



Great Barford Church of England Primary Academy Attendance Policy

'Growing together through learning, friendship and worship'

Purpose

We believe that we can improve the life chances of all children by ensuring that all staff, pupils and parent/carers are aware of the importance of, and take responsibility for, regular attendance. We encourage children to attend and put in place appropriate procedures to support this. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- attainment in school
- relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting relationships
- confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others

The Governors and Head teacher, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school.

Aims

At Great Barford Church of England Primary Academy we believe that it is important to provide an environment in which:

- Pupils are supported in reaching their potential in order that they can attain the highest possible level.
- Everyone is valued, praised and rewarded.
- Positive relationships are promoted.
- Everyone feels safe.
- The curriculum is designed to reflect the interests and needs of the pupils ensuring engagement and enjoyment in their learning.
- There is an expectation that good attendance is the key to success.
- The monitoring and evaluation of individual attendance patterns supports the learning of individuals.

The School Day

	Nursery	Reception	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Start of School	8.45am	8.55am	8.55am	8.55am
Morning Session	8.45am -11.45am	8.55am – 11.45am	8.55am – 11.45am	8.55am – 12.15pm
Break Time	N/A	N/A	10.30am – 10.45am	10.45am – 11.00am
Lunch Time	11.45am – 1.00pm	11.45am – 1.00pm	11.45am – 12.45pm	12.15pm – 1.15pm
Afternoon Session	1.00pm – 3.15pm	1.00pm - 3.15pm	12.45pm - 3.20pm	1.15pm - 3.20pm
End of School	3.15pm	3.15pm	3.20pm	3.20pm

The school gates open at 8.45am. The children in EYFS and KS1 are delivered to the individual class entrances by an adult and a member of the classroom team will be there to greet them and welcome the child in to the classroom.

Children in KS2 are asked to leave their adult at the top of the school, drive and walk to the back playground where a member of staff will be manning the gate will welcome them and they will enter the school building and go to their class where a member of their class team will welcome them in to the classroom.

The doors and gates close at 8.55am and any pupils who arrive after 8.55am must enter via the main reception and report to the school office where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness recorded. A text message is sent to any parent whose child is late to school.

End of School Arrangements

Parents or carers of children in Years 1 to 6 should pick up their children at the end of the day from the main (back) playground.

Reception and Nursery should collect their children at the end of the school day from their child's playground.

Any child who has not been picked up at the end of the school day will be taken to the school office. If they remain uncollected by 3.30pm they will be taken to after school club unless prior arrangements have been made and a charge will be made to the parents at the headteachers discretion. (One off lateness is understandable persistent late pick up will be charged for)

If parents have any short term problems with picking children up from school at 3.20pm, they should talk to the Headteacher so that arrangements can be made to support the family.

Reasonable adjustment can be made for children with specific needs to enter or exit school. This will be agreed with the headteacher taking advice from outside agencies where they are involved and in conjunction with discussion with staff and parents.

If a child is not collected from school within an hour after the end of the session and it is not possible to contact the parents, Children's Services and the police will be contacted as the child is technically classed as 'abandoned'.

Parental Responsibility

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

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, it is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first day of absence; an email can be left on the attendance@gbpa.org.uk email. The email must state the child's name class and the reason for the absence. This is a safeguarding matter so that everyone knows that the child is safe. When a child is absent, the school office will record the absence in the register and record the reason left for the absence. If the school isn't contacted, A call will be made to the family shortly after the register has closed to check the reason for the absence.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If this is unavoidable:

1. An appointment card or verification by the doctor/dentist/hospital is required.
2. The child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If a child is absent due to vomiting or diarrhoea, they should be off school for 48hours after the last bout of sickness or diarrhoea. This to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

Schools do not routinely need to provide medical professional evidence for children who have been off sick. However, if there is a concern about the number of absences or the length of absence parents may be asked to provide documentation as appropriate.

The role of the School Staff

The Leadership team has overall responsibility for attendance. Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance register twice daily is a legal

requirement. Teachers mark pupils, present, absent or late. Pupil attendance is monitored half termly to highlight and take action where the attendance of individual children is causing concern.

Attendance Officer – Mrs Stacie Carter

It is the responsibility of the school attendance officer to ensure :

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- All absences not reported by parents are followed up.
- The appropriate national attendance code is entered into the register.

