



# Attendance Policy

**Ratified by Governors**

Date for full implementation: 1<sup>st</sup> March 2017

Date for review: March 2019

Signature/s

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Chair of Governors – Mr P Dollimore

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Head Teacher – Mrs A Szymaniak

## Safeguarding Statement

At Grange Primary we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Grange Primary. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## Equality Statement

Grange Primary School is an inclusive school where we focus on the well-being and progress of every child and where all members of our community are of equal worth. We believe that the Equality Act 2010 provides a framework to support our commitment to valuing diversity, tackling discrimination, promoting equality and fostering good relationships between people. It also ensures that we continue to tackle issues of disadvantage and underachievement of different groups. We recognise that these duties reflect international human rights standards as expressed in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the UN Convention on the Rights of People with Disabilities, and the Human Rights Act 1998.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Good attendance at school is essential for a pupil's education and establishes a positive working ethos early in life. 100% attendance is certainly possible, but in the event of your child being away from school it is essential that you, the parent inform the school of the reasons for absence.

### 1.1 WHY?

- The Education Act 1996 requires parents and carers to ensure their child receives efficient fulltime education, suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Under current government legislation, all absence figures, together with the reasons for absence have to be reported to the Schools Governing Body, Local Authority (LA), and the Department for Education (DfE).
- Parents, guardians and carers must ensure that they are fully aware of the school's attendance policy as any absence will have a huge impact on your child's learning. Regular school attendance is essential and parents, guardians and carers, together with our school staff all have a part to play in ensuring full potential is achieved.
- Pupils are expected to attend school for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:
  - Authorised Absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence.
  - Unauthorised Absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's absence from school after a parent's request.
- Please be aware that when a parent telephones the school with information that their child is unable to attend due to illness, or other circumstances, this may not be automatically authorised. Your child's current and previous school attendance will be taken into consideration and as a result the absence may not be authorised.
- Keeping your child off school with minor ailments such as a headache or slight cold is not acceptable. Repeated absences will require us to request that you obtain medical evidence from your doctor's surgery. This may be in the form of a date stamped compliment slip confirming your visit, or prescription or medicine bottle. Any of the above is to be shown to a member of the school office. (Please note: that the school is not asking any parent to incur a charge for such information and will not be liable for the cost.)
- There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievement, friendship circles and self-esteem.
- The achievement and maintenance of high levels of attendance is the shared responsibility of parents, guardians or carers, the school with its Governing Body and the Local Authority.

## 2.0 AIMS OF THE POLICY

To promote regular attendance thus offering all pupils equal access to learning. We keep a live register of pupil's attendance every school day.

## 3.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE POLICY

- Ensure pupils are in school for the maximum number of days.
- Create a clearly understood attendance procedure that is effectively communicated to and understood by parents/carers.
- Meet the Government attendance targets set for us.

This Policy is designed to help all concerned adults to enable children to attend school regularly and thus be offered the most consistent access to learning as is possible.

#### 4.0 SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- To communicate clearly the attendance procedure and expectations of the school.
- Maintain appropriate attendance data.
- Have appropriate registration processes in place.
- To follow up absences and lateness if parents/carers have not communicated with the school: initially with a first-day absence telephone call.
- Inform parents/carers of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absences.
- To have systematic and consistent daily records which chart absence and lateness.
- To report to the Attendance Officer and support their work with pupils as necessary.
- To report to the Government on attendance twice a year.
- To consistently administer the attendance procedure.
- To ensure that registers are taken twice daily: at the start of the morning and afternoon sessions
- To promote good attendance
- If there is unauthorised absence for 20 consecutive school days, or no contact from parents/carers after 20 school days, and in liaison with the Education Social Worker, the school should remove the child from school roll and allocate the place to a family in need of a school place. The child missing education will be reported to Children's Services.

