



GREENFIELDS COMMUNITY PRIMARY SCHOOL,
NURSERY & PRE-SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

September 2023



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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 Assistant 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 half termly attendance certificates and sending 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 (Assistant Headteacher) 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".