



The Greville Primary School

Attendance Policy

Last update: October 2024

Governors' Committee Responsible	Learning and Teaching
Policy Originator	Victoria Goram/Duncan Steele
Next Review due	October 2027

Introduction

It is the aim of The Greville that pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential. Our Attendance Policy reflects this and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and is an integral part of our school. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance we will work together with them, their parents/carers and partner organisations to remove barriers, by building strong and trusting relationships. Therefore, improving attendance is everyone's business.

Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time, efficient education to which they are entitled; acting early to address patterns of absence and creating a culture in which the importance of good school attendance is understood and valued by all parties.

This policy sets out our school's position on attendance and details the procedures that all parents/carers must follow to report their child's absence from school and to remind them of their legal duty, to ensure their child attends school regularly.

We want our pupils to go to school every day unless they are really not well enough to attend. We believe that children who attend school regularly are more likely to feel settled in school, maintain friendships, keep up with their learning and gain the greatest benefit from their education. We want all our pupils to enjoy school, grow up to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential. Regular attendance and punctuality is essential in the workplace and children who are used to attending school on time, and on every occasion unless they are too unwell to attend, will be better prepared for the attendance expectations in the workplace.

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently, taking into account the individual needs of our pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school regularly. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence

under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a Penalty Notice.

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended) the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Registration and Lateness

It is expected that children will arrive at school on time. The classroom is open from 8.45am and the school day begins at 8.55am, when the attendance register will be taken. The registers are open between 8.55am and 9.00am. If pupils arrive after the close of the register without a valid explanation, a late mark will be recorded in the class registers. If a child arrives after 9.25am without a valid explanation, it will be counted as an unauthorised absence and coded as 'U' for that session. In cases of persistent late arrival to school, the Attendance Officer will contact parents by letter.

The table below indicates how frequent lateness can add up to a considerable amount of learning being lost. This can seriously disadvantage children and disrupt the learning of others.

Minutes late per Day	Equates to Days of Teaching Lost in one Year	Which means this number of lessons missed
5 mins	3 Days	15 Lessons
10 mins	6 Days	30 Lessons
15 mins	9 Days	45 Lessons

Responding to Non-Attendance

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to inform the school by 9.30 am if a child will be absent for any reason. When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no communication is received from the parent/carer by 9.30am, the school will endeavour to contact them promptly.
- If there is no response, the schools will continue to try to contact the parent/carer.
- The Attendance Officer will respond to the persistent low attendance of individual children with a letter to the parents/carers detailing their attendance level, the impacts of low attendance and expectations moving forward.
- If there is no improvement in attendance, a member of the Leadership Team will meet with the parents/carers. At this meeting the reasons and impacts of low attendance will be discussed, an attendance form completed and parents/carers will be informed that if the absence persists, a referral will be made to the Inclusion Service.

Frequent Absence

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by some of the following means:

- Phone call to parent by Admissions Officer.
- Letter sent to parents stating concerns.
- Meeting at school with a senior leader (Appendix B).
- Meeting at school with a senior leader for an EBSNA discovery conversation (Appendix C)
- Meeting at school with senior leader to discuss action plan

If, after intervention from school is unsuccessful and the child's attendance continues to drop with unauthorised absences, our Inclusion Officer will be involved.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and we need parent's support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

If after intervention, there are no improvements in the child's attendance and there continues to be unauthorised absence (or the parents are not engaging with the school), the school will issue a Notice to Improve/ Attendance Contract (similar to the Penalty Notice warning letter) and monitor the attendance for 15 school days. If there is insufficient improvement, the school can ask Surrey County Council to consider issuing a penalty notice per parent/carer.

The table below indicates how, what might seem like just a few days absence, can result in children missing a significant number of lessons.

Attendance during school year	Days lost in a year	Which is approximately	Approximate number of lessons missed
95%	9.5 Days	2 Weeks	50 Lessons
90%	19 Days	4 Weeks	100 Lessons

The DfE and the Local Authority monitor the levels of PA children and levels of absence in all schools.

Attendance of all pupils is tracked and monitored carefully through class teachers noting attendance patterns.

The issuing of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing their child's regular school attendance. This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions in a block of 6 consecutive school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.

Safeguarding and Attendance

Our school will monitor trends and patterns of absence for all pupils as a part of our standard procedures. However, we are aware that sudden or gradual changes in a pupil's attendance may indicate additional or more extreme safeguarding issues. In line with government guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024) we will investigate and report any suspected safeguarding cases on to the relevant authorities. As part of our safeguarding duty and our standard procedures, we will inform the Local Authority and/or the Police of the details of any pupil who is absent from school when the school cannot establish their whereabouts and is concerned for the pupil's welfare. (Please see our school's Safeguarding Policy for more information).

