

# Grovelands C P School



## Attendance Policy

January 2020

## 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 so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

### Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

### What to do if my child is absent?

#### First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence – Parents are asked to ring the school absence line on 01323 840062 option 1 before 9:30 a.m. and leave a message stating name, class and reason for absence or send a message via the ParentMail App under Absence Reporting.

If your child is absent and we have had no contact from you we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance

It is the responsibility of all parents to inform the school on a daily basis if your child is going to be absent from school that day.

**Please note:** If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and home visits.

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. If one is available, the school will place a child into the after-school club and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

## Recording attendance

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information and cause disruption to the lesson for others.

- The school day begins at 8:45 and all **pupils are expected to be in school at this time**. Pupils arriving after 8.55am must go through the office entrance and sign the late book. Morning registration is at 8:55 am and it closes at 9:20 a.m.
- All lateness is recorded daily.
- Arrival after the close of registration at 9.20am will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with East Sussex County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence for that session, coded *M*. Please be advised that, 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. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as unauthorised absence and may be subject to legal action.

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or East Sussex County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with East Sussex County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools*

## Roles and responsibilities

### Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your 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.

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 or the ParentMail App on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by e-mail 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.

### Responsibilities of classroom staff

- Ensure that all pupils are registered accurately.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance leader on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

### Responsibilities of the school's attendance leader

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.

We monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education.

The following action is taken with support of ESBAS when a pupil's attendance becomes a concern. If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*:-

Attendance between 95-90% - Attendance Alert Letter – attendance target set  
Attendance below 90% - informal attendance meeting – attendance target set

Should the attendance continue to be a concern a referral to ESBAS who will monitor the attendance formally and further unauthorised absence may be subject to legal action.

Penalty warning letter of 10 unauthorised session over a period of 10 school weeks. Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid East Sussex County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance.

### **Request for leave of absence**

If you wish to take your child out of school for any reason you must complete a withdrawal from learning form stating the dates and your reasons. It is down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and if it is for a holiday it is very unlikely to be approved.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in East County Council's *Code of conduct*, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine. Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

### **Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling**

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must complete the withdrawal from learning form and contact the headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

### **7.4 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport**

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.