

Grindleford Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction:

The staff and Governors of Grindleford Primary School are committed to providing the finest education possible. We believe that means enabling every pupil to learn to use their basic skills as well as to promote achievement in a wide range of other subjects. This takes place in a school where everyone believes in the importance of taking an increasing degree of responsibility for ones behaviour and learning.

Good attendance is essential if pupils are to take full advantage of all aspects of school life and acquire the skills they need.

The school has a collective commitment to ensure it provides an inclusive education for all pupils. In order to benefit from this education pupils need to attend school regularly and punctually. It is recognised that there are many reasons for poor attendance and this attendance policy outlines the strategies adopted by the school to encourage all children to attend school on a regular basis. There is a clear correlation between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so will performance and achievement, further poor attendance can lead to social exclusion and, in some cases, to anti-social behaviour and crime.

Our Aims

- To encourage children to maintain high attendance and punctuality at all times
- To encourage parents to support their children in achieving 100% attendance in order to instil good habits early in school life
- Improve the attendance of those pupils whose attendance figures fall below the school/local authority guidelines

School Attendance Policy

Attending school is vitally important for all children to take advantage of the educational opportunities offered to them at Grindleford Primary School. It is the legal duty of every parent to ensure that their children receive an education by attending regularly and punctually. Parents/carers are at risk of prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 if they fail in their duty to ensure regular attendance.

Key Commitments

In order to achieve the best attendance by pupils, the school will:

- Set targets for the improvement of attendance, reviewed annually. The school is judged in Ofsted Inspections on its authorised/unauthorised attendance statistics.
- LA will support the school in setting our targets for improvement.
- LA will support schools in the development of policies and procedures to secure

agreed levels of attendance by their pupils.

- LA will support us and identified pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.
- LA will support parent/carers through the individual casework undertaken by the ESO (Educational Social Officer) and other agencies.
- LA will prioritise the attendance of Looked After Children, accepting their role as corporate parents.

- LA will provide appropriate resources.

- Establishing good working relationships with the parents/carers of all pupils in order to encourage them to have positive attitudes to education and to support us by ensuring that their children attend regularly. Having a clear policy about attendance and punctuality that is understood by pupils, their parents/carers and by the staff.
- Celebrating good attendance annually.
- Having robust internal procedures to monitor the attendance and punctuality of individual pupils in order to identify those who may have difficulties.
- Involving the ESO and other relevant staff at the earliest possible stage with pupils who have difficulties to ensure that sufficient support/challenge is available to enable the interventions to be effectively managed.
- Providing such information about attendance and punctuality to the Governing Body, County Council and Ofsted that is necessary for the monitoring and evaluation of performance and the effective use of specifically allocated resources.
- Continuing to develop the curriculum and teaching that ensures we engage pupils positively in their learning experiences.

Home/School Partnership

Grindleford Primary School believes that there should be close partnership between the parents/carers and school. The Headteacher and staff will encourage open and honest dialogue with parents/carers, and follow up concerns. It is the parent's responsibility to inform school by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence. If a reason has not been given, a letter, written by the parent/carer stating the reason for absence, should be sent on the first day the child returns to school. Absences may be authorised or unauthorised. Only school can approve absence.

Reporting Absences

It is parent's responsibility to inform schools of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. If the school is not informed of the reason for the absence then it will be classed as unauthorised. The school will remind parents who do not provide a reason for absence. Any unauthorised absence is serious and could provoke a 'fixed penalty notice' from the Local Authority - £120 per parent per child for taking their children out of school without permission.

The Headteacher will not authorise any absence if there are outstanding unauthorised absences, due to a parental explanation not being provided to the school.

At Grindleford Primary School parents are expected to contact the school office on the first day of absence giving as much information as is available at that time. If the absence is prolonged, interim

information would be appreciated, so that the school can help with homework or other necessary arrangements.

On their return to school children should bring a letter from their parents confirming the reason for their absence and giving any other appropriate information, unless a telephone call has previously been made to school during the absence.

- In the event of no contact being made by telephone or letter regarding a child's absence the parents will be contacted by the school office on the third day of absence unless concerns have been previously raised.
- If the absence continues or general attendance falls below 90%, a first letter will be sent by the school **Appendix 1**
- If absence continues or general attendance falls below 85% then a letter will be sent requesting a meeting between the school and the parent/carer **Appendix 2**
- If the school continues to be concerned regarding attendance the assistance of the ESW will be enlisted.
- The School has a named Education Social Worker (ESW) whose role it is to provide advice and support on attendance and welfare matters.

If however the school is informed of reasons for the absence that can be authorised by the school then the above letter and meeting system will not be used.

Registration

Under Regulation 3 of the Pupils' Registration Regulations 1956, all schools must keep an attendance register on which, at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, pupils are marked present or absent. The 1991 Regulations also state that registers must state whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

The session times for Grindleford Primary School are:

	Whole School
Morning session	8.55am
Afternoon session	1.00pm
End of day	3.15pm

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start. Therefore a whistle will sound five minutes before the beginning of each session to remind everyone that registration is about to take place. The children will then line up on the yard and proceed into school ready for registration in classes.

The register is closed ten minutes after the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions.

Authorised/Unauthorised Absence

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence, not parents. (Section 199 of the Education Act 1993).

The question of authorised and unauthorised absence is a fairly recent issue and to help parents distinguish between the two the following guidelines are included. If after reading these guidelines you are still in doubt please contact the Headteacher.