Request for leave of absence – 'exceptional circumstances'

The law does not grant parents the automatic right to take their child out of school during term time.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The school will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The request must be made by the parent with whom the child normally lives, and permission must be sought in advance.

Circumstances which could be authorised include significant family emergencies or funerals as well as Religious festivals. However, parents will also be aware that, wherever possible, children are encouraged to continue to attend school normally during difficult family times where they will be supported by the Wellbeing team in school.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then an Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances Form must, wherever possible, be completed prior to the leave date and preferably at least two weeks before. This form can be obtained from the website or the school office.

Although some absences may be unauthorised, it is better that we know your child is safe, rather than missing.

Unauthorised absence includes:

Absences which have never been properly explained

Pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Shopping

Birthdays

Day trips

Long weekends and holidays in term time

Or when the child is refusing to come to school

Visiting extended family

Family Weddings – **only a parent or sibling wedding will be authorised**

In the case of term time leave - if a pupil is kept away from school longer than was agreed, the additional absence is unauthorised

Unauthorised absences may result in Legal Sanctions, usually Penalty Notices or Prosecutions.

Authorised Absence

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away from the school or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

The following information outlines the main circumstances where absence may be authorised by the school:

Dental and medical treatments

Whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing, of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Illness

In most cases, absences for illness which are reported by following the school's absence reporting procedures will be authorised. That is unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school follows Department for Education guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' 2024 which states that if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parent to provide medical evidence, such as a prescription, appointment card, or other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. In some instances, the school may ask the parent to obtain a letter from a GP, or the school may seek parental permission to contact the pupil's GP directly to help support the needs of the individual pupil.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where a pupil has a high level and/or frequency of absence, the school may require medical evidence of some description in order to authorise any future medical absences. If this is the case, the school will make the parent/s aware of this expectation in advance.

The reporting of absence due to illness remains the responsibility of the parent. Absences due to illness which have **not** been reported to the school by the parent on the first day of absence may not be authorised. If a child is absent for more than one day, the parent should contact the school each day to provide an update on the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed by the school.

Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Designated Safeguarding Lead (or other key professional in the setting) for further information on the support available.

Parents should also contact their GP or the NHS Helpline by phoning telephone number 111 for advice if they are concerned. In case of emergency parents should dial 999.

If you believe your child's mental health is impacting their ability to come to school, or there are any other issues impacting coming to school please contact please contact the Designated Mental Health Lead at school immediately. Please see document;

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf

Religious Observance

Our school acknowledges the multi-faith nature of the school community and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside of school holidays or weekends. In accordance with the law, the school will authorise one day's absence for a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs. Should any additional days be taken, these will be recorded in the register as unauthorised absence. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body, to confirm whether the day is set apart.

Encouraging Attendance

The school aims to have the highest possible attendance which is above the national average. We encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- Raise our pupils' awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Provide support, advice and guidelines to parents, pupils and staff.
- Work in partnership with parents, including regularly informing them about their child's absence and attendance levels.
- Support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence and provide support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- By responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school and other pupils.
- By accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registers.
- By celebrating good attendance and punctuality.

Our Attendance Officer will monitor pupils with Inclusion Services and inform parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring them to the Inclusion Service if the irregular attendance continues.

Penalty Notices

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is set out below.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a prosecution of the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

Prosecution could lead to fines up to £2500 and /or 3 months imprisonment. (See DfE's statutory guidance on School attendance parental responsibility measures)

Penalty Notices and prosecution proceedings are issued to each parent with responsibility for the child and are issued for each child with irregular attendance. For example, in the case of Penalty Notices, if two siblings had irregular school attendance, and there were two parents with responsibility for the children, four Penalty Notices would be issued. Penalty Notices cannot be paid in instalments.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notice may be issued

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Inclusions Officer.

Where a child is taken out of school for an unauthorised leave of absence during term time for 5 days or more without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent, or responsible adult living in the same house** is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.

The amount payable for a penalty notice is as follows:

Absence – Per Parent/Per Child	0 – 21 days	22 – 28 days	More than 28 days
First Absence since 19 August 2024	£80	£160	Prosecution
Second Absence (within 3 years of first PN issue date)	£160	£160	Prosecution
Third Absence (within 3 years of first PN issue date)	NA	NA	Prosecution

Pupils identified by police and Inclusions Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

Where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 10 unauthorised sessions in a 10-school week period (this can include late arrival after the close of registration where the U symbol has been used denoting unauthorised absence). The lateness will be recorded in accordance with the 'Registration and Lateness' section of this policy.