Action for Low Attendance

Low and non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different, and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. The school uses the following guide for attendance:

Percentage Attendance	Effect on Education
96-100%	No Concern Well Done!
92-96%	Concern
88 – 92%	Risk of Underachievement
60 – 88%	Severe risk of under achievement
0 – 60%?	Extreme Concern

Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding on the most effective support/intervention strategies to apply. In every case, early intervention is essential to ensure attendance improves. It is essential that parents are kept fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

Attendance	School Action
92-96%	Monitor attendance weekly
90-92%	Reason for low attendance investigated to see if there is an explanation for this. An initial letter will then be sent inviting parents to a 'Parent Contract' meeting. At this meeting it will be discussed how low attendance affects attainment and how school can support the child and the family; as well as the part the family need to play in supporting the child and school. A 'Parent Contract Action Plan' will be drawn up as a result of this meeting. If other agencies need to be involved (e.g. Parent Support Worker, Grey's Medical Service, School Nurse) we will contact them for support. This plan is reviewed monthly with the parents/carers until it is considered to be no longer needed. If the plan is not seen to be working because there is a medical need, a medical plan will be put in place. If outside intervention is required, an Early Help Assessment form (EHA) will be completed. If attendance does not improve and falls below 92%, see below.
88-92%	Medical proof of illnesses required from the doctor (appointment card/medication prescription/packaging). Referral to Grey's Medical.

	Continue to meet monthly to review 'Parent Contract Action Plan' and support child/family. Invite School Nurse and any other appropriate agency. If attendance does not improve and falls below 88%, see below.
60-88%	Educational Welfare Officer informed.

Children Missing in Education

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school, the Head Teacher must be informed in writing. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been informed by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the local authority attendance service as missing.

Lateness

The class register is taken at 8.55am and at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving after 8.55am must enter via the main school 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 9.10am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration has closed (Code U). This national code counts as an unauthorised absence. Frequent lateness is disruptive to learning, both for the child concerned and the class. This will be discussed with parents at consultations, and with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). Frequent or regular lateness can provide grounds for prosecution or the issue of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notice Proceedings for Lateness

If there are 10 incidents of late arrival after the registers have closed in a term the school will make a referral to the Attendance Service for a Penalty Notice Warning Letter. The Penalty Warning Letter sets out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded. If an unauthorised absence is recorded during 15-day period, Penalty Notice(s) will be issued (one per parent per child). Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 42 days of issue, the Attendance Service may investigate court proceedings.

Definitions

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head teacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences that have never been properly explained.
- Holidays which have not been agreed.

Authorising Absence

Only the Head Teacher can authorise absence for approved reasons. The absence must be unavoidable. The Head teacher 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 the school. The follow 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
- Parental illness (alternative arrangements should be made to get children to school - emergencies excepted)
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Holiday absence

Leave of Absence/Holiday Absence

Time off for family holidays cannot be authorised. Schools have the discretion, in exceptional circumstances to authorise leave absence:

- For service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have a minimal disruption to the pupil's education;
- When a family needs time to spend together during or after a crisis. Applications for Leave of Absence where dates can be known ahead **MUST** be made at least 4 weeks in advance of the requested date. Consideration is given to each request before a decision is reached on behalf of the Governing Body. Each case will be judged on its merits in line with the criteria outlined above. The decision is final and once the decision to not authorise the leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120 (or £60 if paid within 28 days) to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Attendance and Lateness

If a new pupil had poor attendance at their previous school, there will be a pre-start attendance meeting held and targets for attendance will be set. For all children, the attendance officer will monitor absence and lateness following the procedure outlined, being approved. It will not always be appropriate to progress through all of these steps or even to carry them out in the order listed. The attendance officer along with the Headteacher will use discretion and consider each case carefully considering the following:

- Where there has been no contact from parents, first day calling for all pupils
- The attendance officer will identify pupils with attendance below 92%, monitoring trends in pupil lateness and attendance. EWO support will be requested if necessary.
- Request from school to meet with parent/carer.
- Initiate the process, if appropriate, to access help from outside agencies.
- Referral to Attendance Service. Reasons for absence are recorded and retained by the school. When an Attendance referral is requested the child's Registration Certificate, copies of any correspondence and minutes of meetings **MUST** be attached to the referral form.

Working in Partnership

We are committed to working with our parents/carers and children to achieve the best attendance possible for every child. We want our children to fully take part in school life, to achieve their full potential and to experience the rich curriculum activities that the school provides. We know that regular, open communication between school and parents/carers is essential so that any issues can be quickly identified and appropriate support can be given.