Authorised Absences

- a. **Illness, Medical and Dental Appointments** - If the school is satisfied that a pupil of compulsory school age is prevented from attending school by reason of illness then the absence will be treated as authorised. Leave for medical or dental appointments may be given (i.e. the absence may be authorised) where confirmation has been received from the parents (either in person, in writing or by a telephone call) or on production of an appointments card. A book is maintained by the School Office for the purpose of recording pupils leaving or returning to the site during the school day.
- b. **Lateness** - The school policy is to encourage punctuality and to actively discourage lateness as it can seriously disrupt lessons and adversely affect the child's progress. If a child is late and misses registration, a late mark will be recorded (this is classed as an unauthorised absence). Obviously the school will be sympathetic if this is for a good reason. If however a pattern of lateness starts to emerge, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the class teacher/Headteacher in order to reach a satisfactory solution. **Late is ten minutes after the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions.**
- c. **Exceptional Circumstances** - It is for schools to determine whether an absence in this category should be authorised or not: much will depend on the circumstances of the particular case. Generally the rule should be that only truly exceptional circumstances should be sanctioned through authorised absence after discussion with the Headteacher. The following are only guidelines and are not an exhaustive list:
 - **Attending the wedding of a family member**
 - **Attending a family bereavement**
 - **Attending a prison visit**
 - **Significant family illness**
 - **Days of religious observance**
 - **Excluded pupils**

Unauthorised Absence (Non-exhaustive examples only)

- Birthdays of pupils or family members
- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with the beginning or end of the school terms
- Looking after the home, brothers and sisters
- Shopping during School hours

Attendance Incentive Scheme

- Pupils to be greeted each morning during registration period by a member of staff.
- Pupils who have achieved 100% attendance throughout the year, to be congratulated and presented with a special certificate.
- The school office will monitor the registers daily to ensure that attendance and punctuality issues are dealt with promptly.

Appendix 1 – Letter 1

- Attendance below 90% without good explanation
- No parental explanation for an absence
- Pattern of poor attendance emerging – e.g. every Friday off
- Lateness x 5 in a four week / monthly monitoring period

Dear

The school office carries out regular analysis of all attendance and informs me if there are any concerns compared to what the school would expect your child's attendance to be.

The following concerns have been brought to my attention: (Please delete as necessary)

- We have not received an explanation for your child's absence on
- Your child's attendance has dropped below 90% and we would urge you to try and improve it or provide an explanation that the school can authorise
- A pattern of absence has been noted
- Your child has been late for school twice or more in the last two week monitoring period

I am sure that you understand the importance of your child attending school regularly and on time. If they are not at school, or miss important parts of lessons due to lateness, this will affect their progress and achievement.

I would be grateful if you could try to improve the situation. If the school can be of any help or you would like to discuss the reasons for the absence please do not hesitate to contact the class teacher or telephone me.

If there is a good explanation for the situation that the school has been informed about – please ignore this letter.

I am sure that we will continue to work together to ensure that your child has the best possible education that they can.

Please do not hesitate to contact should you wish more information or wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher.

Appendix 2 – Letter 2

Please note letter 1 must have been sent first

- No improvement/attendance below 85% without good explanation
- No parental explanation for further absences in any further four week monthly monitoring period
- No improvement / pattern of poor attendance continuing – e.g. every Friday off 2 in any further four week / monthly monitoring period
- Lateness x 5 in any further four week / monthly monitoring period

Dear

I wrote to on with concerns about your child's attendance. I am sorry to say that the school has seen little or no improvement and I feel that it is now necessary for you to make an appointment to see me.

At that meeting we can discuss any problems that you might be experiencing and see if the school is able to offer any support. It is in everyone's interest for your child to be attending school regularly and on time.

If I do not hear from you in the near future, then I will have no option but to refer your case to the EWO Service. (Education Social Worker)

I look forward to hearing from you so that we can discuss the situation and agree a plan for improvement.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher

GRINDLEFORD PRIMARY SCHOOL

APPLICATION BY PARENT/S FOR A CHILD’S LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

To the Headteacher

Name of Child..... Year Group

Name of both parents Mr

Mrs/Ms/Miss

Address

.....
.....
.....

I / We wish to apply for our child to be absent from school for EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES.

Dates:

From.....

To.....

Total number of days requested

Please supply in as much detail as possible the reason for your request and why you feel it is exceptional circumstances:

Signed (both parents if applicable)

Date

.....
.....

THIS FORM SHOULD BE SUBMITTED TO THE HEADTEACHER AT LEAST 2 WEEKS BEFORE THE DATE OF REQUESTED LEAVE.

LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Guidance Letter for Parents

June 2013

Dear parent.

School Attendance Policy

The Department for Education expects schools and local authorities to promote good attendance and reduce absences, including persistent absence. This is because we know that missing out on lessons leaves children/young people vulnerable to falling behind. Children/young people with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary schools.

As a school we work incredibly hard to support all children/young people and their families so as to ensure that all children/young people have good attendance.

The Government has recently made amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which come into force on **1st September 2013**. These state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence for holidays during the term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; in these cases it is the Headteacher who determines the number of days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

As a consequence of these changes I will no longer be able to approve requests for leave of absence for reasons that are not considered to be special or exceptional such as:

- Availability of cheap holidays and cheap travel arrangements
- Days overlapping with beginning or end of term

Parents needing leave of absence for **exceptional circumstances** should complete a form at least two weeks before the anticipated start date. The reason for the request should be given in detail. Applications should be made before the leave is arranged as absences will not be granted retrospectively.

I would like to remind parents that this is Government policy and parents who take their children on holiday without permission will incur unauthorised absences for their child. These remain on the child's record and will be monitored for further action by the Education Welfare Service. Parents could be issued with a fixed penalty notice and/or court action.

Thank you for your support and understanding.

Yours sincerely,

Reviewed and approved
Due for review

28/4/15
Summer 5 2018