



Great Easton C of E Primary School
Attendance and Punctuality Policy



This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

This Policy was reviewed and amended and Staff were consulted on this document in:	September 2016
The policy was ratified by the Governing Body in:	October 2016

To be reviewed October 2018

Statement of Intent

Great Easton Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a School, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This policy has been written following consultation with all local schools.

School Attendance and the Law

Under the 1996 Education Act, parents and carers are responsible for ensuring their children attend school regularly and punctually. Failure to do so could result in legal action being taken against them by the Local Authority.

The register is a legal document and schools must, under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 take a register at the start of the morning session, and again during the afternoon session. Since September 2006, schools have been required to use statutory registration codes (see appendix A).

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, only the school (and not parents/carers) can authorise an absence. Where the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the time the register is taken, that absence shall be recorded as unauthorised. If a reason for absence is provided by the parent/carer, the school may decide to grant leave of absence which must be recorded as authorised using the appropriate national code.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave. The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where the request for leave was not agreed, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. This may result in the Local Authority issuing a Penalty Notice (parents must, from 1st September 2013, pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days). If this penalty is not paid the Local Authority will institute legal proceedings against the parent/carer in the Magistrates Court.

The guidance in The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 will be followed with regard to deleting pupils from the Admission Register. The Education Welfare Service will be informed of every student deleted from the Admission Register.

If a pupil is deemed to be missing from education (CME), the guidelines issued by the Education Welfare Service will be followed. This can include a referral to the EWS for investigation.

Rights and Responsibilities

The School:

Great Easton Primary School expects pupils to attend school regularly, on time and properly equipped and ready to learn.

Great Easton Primary School will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

Great Easton Primary School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.

Great Easton Primary School will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.

Great Easton Primary School will include in reports to parents on achievement, pupil's attendance at least annually.

The Pupils:

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils will attend all lessons punctually.

Pupils can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.

Pupils will be listened to and respected.

Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

The Parents:

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and in an appropriate condition to learn.

Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call before 9.30 am on the first morning of any absence.

If attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff and the Education Welfare Service, to solve them.

Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

Registration

Types of Registration and General Register Maintenance

At Great Easton Primary School a manual registration system is used.

Manual registers must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used.

If a child is absent, the adult taking the register will record this with a circle. **The appropriate code will then be added by the office staff.**

Registers will be returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured but accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored on the pupil's file and retained for three years.

Start and Close of Registration

Great Easton Primary School will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 30 minutes of the start of the lesson.

Registration begins at 8.45 am and 1.15 pm each school day and registers will be 'closed' 30 minutes after these times.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they should report to the office to be entered into the late record book.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Use of Symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

(New guidelines on symbols have been issued by the DCSF and will come into force by September 2006, but can be implemented prior to this)

Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
B	Educated off site
C	Other Authorised Circumstances
E	Excluded
F	Extended Family Holiday (agreed)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed). Unauthorised
H	Family Holiday (agreed). Authorised
I	Illness
L	Late (before 9.15/1.45)
M	Medical, Dentist, Hospital
N	No reason Yet Given
O	Unauthorised not covered by other codes
P	Approved sporting activities
R	Religious Observation
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late after Registration closes.
V	Educational Visit or Trip.
Y	Enforced Closure
Z	Pupils not yet on Roll
#	School Closed to Pupils

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff Responsible for Processes

The headteacher is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The headteacher will liaise regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The EWO regularly monitors the school's registers and will make further enquiries if they notice any anomalies or cause for concern eg periods of unauthorised absence.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.

The class teacher/adult in charge is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session.

The class teacher/adult in charge is responsible for register maintenance of their own class register. Including the following:

- ◆ using the correct colour ink (red)
- ◆ ensuring that symbols used are appropriate (/ , \, or O)
- ◆ not using correction fluid
- ◆ ensuring all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections clearly marked
- ◆ ensuring the registers are neatly kept allowing for ease of reading at all times but especially in an emergency situation - i.e. during a fire procedure

Great Easton Primary School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Each pupil should be called by name when the register is being taken.

Procedures for Following up Absence/Lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. If this contact is not made then Great Easton Primary School will:

- Contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unobtainable;
- Write a letter requesting information

If the above actions do not elicit an explanation for the absence and the absence continues, a further letter will be sent to the parents/carers.

If this letter does not elicit an explanation for the absence a second letter will be sent to the parent/carer, the school's Education Welfare Officer will be informed and the parent may be invited in to the school for a meeting by the headteacher. This meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting then a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer, and a formal intervention planned.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Where a pupil is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

THE DSCF CIRCULAR NUMBER 10/99 STATES THAT PARENTS MAY NOT AUTHORISE ABSENCE, ONLY SCHOOLS CAN DO THIS.

Essex County Council advises us that leave of absence will only be granted in the most exceptional circumstances. This may include;

- ◆ An immediate family member is critically/terminally ill
- ◆ Families who have been through a traumatic event
- ◆ Families where a parent/carer is able to demonstrate clearly (e.g. a letter from an employer which can be verified) that they are restricted to all annual leave within school term time.
- ◆ Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- ◆ Transport arranged by the LA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

Absence will be recorded as unauthorised when due to:

- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Haircuts
- ◆ Missed bus
- ◆ Slept late
- ◆ No uniform
- ◆ Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- ◆ Minding the house
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Holidays

It may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for the permission of the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance/Punctuality

In the belief that pupils are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed.

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices.

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement and School prospectus.

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used.

Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence.

Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement.

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme.

All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school (bullying etc needs to link with behaviour policy and equal opportunities policies)

This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.