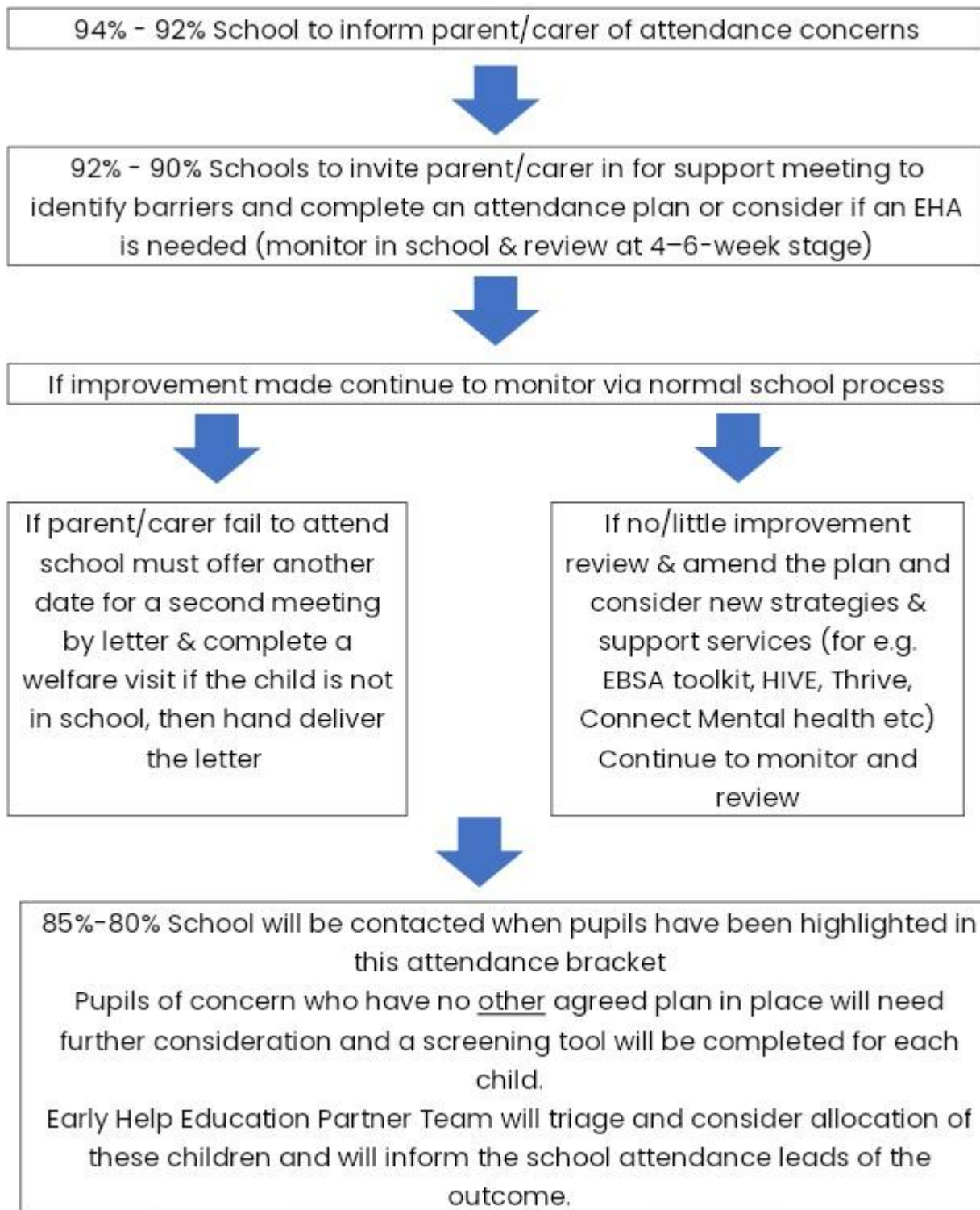
PA children are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we also combine this with academic mentoring where absence affects attainment. Where persistent absenteeism is not improving and is therefore a significant concern, school may make a referral to Social Care or suggest that a family engages in an Early Help Assessment to help identify how to support the family to improve attendance. School will not authorise absences for children with attendance of less than 90% without additional information. For example, if a child in the PA category is ill, confirmation from a medical practitioner will be required in order to authorise this absence.

