

Pupil Attendance Policy

George Grenville Academy



Approved by:

Governors

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office via SIMS or a paper register in the event of a technical issue. Class teachers will also telephone or email pupils who may have irregular attendance to encourage them to attend. They will also support the parents and headteacher in developing a parent contract if needed (see 5.2 Reducing Persistent Absence)

3.5 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents and check messages sent via parentmail about absence and record it on the school system.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08.45 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08.45 and will be kept open until 09.20. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.00 and will be kept open until 13.30.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08.45 or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). This can be done by logging the absence on parentmail, emailing the school office or ringing the school office.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done via the school office in the methods listed above.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a child arrives late to school, they must be signed into the main school office with the reasons for their lateness recorded clearly. The admin staff will input how many minutes late they are into the online register system.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting the parents via telephone
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported to parents as part of the end of school summer report. Attendance will also be discussed in parent/teacher termly meetings.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative. Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.

Examples of where absence will **not be authorised** include:

- Family holiday (including where it is cheaper to book during term time)
- Shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park
- A birthday treat
- Oversleeping due to a late or bad night
- Looking after other children / other family members

A penalty notice will be considered for all absences due to unauthorised holidays i.e. irregular school attendance. The school follow Buckinghamshire County's procedures for reporting unauthorised absences and irregular attendance. See 5.2 Reducing persistent absence and 5.3 Legal Sanctions for more information.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

A child will be described as a persistent absentee if they have attendance of 90% or below. This equates to 95 hours or more of missed schooling over the course of an academic year. This attendance figure is reported nationally and picked up through the school census information.

In order to promote high attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism, the school follows Buckinghamshire County Council's attendance systems and procedures. See appendix 2 Irregular Attendance Procedure.

Attendance will be regularly monitored pupils with low attendance will receive a letter informing parents their child's attendance will be closely monitored for the following three weeks. Where there is no improvement, the parents will be invited into school to complete a parent contract.

What is a parent contract?

A parenting contract is an agreement between the parent or carer, and the school. It is not intended to be a punishment; rather, it should be viewed as a way for the school and parents/carers to work together to improve their child's attendance at school. The contract consists of an assessment of the issues that may be impacting on the child's attendance, and an action plan for all to adhere to in order to improve the situation. This is a voluntary arrangement between the school and the parent or carer which provides an opportunity to put in support. If a parent or carer decides not to enter into a contract, they will need to try and find other ways of improving their child's attendance and will be asked how they intend to do this. In all instances, any refusal to sign a parenting contract or breach of a parenting contract will be disclosed to the court.

If there is no marked improvement in the child's attendance, after a review period has taken place, the school representative will refer this to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO)

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- Where a pupil's attendance remains irregular after a parent contract and review cycle has been completed

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

George Grenville Academy work hard to promote high attendance throughout the school. We do this by:

- Building respectful relationships with staff, pupils, families and other stakeholders in order to secure their trust and engagement.
- Ensuring there is a welcoming and positive culture across the school.
- Liaising closely with outside professionals to provide extra support when needed. (e.g. school nurse team, social workers, family resilience, young carers)
- Taking into consideration the vulnerability of some pupils and the ways in which this might contribute to absence, handling confidential information sensitively
- Understanding the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff
- Engaging extra in-school pastoral support or emotional literacy support if needed
- Celebrating high attendance in classes and assemblies
- Link high attendance clearly with school values
- Create WOW weeks/days throughout the year at key times to engage pupil interest to ensure high attendance.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a parent/carer does not contact the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent, the school will:

- Follow up on the child's absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting them via telephone. (Ensure each contact for the absent child on SIMS is telephoned).
- If school are still unable to ascertain a reason for a child's absence, a Parent Mail will be sent explaining the absence concern.
- Staff will ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
 - If the parent/carer does not contact school to inform of reason for absence, then SLT (Senior Leadership Team) will attend the child's address in order to ascertain the reason for a child's absence.
 - If SLT can still not ascertain a reason for a child's absence, the school will contact the missing in education team in county for advice and make a referral if necessary.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days without an acceptable reason being provided, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
I	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

