

~ : Greenmount Primary Policy on Attendance : ~

1. Introduction

1.1 We expect all children on all to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Greenmount expect its pupils to arrive on time before 9am and be ready to learn. "Early Bird" activities enhance this aim from 8:50am each day. We have a free morning activity club as 8:15am for working parents. If children miss breakfast they are replenished at playtime with fruit and milk.

1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2. Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go

shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence.

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3. If a child is absent.

- 3.1 The class register is taken twice a day and recorded electronically. If a child is marked absent their absence is noted by the learning mentor and if necessary she will contact parents. Most parents inform us of illness and appointments and notification slips are analysed for trends.
- 3.2 When the child returns to school the class teacher welcomes the child back and checks the reason for absence.
- 3.3 Absence notes are put in the registers by office staff to explain absences when parents ring or call in. We use a ticket system in our office to record pupils arriving late or leaving during the day e.g. for medical appointments.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- 3.5 Lateness is recorded in the "late book" and persistent offenders and family meet with the L.M. and H.T.
- 3.6 Families who go on longer visits abroad are contacted regularly and pupils take an activity sheet.
- 3.7 Vulnerable pupils (SEN, "looked after", persistent offenders, family with social workers) have case files in the safeguarding file and are monitored regularly.
- 3.8 Pupils with low attendance have case files in the attendance file.

4. Authorised absence in schools, requests for leave.

- 4.1 Term times are for education! Children and families have 175 days off school to spend time together. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child.
- 4.2 New pupil registration regulations (Sept 2013) have removed the possibility of term time holidays. Holiday leave can **no longer** be authorised.
- 4.3 Only exceptional circumstances **now** warrant an authorised leave of absence e.g. compassionate leave, trauma recovery, young carers needs, the needs of members of the armed forces. An absence is "exceptional" if it is **rare, significant, unavoidable and short**. The head teacher's decision will be for the individual family and will be informed by the child's attendance record and criteria above. If a family go on leave without authorisation there will be a fine, the authorities will fine each parent £60 for each absent child.

5. Long-term absences.

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be at home for over five days, the school will do all it can to send materials home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6. Repeated unauthorised absences.

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services e.g. Attendance Improvement Officer, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7. Rewards for good attendance.

- We have a "100% club" chart outside each classroom. Parents are texted if they are on the list.
- We take part in national and local attendance initiatives.
- All children who have 100 percent attendance in one term will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the term. There are special prizes for any child who has 100 perfect for a whole year. Friday assembly is important as class results are announced and cups are given out.
- Parents received regular updates about their child's attendance and receive an annual breakdown with the end of the year report.
- Nursery pupils are given 100% certificates by Teddy Bear and Alphie the Dragon termly.

8. Attendance targets

8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The attendance targets are then agreed with the LA School Improvement Partner (S.I.P.) as well. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considered carefully the attendance figures for other similar school when setting its own targets.

9. Monitoring and Review

9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they receive a 1/2 termly update from the head teacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will

therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be. The governors are hoping to gain a charter mark for their work and attendance is high on the agenda.

- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records of file for a minimum of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported weekly on the school website and $\frac{1}{2}$ termly to the governors. The L.M and H.T monitor data monthly and half termly. All pupils below a score of 90% have home visits, supportive face-to-face meetings and are given a target to improve.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the head teacher, L.M. and F.S.W who will arrange a home visit.
- Class teacher closely follows the PHSE programme which allows pupils to share any worries they may have about school life. Pupil questionnaires and surveys would indicate dissatisfaction if there were any.
 - Class teachers and the L.M. will monitor "triggers" since P.E., swimming, supply teachers have been known to have a negative impact on attendance, particularly with pupils who lack confidence.
 - Our attendance team has Mrs Simpson (Learning Mentor) Ms Wilde (Head Teacher) and out Education Welfare Officer (Angela Perry) as members.
- 9.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or even earlier is considered necessary.

Signed:

Date:

Appendix 1

Attendance – Regular Practice.

- Close Analysis of data to identify trends.
- Head teacher reads our results for each class in Friday assembly.
- A cup and a treat for the class with the top score.
- Referral sheets to teachers; Learning Mentor oversees and takes action - weekly.
- Identified groups are monitored daily e.g. Y6.
- Absence slips are checked daily by LM.
- Children with less than 90% attendance monitored half termly by Learning Mentor/Head teacher. Home visits made.
- Group meetings with pupils to discuss absences and importance of being in school.
- Tight procedures to check that "leavers" reach a destination and "missing" pupils reported to LA / social care.
- Supportive approach so "late" children don't stay at home.
- Assembly themes - reminders regarding school attendance.
- Good lessons and supportive teachers and learning assistants with appropriate attitude.
- Reminders at parents events, parent assemblies, curriculum meetings, coffee mornings, texting etc. re importance of attendance.
- Wake up calls for families.

Future Developments

- Increased support from A.I.O for challenging families.
- More publicity regarding adverse effects of non-attendance - pupils to design poster / parents to be texted.
- Prizes for parents.

- Extend LM and FSW support of vulnerable families.