#### 5.0 PARENT/CARER RESPONSIBILITIES

- To ensure their child has no unauthorised absences
- To have children in class ready for teaching by the start of the day
- To inform school on every day of any absence
- To request leave at least two weeks in advance as possible unless an emergency
- To take no more than one school day for religious observance
- To make applications for leave in writing on the school's 'Leave Of Absence Form' , giving the reason for the request
- To work with the school and Attendance Officer to reduce lateness and improve attendance
- To avoid medical and dental appointments during the school day
- If parents, guardians or carers are worried about their child's attendance at school they should:
  - Talk to their child; it may be something simple that needs your help in resolving
  - Talk to your child's class teacher in the first instance

#### 6.0 THE PROCESS FOR MONITORING ATTENDANCE

The School Attendance Officer will log instances of absence and lateness and discuss weekly with the Headteacher. Where issues persist the following will be initiated:

- Stage 1: Where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality the school will make verbal contact with home
- Stage 2: If the concerns persist the school will write to the parents/carers
- Stage 3: If the concerns persist the school will arrange a meeting between the parent/carer, school representative and the attendance officer
- Stage 4: If the concerns persist the school will make a formal referral to the Local Authority Educational Welfare Service to deal with the on-going issues. Should concerns persist the Local Authority will agree action (as above) and where necessary meet with the parents/carers. Please note that ultimately the Local Authority can take legal action. See Appendix 1.

#### 7.0 ABSENCES DURING TERM TIME

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 explanatory note states:

*Regulation 7 of the 2006 Regulations is amended to prohibit the proprietor of a maintained school granting leave of absence to a pupil; except where an application has been made in advance and the proprietor considers that there are exceptional*

*circumstances relating to the application.*

*Leave of absence taken without authorisation may be referred to the Education Welfare Service. This may result in prosecution proceedings, or a Fixed Penalty Notice. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, a separate Notice would be issued to each parent for each child.*

***AS OF 1<sup>ST</sup> SEPTEMBER 2013, THE RATE PER FAMILY PER CHILD WILL BE £60 If paid before 21 days, increasing to £120 if not paid within the first 21 days, but paid within 28 days.***

If the penalty notice is not paid each parent may be liable to prosecution at the Magistrates Court, and if proved, each notice may receive a criminal conviction and/or a fine to the maximum of £1,000 plus costs.

Application for term-time leave of absence must be made in advance by the parent with whom the child normally resides on the form headed 'APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR TERM TIME HOLIDAY'. These may be obtained from the school office. (see Appendix 1)

Leave of absence will only be granted where the Headteacher considers it is due to 'exceptional circumstances'. Parent will be informed within 7 school days as to whether the request has been authorised or unauthorised.

**There are approximately 190 school days (380 sessions) a year which your child is expected to attend. There are also approximately 76 days (152 sessions) of school holidays. This is over 13 school weeks. Please ensure that your holidays are taken during this period.**

## **8.0 LATENESS**

**Punctuality is an important life skill. It is also polite.**

- Children must be in class on time each day. Registers will be taken twice daily (at 8.45 a.m. and 12.45 for EYFS p.m. and 1.00 p.m. for KS1 and 1.15 p.m. for KS2)
- Morning registers will close at 8.55 a.m.
- Any child arriving after the close of the registration period will be recorded as "late" for that session. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. unexpected traffic problems.
- The school gates will be shut by 8.45 am. Children who arrive after that time must come into the building via the main office, where they will be entered onto the schools entry system.
- Lateness will be monitored and the Attendance Officer will follow this up
- If the arrival at school is after the registers have closed at 8.55 am, the pupil will receive a 'U' code confirming they are unauthorised on the official school register.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence coded 'M'.
- Where possible doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.
- Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Lateness is considered to be equally as serious as absence as it disrupts learning for a child and the class. Parents/carers of pupils who seem to be developing patterns of lateness the procedure outlined in point 6.0 will be applied.

