



GREENSIDE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Greenside School aims to maximise attendance rates in order to ensure that all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. However, given the learning and/or medical/physical difficulties of pupils on roll, it is generally not within the capability of pupils to avoid attendance at school.

STATUTORY FRAMEWORK

Under Section 199 of the 1993 Education Act, a pupils is required to attend regularly at the school where he/she is a registered pupil.

The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent doe not in itself authorise a absence. Only if the school is satisfied as to the validity of the explanation offered by the letter/message will the absence be authorised, (see below).

RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Improving attendance at Greenside School is the responsibility of everyone in the school community - pupils, parents and all staff.

PUPILS

All pupils currently attending Greenside school are brought to school by transport which is subject to the vagaries of traffic conditions. Where on the rare occasions pupils have difficulties at home about attending school, the class teacher will liaise closely with parents or carers to ascertain the cause of the problem. The pupil will be encouraged to take a positive attitude about attending school. If the problem persists, the problem will be referred to the Headteacher for appropriate action to be taken. The Education Welfare Officer will be closely involved at an early stage if truanting/school refusal is suspected.

PARENTS

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn. If a child is prevented for any reason from attending, or is late, parents are requested to notify the school as soon as possible - by phone call or preferably in writing. A message may also be sent via the school transport to alert the school that there is a problem but this should be followed up by contact by the parent. A pupil's absence from school must be considered as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is forthcoming from the parent.

Parents will be promptly informed of any concerns which may arise over a child's attendance. Where there is cause for concern over a child's absence from school, the Headteacher will contact the parents/carers. Parents will be encouraged to avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for their child during school hours.



Parents whose first language is not English or have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support from school in matters of communication.

STAFF

Staff will endeavour to encourage good attendance and punctuality through personal example. Attendance is the responsibility of all school staff not just teaching and pastoral staff. The school will employ a range of strategies (see below) to encourage good attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism, liaising closely with parents. Staff will respond to all absenteeism *sensitively* and consistently.

REGISTRATION

Registers will be called as near to 9.00 a.m. as possible, given the problems of transport and at 1.25 p.m. and will be marked in red or black in accordance with the list of symbols as set out in the schedule given to class teachers which should be kept with the register.

Registers will close at 9.15 a.m. and 1.30 p.m. once they have been taken. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers close, he/she will be marked as 'absent'. Pupils who arrive after registers have been taken should be marked in accordance with guidelines. At Greenside School it is unlikely that it is the responsibility of the pupil for being late.

All class teachers will take registers for each of their classes and will notify the Headteacher as soon as possible of any absentees for whom there has been no message either from the transport or directly from parents.

The Headteacher will inspect all registers each half-term in order to ensure that correct procedures are being followed, totals are being calculated and entered etc.

AUTHORISED/UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

It is vital that all staff adhere to the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence.

Greenside School will decide on how an absence is to be recorded according to 'School Attendance: Policy and Practice on Categorisation of Absence' (DFE 1994). This states that:

Absence can be **authorised** if:

- the pupil was absent with leave (defined as 'leave granted by any person authorised to do so by the Governing Body or proprietor or the school')
- the pupil was ill 'or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause'
- the absence occurred on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs.
- no suitable arrangements have been made by the LEA for the child's transport to and from school
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents and the conditions as stated in paragraph 47 of the guidance are met.



- there is a family bereavement.
- the pupil is attending an interview with either a prospective employer for work experience or in connection with an application for a place at an institute of further or higher education or for a place at another school.
- the pupil is attending approved work experience
- the pupil is attending an approved off-site activity or is receiving special off-site tuition
- the pupil is attending a Pupil Referral Unit
- the pupils is participating in an approved public performance
- the pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion (e.g. if a pupil is attending the graduation of an older sibling).
- leave of absence is granted by the school for a family holiday of no more than two weeks (parents should be reminded that they cannot expect that, as of right, the school will agree to a family holiday during term time).

Absence should be **unauthorised** if:

- no explanation is forthcoming
- the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- the pupil stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- the pupil is shopping or taken shopping during school hours.
- the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- the pupil is away from school on a family holiday for a period of time longer than that negotiated with the school (normally a maximum of two weeks)
- the pupil is on a family holiday without permission or if the parents have failed to apply for permission in advance of the holiday and instead seek retrospective approval on their return.

HOLIDAYS

Parents are strongly urged to avoid taking family holidays during term time. Indeed, parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such a holiday. If, however, parents apply to the school in advance, the school may grant up to two weeks term-time absence in any year to go on a family holiday. Apart from this, leave in term time can only be given in exceptional circumstances.

Occasionally, holidays of more than two weeks to visit family living overseas may be planned. Parents are urged to discuss with school staff, the most appropriate time of year and point in the child's educational career for this visit to take place. This will help minimise disruption to the child's progress at school.

PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOWING UP AN ABSENCE

- If a pupil is absent without an explanation being forthcoming, the Headteacher will contact the parents.



- If a pupil is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Headteacher will write to the parents and invite them to attend a meeting at school.
- If a pupil returns to school after a period of absence and fails to bring a note or if the explanation offered by a note is unsatisfactory, the Headteacher will write to the parents.
- If a pupil is persistently absent and the school's efforts to effect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer during his/her consultation visit.
- Notes from parents will be initialled by the class teacher and kept on the pupil's file. All telephone messages regarding absence/lateness are to be recorded and placed in the pupil's file in the office.

STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

- Greenside School will offer an environment in which pupils feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent and that follow up action will be taken.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all pupils. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- Pupils whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The class teacher will monitor and review these targets.
- Parents will be regularly reminded (via newsletters, the school brochure, parents' evenings, etc.) of the importance of attendance.
- Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- Pupils who have been absent for whatever reason for an extended period of time will (when appropriate) have individually - tailored reintegration programmes prepared for them.
- The Headteacher will make an annual report to the school's governing body on attendance matters.
- The Headteacher will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies - Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, Child and Family Guidance, etc. - when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- The Headteacher will have regular meetings (half termly) with the school's Education Welfare Officer in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.