



Pupil Attendance Policy

Date of Approval:	October 2021
Date of Next Review:	October 2022
Signed: Executive Headteacher	M Talbot
Signed: Chair of Governors	M Hall

Document History

Date	Change Reference	Summary of Change
04.10.2021		Changes to times and flowcharts regarding L and U codes

1. Introduction

This is a successful junior school and your child plays their part in making it so. We create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to reach out for excellence. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they are punctual and attend regularly. Your child should be at school every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Therefore, it is very important that you make sure that your child attends regularly. This policy sets out how we will achieve this together.

2. Why regular attendance is so important

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect learning. Pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines and can affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason may create an offence in law and will result in prosecution.

Children with an attendance percentage of less than 90% are classed by the Government as being 'Persistently Absent'. We have a duty to robustly challenge all absence and to ensure no pupils are classed as Persistently Absent.

With attendance figures less than 90%, children are missing half a day each week. This equates to 19 full days (nearly four weeks) each school year. This totals 28 weeks lost if attendance is always this poor through a child's primary school life (Reception to Year 6). This is only 10 weeks short of a full year missed from their education before they reach secondary school. This has been proven to have a negative impact on a child's chances of attaining good qualifications.

3. Promoting regular attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility – parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Hold regular meetings with key staff to identify any pupil causing concern and devise an agreed strategy to improve attendance;
- Inform parents whose children's attendance is causing concern and agree strategies to improve attendance;
- Make good use of our Learning Mentor to support children and families with attendance matters;
- Liaise with the Local Authority and Senior Education Welfare Officer as required;
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying achievements and reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates, badges and awards (strong attendance forms part of Trustee status);
- Report to you annually on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainment.

4. Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school with a good reason. This includes:

- Illness;
- Medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time (appointment cards will be required);
- Emergencies or other unavoidable incidents;

- Funeral of direct family member (one day only).

This list is not exclusive.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable, and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the School and Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unreasonably;
- Truancy;
- Absences which have never been properly explained;
- Extended visits to see family;
- Medical/sickness given as a reason but not backed up by a medical stamp if requested;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9.05am);
- Shopping;
- Looking after others;
- Birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time.

This list is not exclusive.

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 never advisable 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. The school employs a Learning Mentor (Mrs Garratt) who has a number of strategies to support children and families. Mrs Garratt can be contacted via the school office or directly by email:

School Office: 01908 312551

jgarratt@greenleysjunior.org

5. **Persistent Absenteeism (PA) (Below 90%)**

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 doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system and we will also monitor the attainment of these pupils very closely.

All our PA pupils and their parents are subject to an action plan, the plan may include allocation of additional support through our Learning Mentor, Parent Ambassador, Children and Family Practices, individual incentive programmes and participation in group activities around raising attendance. All PA cases are also automatically made known to the Local Authority Senior Education Welfare Officer.

6. Fixed Penalty Notices and Court Proceedings

This is the last resort for the school but will be applied rigorously in all cases that fall into the fixed penalty/court proceedings categories. The Local Authority Senior Education Welfare Officer will process fixed penalty notices and instigate court proceedings.

Fixed Penalty Notice: £60 in the first instance rising to £120 if not paid within 28 days:

- Issued for 'late after the register closes' and unauthorised absence.

Court Prosecution: Up to £2500 fine and 3 months in prison:

- Issued for 'persistent absence from school'.

The school will follow Appendix A Flowchart 1 for pupils whose attendance is below 96%.

7. Absence procedures

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact school by 9.00am on each day of absence (01908 312551). If you do not contact us, our Office Administrators will contact you;
- We follow up each unreported absence to ensure all children are safe and make parents aware that their child is not at school. If contact cannot be made a letter will be sent with the child shortly after their return to school requesting written details. If these are not provided, the absence will automatically be unauthorised.

8. Telephone numbers

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your latest contact numbers at all times. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

9. Holidays in term time

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If you feel that you have 'exceptional circumstances' then a written submission must be made addressed to the Head of School. We have withdrawn our Holiday Request Form.

GJS will refer parents to the Local Authority for action if children are taken out of school to go on holiday. Consideration of whether the child/children attend school regularly is no longer relevant. This reflects the ruling that school attendance is compulsory and the Department for Education's stance that parents should be discouraged from taking holidays during term time.

10. Taking a child off the school roll

If we are unable to establish the reason for absence or make contact with parents/carers, we will take a child off the school roll following 20 days of unauthorised absence. You will be informed in writing before the removal takes place. Any child removed from the roll in this way will be classed as a child 'Missing in Education'. The Local Authority will be informed after 10 days where we suspect a child is missing.

11. Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they will miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils disrupt lessons and other children already working. Late arrival can be embarrassing for a child and Office Staff will use this time as an opportunity to encourage and support them to arrive on time or attend Breakfast Club. If staff are concerned by continued lateness they will contact parents to discuss the matter further. The school is open to children from 8.15am to 8.25am offering a free breakfast service. Gates re-open at 8.45am and children enter classrooms from 8.45am onwards. **Children must be in their classroom by 8.55am.**

12. How we manage lateness

The school day officially starts at **8.55am** and we expect your child to be in their classroom by this time. Any child arriving in reception after 8.55am will be recorded as Late ('L' code used). At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be 'Unauthorised' late ('U' code used). This will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence mark. This will mean that you face the possibility of a Fixed Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

The school will follow Appendix B Flowchart 1 – Lateness

13. School targets and attendance trends

The school has challenging targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

The current target is to achieve a whole school percentage higher than 96.0% which is in line with the National target. Our target is to achieve better than this, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful learning and we believe that our pupils can be amongst the best in the city.

Information on any projects or initiatives that focus on attendance will be provided in our newsletter and we ask for your full support.

The school uses the following scale to judge attendance:

98 – 100%	Very Good
96 – 97.9%	Good
95 – 95.9%	Requires Improvement
90 – 94.9%	Poor – impacting on learning
89.9% or less	Persistently absent – significant impact on learning



Pupils should aim to have **96% or above** attendance

90% is **not** good!
 1 School Year @ 90% attendance=**4 whole weeks of lessons missed!**

That's **100 HOURS OF LEARNING MISSED!**

Attendance Ladder



...being in school, on time, every day, ready to learn.



DID YOU KNOW? If you are 15 minutes late each day you will have missed a full 2 weeks of school in one year?

Trends over previous years:

2020/21	94.9% Attendance (National figure was 95.3% for Autumn Term only)
2019/20	95.3% Attendance
2018/19	95.6% Attendance
2017/18	95.4% Attendance

14. Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Miss Thurstance (Head of School)

Mrs Garratt (Learning Mentor)

Mrs Jago (Business Manager)

If a parent/carer wishes to know the current attendance percentage of their child/ren then please contact the school office who will be able to assist.

15. Summary:

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote excellent attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils to ensure the highest levels of attendance and excellent punctuality possible.

Appendix A - Flowchart 1 - Absence below 96%

Regular attendance meetings will monitor the attendance of all pupils.

Normal good attendance = 96% or above (No further action required)

Percentage falls between 90% and 95.9% =
1st attendance letter – explaining the school is responsible for making the final decision about what constitutes an authorised absence where there has been no satisfactory explanation or supporting medical note. Reminder of PACE should attendance not improve. Attendance monitored during the regular attendance meetings.

If no improvement:
2nd letter sent – warning and GP stamp required. Reminder of PACE should attendance not improve. Attendance monitored during the regular attendance meetings. **Attendance Interview arranged.** Failure to attend will result in a P.A.C.E meeting being arranged with local authority. A review period of 2 months will be put into place to allow time for sustained improvement.

If attendance during these periods does improve and is sustained then continued monitoring will be put into place and support from both the Learning Mentor and school will be ongoing.

If attendance during the review period does not improve then a PACE referral to the local authority will be made.

Appendix B - Flowchart 1 - Lateness

Normal attendance = child in school before 8:55am (No further action required)

Child arrives after 8:55am = entrance via the school office who record lateness –

- 8.55am-9.05 am 'L' code
- 9.05am onwards 'U' code used and minutes late recorded.

3 'L' or 'U' codes combined identified by registration computers during 1 term (6 school terms) or since September = 1st letter – polite reminder about timings of school day and indicating how many lates (and minutes late) the child has had during the term. Support offered by LM. Monitored during regular attendance meetings. Indication that if punctuality does not improve an FPN will be given.

If no improvement (continuing lates after the letter has been issued) = Attendance Interview arranged. A review period of 1 term will be put into place to allow time for a sustained improvement to be made.

Failure to attend will result in an FPN being requested to the Local Authority.

If punctuality and attendance during the review period does not improve then the FPN request will be made to the Local Authority.

If punctuality and attendance during these periods does improve and is sustained then continued monitoring will be put into place and support from both the Learning Mentor and school will be ongoing.