## **9.0 SICKNESS**

- Please notify the school on each day of the absence.
- We reserve the right to request a doctor's/consultant's letter regarding recurring and frequent illness.
- We will provide a letter to be stamped if a GP or Consultant does not provide an appointment/visit card
- Parents should write a letter/email to confirm an absence even if you have telephoned when the child returns to school. This should include the dates of absence and reason for absence and should be signed and dated.

## **10.0 PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE**

We celebrate good attendance throughout our School by

- Celebrating class attendance totals every month in the newsletter

- Rewarding a class with the highest weekly attendance with a pizza party
- Awarding individual certificates to individual children who have 100% for each half term
- By awarding special certificates and a prize to individual children who get 100% attendance for the whole academic year (September to July)
- Weekly prize draw with a £5.00 voucher to one child in KS1 and one child in KS2

### 11.0 THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

The Local Authority strives to support the school, parents and pupils with the aim of ensuring and promoting good attendance and punctuality. However, the Local Authority also has a statutory responsibility under the Education Act 1996 to pursue non-school attendance and persistent lateness.

Section 444 of the Education Act states that “if a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil at a school, fails to attend regularly at the school, the parents are guilty of an offence.” Harrow Council, through the Education Welfare Service, may issue a Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecute parents when children do not attend school regularly.

A Fixed Penalty Notice can be issued as long as the following criteria apply:

- At least 10 sessions (equivalent to five school days) of unauthorised absence by the pupil during the current school term, or 20 sessions (ten school days) in the previous 4 months
- Other than in specific circumstances, the parent will receive a formal warning of the possibility of a Penalty Notice being issued and given 15 school days to affect improvement.
- Within the 15 day period, further unauthorised absence will trigger the issue of a notice without warning.
- No more than two Penalty Notices will be issued per pupil per academic year.

In exceptional circumstances the Local Authority reserves the right to:

- issue a Penalty Notice for a first offence
- issue a Penalty Notice without warning

Lateness:

- In cases where a child persistently arrives at school after the register has closed (ten unauthorised late marks) within a period of no more than 12 weeks

Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time frame, legal proceedings are initiated in the Magistrates Court.

### 12.0 GOVERNORS

It is the Governors legal responsibility to monitor and evaluate the attendance in their schools. The schools attendance figures are presented to the Governing Body on a termly basis.

# APPENDIX 1

## APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR TERM TIME HOLIDAY

At Grange Primary we believe that full time education enables our children to learn and progress more effectively. Please note we would expect very high attendance before we authorise leave during term time except in exceptional circumstances such as family illness or bereavements. We must have a fixed return date. If your child's overall attendance during their time with us has not been high we will consult the Education Social Worker. If leave of absence is UNAUTHORISED we will inform the Education Social Worker.

Harrow will now fine families up to £120 per child, per parent; please do not ask for time off during term time where possible.

