

# Graham James Primary Academy



## Attendance Policy

Agreed by Governing Body: September 2019

Next Review Date: July 2020

## Introduction

This document is a statement of aims, principles and strategies for Attendance. Government guidelines on attendance and punctuality have been taken into consideration in its foundation.

Graham James Primary Academy is a successful school that aims to provide the best available learning opportunities for children living in the local community. Without the help and support of parents, some children will find it difficult to adjust to the structured environment that schools have to be in order to achieve their objectives. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their time at school, it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

This policy sets out the information we think will help you to explain to your child what is important to their future success and how, with your support, attending school regularly will help them to achieve their full potential.

### Why Regular Attendance is so important:

The effect of absence on progress					
<i>A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 190 days. That leaves 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.</i>					
No absence	10 days absence	12 days absence	19 days absence	29 days absence	38 days absence
190 days of education	180 days of education	178 days of education	171 days of education	161 days of education	152 days of education
100%	95%	94%	90%	85%	80%
<b>Very Good</b>		<b>Worrying</b>		<b>Serious Concern</b>	
Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.		Less chance of success. Makes it harder for your child to make progress.		Your child will find it very difficult to make progress.	

Any absence that a child has from school affects them as their learning becomes disrupted and social interactions can also be affected. Regular absences will have a serious effect on their academic progress and can affect a child's confidence within school.

Ensuring your child attends school regularly is your legal responsibility and allowing absence from school without good reason is an offence and may result in a prosecution.

A few days a week/month can quickly build up –

<b>365 days in a year</b>	<b><u>Attendance</u> 190 school days in total/ 39 weeks</b>	<b><u>Absence</u></b>
100% attendance	190 days	0
95% attendance	180 days	2 weeks absence
90% attendance	171 days	4 weeks absence
85% attendance	161 days	6 weeks absence
80% attendance	152 days	Absence equal to the first school term Sept-Oct
75% attendance and below	143 days	9+ weeks absence

## **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for your child encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the Curriculum and anti-bullying.

**Your child may be at risk of harm if they are frequently absent and so failing to attend school regularly will be considered as a safeguarding matter.**

## **The Law relating to attendance**

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have either by regularly attendance at school or otherwise'

## **The Law relating to safeguarding**

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

## **Absence Procedures:**

### **If your child is absent from school, you must:**

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence and inform us of the reason for the absence.
- Provide us with appointment card/appointment letter if taking your child out of school for a medical appointment; your child should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Provide the school with medical evidence of any absence lasting more than 5 consecutive days (i.e. medical note, medical appointment card, medicine bottle)
- Provide the school with medical evidence for all future illness if your child has already had 5 different occasions in the school year when they have been absent due to illness or when attendance falls below 95% - you will be notified if your child reaches this level.

**If we do not receive information from a parent/ carer regarding absence – it will be considered as a safeguarding matter.**

### **If your child is absent from school, we will:**

- Telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Send a letter of expectation if the absence reporting procedure is not being adhered to (Safeguarding concern)
- Apply the attendance escalation stages once your child meets the stage criteria (Attendance is monitored on a daily basis, however, letters/ stage escalation will occur at the end of each half term/term. (Please note – earlier intervention may be applied – case by case knowledge)