With the exception of unauthorised holidays taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Inclusion Officer

If after support and interventions, attendance problems cannot be resolved by school, the school can or will make a referral to the Inclusion Officer. They will try to resolve the situation but if attempts to improve attendance have failed, but unauthorised absence persists, the Inclusion Officer can use sanctions such as parenting contracts, penalty notices and prosecution.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance, under section 444 of the Education Act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrate's court, to a fine not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

Expectations

Every member of staff makes attendance a high priority and will convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers should also support these views at home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly and punctually
- Attend school appropriately and be prepared for the day.
- Discuss with their class teacher any problems preventing them from attending school.

We expect that all parents/carers who have day-to-day responsibility for the child will:

- Ensure regular school attendance.
- Ensure that the child in their care arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure they contact the school promptly whenever the child is unable to attend school on the first day of absence and call in on a daily basis to update the school of the child's condition, unless otherwise agreed with the school office.
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school.

We expect that all school staff will:

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils at least twice daily; at the beginning of morning and afternoons sessions.
- Monitor every pupil's attendance.
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Record all reasons for absence and lateness.
- Encourage and reward good attendance in line with whole school attendance.

Review schedule

<i>Committee/Date</i>	<i>FGB Approval</i>	<i>Reviewed/Updated</i>
Learning and Teaching 10.6.19	<i>17th July 2019</i>	<i>June 2023</i>
Learning and Teaching	<i>6th June 2023</i>	<i>October 2024</i>

Appendices

- 1) Attendance contract
- 2) Application for leave of absence
- 3) Amber letter
- 4) Red letter



Attendance Contract

Date	
------	--

Name of child	Class/ Year group	Current attendance

Present at meeting:	
---------------------	--

Reasons for low attendance:	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>
-----------------------------	--

Action agreed
<p>EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil will arrive at school by 8.30 a.m. every day. • Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence. • Parent will provide medical evidence when illness persist for more than 3 days. • Are any issues preventing pupil from attending regularly, school staff will be informed?

Attendance target:	
Timescale for improvement:	4 School Weeks w/c:

Date for review meeting:	
--------------------------	--

I confirm that this Attendance Contract was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carer

..... School Representative

..... Other Agency

inspire nurture achieve

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to validate your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more will result in the following action being taken:

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, per parent/carer per child, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice – Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, per parent/carer per child, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision. In the absence of a decision, parents/carers cannot assume that permission for the absence has been given.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for	
from:	to:
Number of school days:	
The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested:	

Has your child/children already had any leave of absence since 01 September 2024 resulting in a penalty notice being issued to you (applicant) or any other parent/carer? YES / NO	
If YES, please give dates and details:	
I also have children at...	
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:
Address:	

<u>To be completed by the Headteacher</u>		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved		The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved		The absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we will be requesting the Surrey County Council to issue a penalty notice per parent/carer per child.
Explanatory notes:		
Signed: (Headteacher)		Date:



THE GREVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stonny Croft, Ashtead, Surrey, KT21 1SH

Telephone: 01372 274872

E-mail: office@greville.surrey.sch.uk

Website: www.greville.surrey.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr D Steele

Date

<u>Green</u> Pupils with attendance from 96% - 100%
<u>Amber</u> Pupils with attendance from 90% - 95.9%
<u>Red</u> Pupils with attendance below 90%

Dear XXXX

Re: XXX – amber letter

As you are aware, improving attendance at The Greville is a priority for us as a school. We aim to achieve this through maintaining good attendance and reducing the percentage of persistent absentees. We regularly monitor attendance to ensure our children have at least 96% attendance. Our pupils should enjoy learning, experience success and realise their full potential.

In our most recent attendance check, it was noticed that the XXX's attendance is **XXX%**, which equates to **XXX days** absent.

We hope that when we come to our next attendance check on the XXXX, XXX's attendance will have improved.

Yours sincerely

M Cushnie
Assistant Headteacher

V Goram
Attendance Officer



THE GREVILLE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Stonny Croft, Ashtead, Surrey, KT21 1SH

Telephone: 01372 274872

E-mail: office@greville.surrey.sch.uk

Website: www.greville.surrey.sch.uk

Headteacher: Mr D Steele

Date

Green Pupils with attendance from 96% - 100%
Amber Pupils with attendance from 90% - 95.9%
Red Pupils with attendance below 90%

Dear XXXX

Re: XXX – red letter

XXX attendance is XXX, the equivalent to XXX days absent.

Further to our letter sent on XXXX. XXX attendance is now XXX which means they are deemed a persistent absentee.

Therefore, I would like to arrange a supportive meeting with you to discuss XXX attendance on **Thursday 25th September at 10.30am**

Please confirm you can attend the meeting via email; mcushnie@greville.surrey.sch.uk

The Family Support Worker will be in attendance too, should you have anything you wish to discuss.

For your information we enclose a Registration Certificate.

Yours sincerely

M Cushnie
Assistant Headteacher

V Goram
Attendance Officer