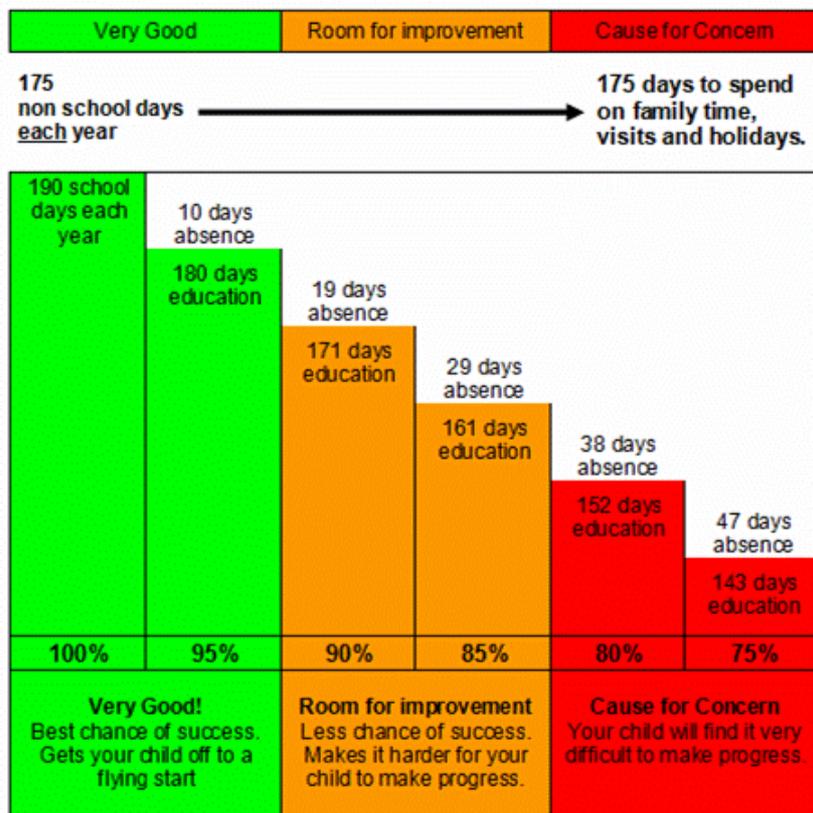
CHILD'S/ CHILDREN'S NAME(S):		CLASS(ES):	
ADDRESS:		TELEPHONE: Home - Mobile - Work -	
DESTINATION (Address where possible):	REASON FOR APPLICATION:		
LAST DAY AT SCHOOL:	FIRST DAY BACK IN SCHOOL:	SCHOOL DAYS ABSENT FOR:	
PARENT/ CARER NAME:		PARENT/CARER SIGNATURE:	
EMERGENCY CONTACT NAME WHILST AWAY:		EMERGENCY CONTACT TELEPHONE NUMBER:	

### FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:

REQUEST RECEIVED ON:	SEEN BY:  Headteacher                      Delegated Teacher
CHILD'S ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE FOR THIS ACADEMIC YEAR:                      %	NUMBER OF AUTHORISED HOLIDAY DAYS THIS ACADEMIC YEAR:
I agree to _____ day(s) absence  AUTHORISED:  UNAUTHORISED: <b>You are now formally cautioned that the Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty notice, as specified above.</b>	Comment:   Signed:  Date:

# Parent Guide:

## WHAT IS GOOD ATTENDANCE?



Good school attendance is one of the main factors in determining your child's future and opportunities in life. Children who are absent from school regularly do less well in achieving their academic potential and have fewer career choices. Harrow local education authority aims for all pupils to attend at least 98% of the school year. At Grange Primary, we aim for at least 97%.

It is important that your child develops good attendance habits from the beginning of primary school.

*In Harrow we know that children who have below average attendance at primary school:*

- can have difficulty in making and keeping reliable friends
- may have difficulties with school work
- can develop behavioural problems in and out of school
- are more likely to truant or drop out
- have less opportunities for further education and employment
- find it more difficult to find and keep a job
- are more likely to be involved with the police
- do less well in SATS and GCSE exams

## What parents/carers can do...

If you are a parent/carer, it is your responsibility to:

- avoid unnecessary absences such as treats for birthdays etc
- arrange medical/dental appointments for after school (if this is not possible, avoid keeping your child off school for the whole day)
- shop for clothes and shoes at the weekend, not during school time
- inform the school on the first morning if your child is ill and send a note explaining the absence on your child's return to school, signed and dated
- if you think something is wrong eg your child complains of feeling ill frequently, or bullying, contact the teacher and make an appointment to discuss your concerns

## How you can help:

- set up good evening and morning routines so that your child arrives alert and ready to learn
- make sure your child arrives on time - late arrivals are disruptive
- take an active interest in your child's school and homework
- attend parent and curriculum evenings

## Pupil leave of absence from school (update)

The Amendments in September 2013 to the 2006 school attendance regulations make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

As absence for holidays is no longer allowed, no parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday.

For more details, see the Grange Primary Attendance policy.