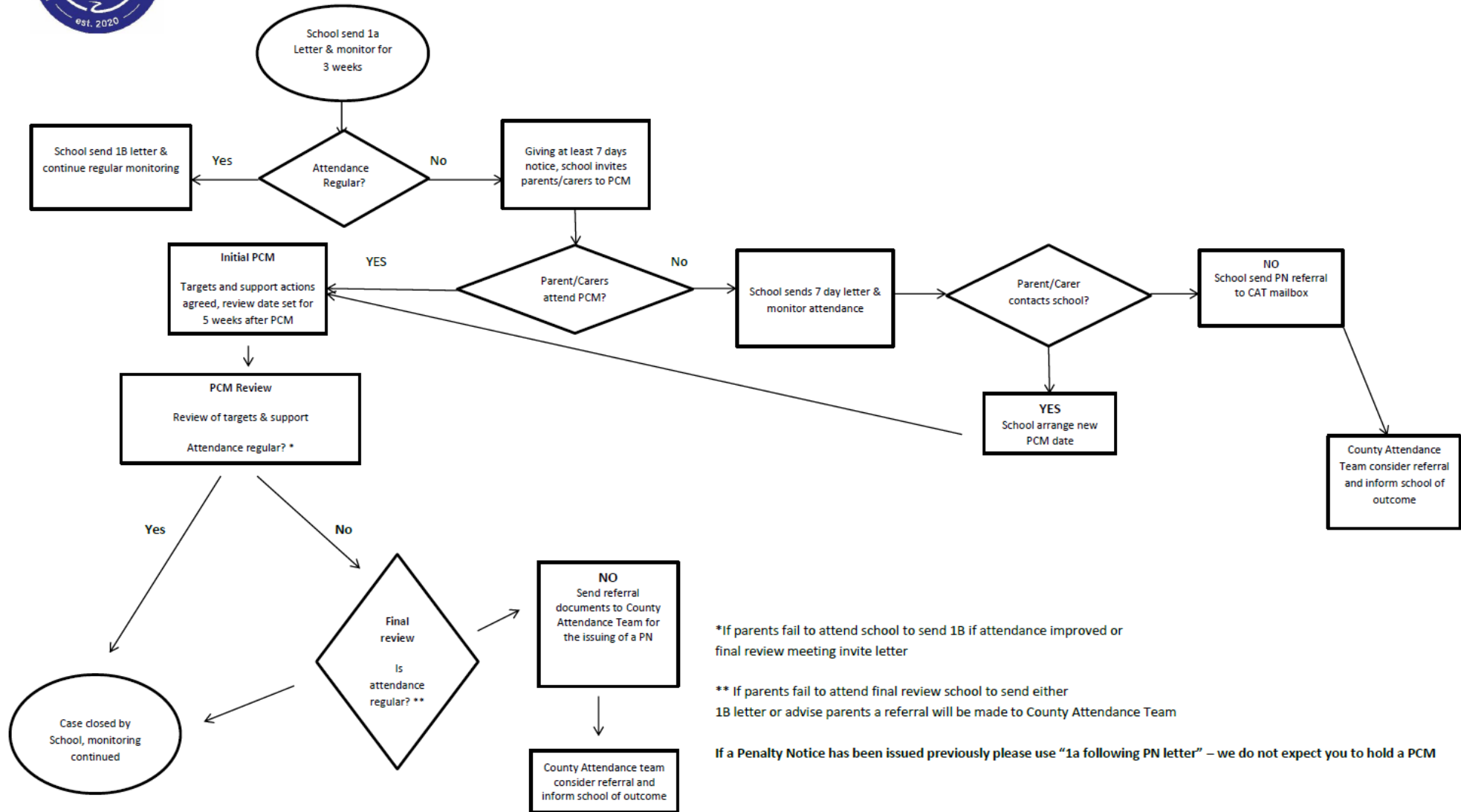
Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend or isolating due to covid
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day



APPENDIX 2: IRREGULAR ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE



*If parents fail to attend school to send 1B if attendance improved or final review meeting invite letter

** If parents fail to attend final review school to send either 1B letter or advise parents a referral will be made to County Attendance Team

If a Penalty Notice has been issued previously please use "1a following PN letter" – we do not expect you to hold a PCM