School will contact parents/carers when their child's attendance falls below 90% to inform them that they have entered into a legal monitoring period of 4 weeks. During the monitoring period, attendance needs to be no less than 95%. Attendance that fails to meet the 95% target will result in school referring parents/carers to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Warning Notice. The process is then repeated with immediate effect. If the attendance target is not met again, school will refer parents/carers to the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice (fine). A Penalty Notice is a fine of £60 per parent per child if it is paid within 21 days of receipt. If not paid within 21 days, this rises to £120 per parent per child. If the penalty (fine) is not paid in full within 28 days, the Local Authority will prosecute parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If found guilty, parents could be fined up to £2,500 or receive up to three months in prison.

Amber Zone - 'At Risk': Children with attendance between 90% and 95.9% are in the Amber zone. There is clear evidence that children with this level of attendance are at risk of under achieving. School will begin formal monitoring at this stage.

Green Zone: Children with attendance of 96% or above are in the Green Zone, which gives children the best possible chance to fulfil their potential

The following Flow Chart shows the process we follow when attendance dips below 94%





ILLNESS



When your child says they feel unwell, it can be hard deciding whether to keep them off school. Not every illness will mean your child should stay away from school. Whether you send your child to school will depend upon how severe you think the illness is. This link will take you to the NHS guidelines that should help you make that judgement:

[NHS - Is my child too ill for school?](#)

If children have an infectious illness, when deciding whether the absence can be authorised, we use the Public Health England guidance to schools about the recommended time that children should be kept away from school:

[PHE guidance - Health Protection in Schools](#)

Medication - In order to encourage regular attendance and full participation in school life, we urge parents/carers to speak to their GPs about how the timings of medication can fit around the school day. If staff are asked to administer GP prescribed medicines, we follow these guidelines:

- Non-prescribed medicines cannot be administered to any child.
- Medicines can only be given if parents/carers have given written permission.
- Medicines can only be administered according to prescription dosage and where the frequency is specified as '4 times daily' ('3 times daily' medication can be administered by parents/carers before school, after school and before bed).
- Medicines must have the pharmacy label showing the child's name, the prescribed dosage and frequency of administration.
- Medicines must be handed in at the school office to be stored in a secure place. (Children who require the use of inhalers or epipens will always have immediate access to them.)

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EVERY DAY COUNTS!

Attendance matters *all day, every day*

100%	OUTSTANDING
98%	IMPRESSIVE 4 days absence 20 hours of learning lost
96%	GOOD 6 days absence 30 hours of learning lost
93%	NEEDS TO IMPROVE 13 days absence 65 hours of learning lost
90%	CONCERNS 19 days absence 95 hours of learning lost
80%	SERIOUS CONCERNS 29 days absence 145 hours of learning lost



PENALTY NOTICES:

Under the new National Framework for Penalty Notices issued by the DfE, the following changes came into force for School Penalty Notice Fines issued after 19th August 2024:

- **First offence:** The first penalty notice issued for unauthorised absence is a fine of £80 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £160 if the notice is paid after 21 days but within 28 days.
- **Second Offence:** If a second penalty notice is issued within a 3-year period for unauthorised absence, then the fine is a flat rate of £160 paid within 28 days.
- **Third Offence:** The third time an offence is committed a penalty notice will not be issued, and the case will be presented straight to the Magistrate's Court. Prosecution can result in Criminal record and fines of up to £2,500

If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period, the Local Authority will prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

As the Penalty Notice are fixed the legislation does not allow part- payment to be made or payments by instalments.

HOLIDAYS DURING SCHOOL TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, SI 2013 No 756, amended the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, SI 2006 No. 1751 to remove references to family holiday. Prior to the changes, Headteachers could grant a leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten school days per year.

According to the regulations which took effect in September 2013, Headteachers cannot grant leave of absence during term-time unless there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any requests for leave of absence must be put in writing, so that the Headteacher and school's Governing Body can be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and therefore warrant the granting of leave. Examples of exceptional circumstance might be to attend the funeral of a close family member or to receive respite care that has been recommended in writing by a health professional as part of rehabilitation from a medical issue.

If a holiday is unauthorised, you will receive a letter from school to notify you of this decision within 5 working days of the request being submitted.