Greenvale School

Attendance Policy

Signed: June 2021

Next Review date: June 2022

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. Introduction

Greenvale is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. The whole school community has a responsibility for promoting excellent attendance: parents, carers, pupils and all school staff.

2. School's Roles and Responsibilities

All staff at Greenvale have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all pupils are able to learn and feel valued members of the school community. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

3. Registration

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day: at the start of the day and at the start of the afternoon session. Class teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers by indicating where a student is present or absent and Office staff will input prescribed codes (shown below) after the reason is ascertained.

Register Code	Present Or Absent
# - School closed to pupils	Authorised Absence
/ - Present (AM)	Present
\ - Present (PM)	Present
B - Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Present
C - Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised Absence
D - Dual Registered - At another educational establishment	Authorised Absence
E - Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F - Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G - Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised Absence
H - Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
I - Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised Absence
J - Interview	Present
L - Late (before registers closed)	Authorised Late
M - Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised Absence
N - No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O - Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised Absence
P - Approved sporting activity	Present
R - Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S - Study leave	Authorised Absence
T - Traveller absence	Authorised Absence

U - Late (after registers closed)   Unauthorised Absence
V - Educational visit or trip   Present
W - Work experience   Present
X - Non-compulsory school age absence   Present
Y - Enforced / Partial Closure   Present
Z - Pupil not yet on roll   Present

Registers will be called promptly at 9.15 and 1.20 by the class teacher.
Registers will close at 9.30 and 1.30.

4. **Categorising Absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each pupil during registration. Any pupil who is not present at this time will be marked unauthorised absent unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. School staff will amend the registers to indicate lateness if a pupil arrives after the register closes.

The school recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. If absence is frequent or continuous, and except where a pupil is clearly unwell, staff at Greenvale will challenge parents about 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 child's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school.** The school works closely with the local authority Attendance and Welfare Officer who supports the school to analyse attendance and carries out home visits when the school has concerns.

Please note: As of 1 September 2013 there has been a change in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. Where there used to be the option for Head teachers to grant leave of absence during the term time in 'special circumstances' of up to ten days in a year, this has been removed. Leave of absence in term time is discouraged. Parents are not automatically allowed to take their child out of school on holiday. Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance.

5. **Absences will be authorised in the following circumstances:**

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –
  * a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion e.g. family wedding
  * in **exceptional** circumstances, where permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand);

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;

(f) where the pupil is entitled to home to school transport provided by the Local Authority and no suitable transport arrangements have been made

(g) the pupil is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which requires him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits

(h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement) and **for a limited period**.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.
Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, e.g. a birthday;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;

5.1 Approved Educational Activity

Where a pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

6 Collection and Analysis of Data

A member of the school's office staff will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the Deputy Headteacher.

Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

The Headteacher reports attendance to the school's Governors termly.

7. Systems and Strategies for Managing and Improving Pupil Attendance

1. On a daily basis office staff will go through the registers between 9.30 am and 10.00 and any absences will be noted. If no explanation has been received, school will attempt to contact the parent/carer. If the school fails to contact the parent/carer, the school will then follow up with a visit to the family home If we still remain unable to contact the family the police or social services will be notified.

See Children missing education Statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016 for further details

2. If the child returns to school with no explanation of the absence from their parent/carer, the parent will be contacted or a letter will be sent to the parent/carer requesting this information.

3. If a pattern of concern re attendance is developing, the Headteacher will speak or write to the parent/carer about their child's pattern of absences.

4. If there is no significant improvement, the Headteacher will contact the parents/carers and invite them into school to discuss attendance.

5. Once point 4 is reached the Attendance and Welfare Officer should receive copies of all previous attempts made.

The school adheres to Lewisham Local Authority protocols with regard to non-attendance including the issuing of penalties.

Students' attendance is monitored regularly by the Headteacher and/or deputy Headteacher, with the deputy headteacher meeting termly with the Attendance and Welfare Officer. Termly 'Student Cause for Concern' meetings review attendance alongside academic and personal development. Key Stage coordinators support the improvement of attendance in their key stage by working with parents/careers when attendance is below 90%. This can also include chairing Team Around the Family (TAF) meetings and liaising with social care.

8. Parents' / Carers' Responsibilities

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This may give the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), The Education Act 1996 states that all children should attend school regularly and punctually. Section 444 of the Act says: "If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence".
(NB Where the Education Act refers to "he", it also means "she")

8.1 Greenvale expects parents/carers will:
- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

8.2 Parents/carers will also be expected to:
- notify school by telephone on the first day of absence and confirm in writing in the home/school book upon their child's return to school;
- ensure their child arrives at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents'/carers' meetings and consultations, taking an interest in their child's work and activities;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Greenvale will endeavour to support parents/carers to address their concerns.

9. Conclusion

Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring positive outcomes for all children. These include:
- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings;
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly;

- regular attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development;
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy;
- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children;
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others;
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style.

10 Reviewing the Policy
The school will review this policy each year.

11 Equality Impact Assessment
This policy has been screened for potential adverse impact on specific groups within the school community. It is not believed that this policy will have any such adverse impact.

Signed……………………………………………………….

Dated 17th June 2021

Agreed remotely (COVID)

APPENDIX 1 A GUIDE FOR PARENTS/CARERS

1. When does my child need to be in school?
School opens for pupils at 9.15 a.m. Your child should be ready in good time for the school transport to ensure that they arrive on time.

2. Does the school need letters explaining my child's absence or will a phone call do?
We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am and confirm in writing in the child's home/school book upon their return. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's end of year report.

3. What reasons will the school accept for absences?
- Illness
- Dental/medical appointment (Please make routine appointments after school or during the holidays, wherever possible)
- Day of religious observance
- Family bereavement
- **Exceptional** special occasions, e.g. a family wedding, where permission has been granted in advance using a Special Leave of Absence Request form
- Other **exceptional** circumstances, where permission has been granted in advance using a Special Leave of Absence Request form
- Attending an interview e.g. for college

Except in the case of illness, you should ask for permission for your child to miss school well in advance, giving full details. In cases of recurring absences through illness you may be asked to produce a medical certificate.

4. What is unacceptable?
The school will not authorise absence for day trips, visiting relatives, shopping or birthdays.

5. Will the school contact me if my child is absent?
We would expect a parent/carer to telephone the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence. If you do not phone us, we will try to contact you. This is to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. Failure to reach a responsible adult will result in staff from the school visiting your home for a "safe and well visit". Should the school fail to contact you we will contact the police or social services to report your child as missing. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence, and this will be shown on your child's Annual Review report.
If we are concerned about aspects of your child's attendance or punctuality, we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

6. What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?
Try to make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

7. My child is reluctant to come to school. What should I do?
Contact your child's teacher and openly discuss your worries. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to resolve the problem. In some cases, you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with an Education Welfare Officer. The school may also refer you to an Education Welfare Officer who works with staff and families if difficulties with attendance arise.

APPENDIX 2 Attendance expectations during COVID-19 Pandemic

Attendance will be mandatory from 8 March 2021 and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct
Not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)
There are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

To make sure schools record this accurately and consistently, we have made changes to the regulations [footnote 2] governing school attendance registers to add a new category of non-attendance – 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)'.

This category must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)[footnote 3]
prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)
In line with the Secretary of State's expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Attendance codes
From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak (set out on page 9 of the school attendance: guidance for schools), in addition to the new category of 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)':

pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' should be recorded using code X[footnote 4]
schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory school aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak
Examples in which 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' could apply
In line with current legislation, and current guidance from PHE and DHSC, examples are as follows.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate as they, or a member of their household, has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
View stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection.

Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.

If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school. If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.

If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms. They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone. Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

If someone in the pupil's household has symptoms, the household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.

If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.

If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive. Code X should be used during this period.

In all cases of self-isolation, schools should ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. Schools should not require evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

Pupils who are required to self-isolate because they are a close contact of someone who has symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19)
View stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and NHS test and trace guidance.

Pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19).

The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19). In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 10 days from the day after contact with the individual who tested positive. Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

Pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine
View guidance on how to self-isolate when you travel to the UK.

As usual, parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time. Families should also

consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine. If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

Pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable when shielding is advised
Read guidance on shielding and protecting extremely vulnerable persons from COVID-19 for advice on whether clinically extremely vulnerable pupils are advised to attend school or not.

If shielding has been advised nationally or in a local area by DHSC or PHE, then pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable are advised not to attend school. Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.

Schools should contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school. Code X should not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to school.

Local or national lockdown
If rates of the disease rise locally or nationally, schools may need to prevent some pupils from attending. Schools should follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local or national lockdown. Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X - should be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote education
If a pupil is not attending school due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), we expect schools to be able to immediately offer them access to remote education. Schools should keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, but this does not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Data collection
This year the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.