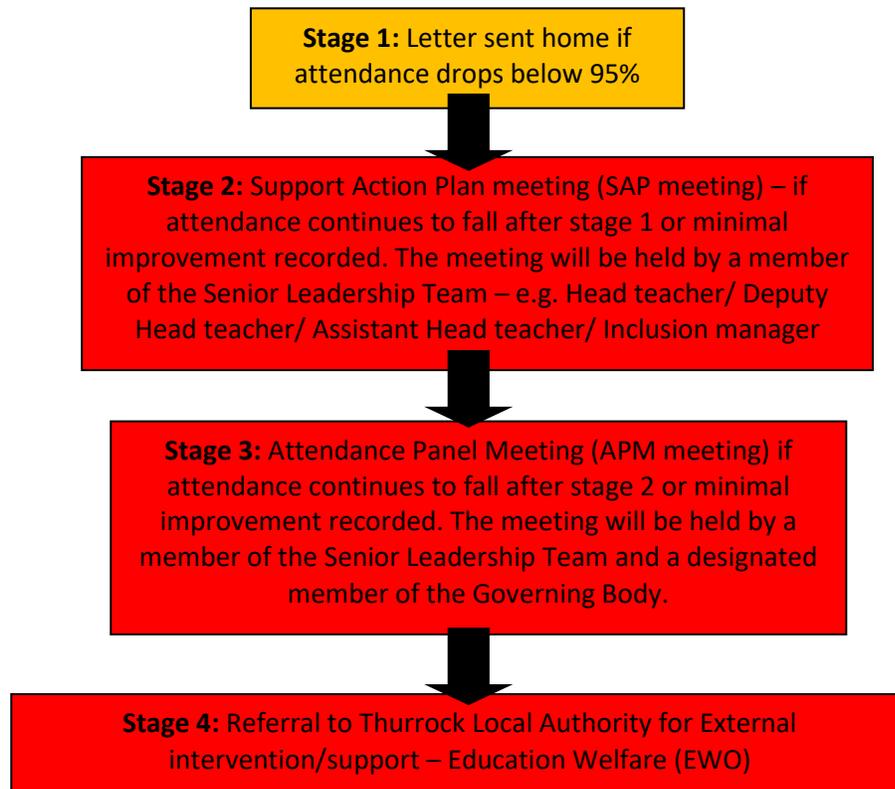
## **PARENTAL ENGAGEMENT – INFORMAL/ FORMAL ESCALATION**

### **- INFORMAL STAGE (Classroom level/ teacher level):**

- Teachers will have regular communication with parents/ carers regarding attendance and any trends that may be developing/ absences.
- The above process will be supported by weekly attendance figures for each child.
- Teachers will keep a record of informal conversations in order to support formal attendance stages (if needed)

### **- FORMAL STAGES:**

- The following stages are applied on a half termly basis (unless earlier intervention is deemed necessary):
-

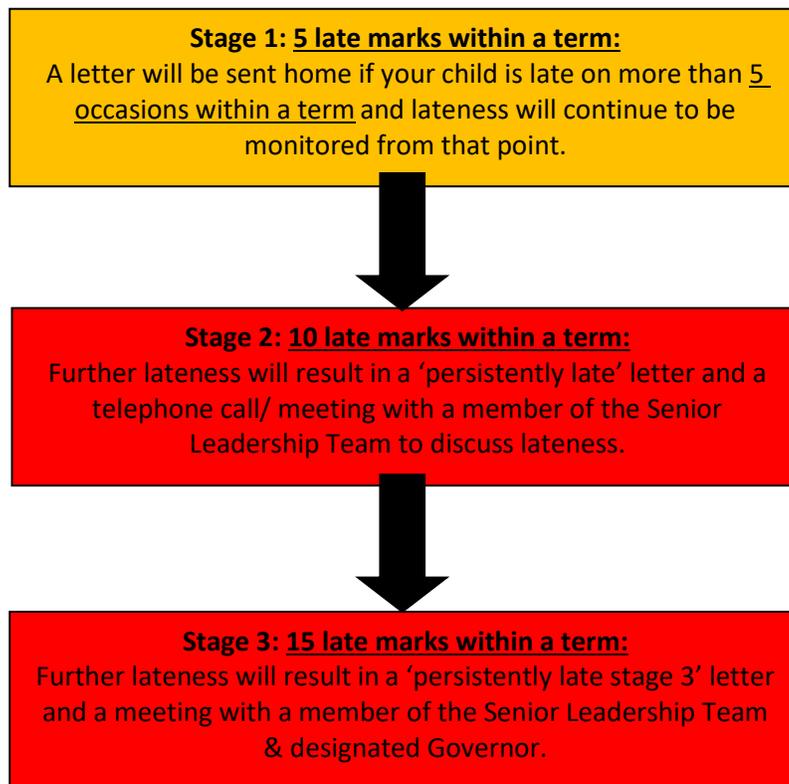


## Lateness:

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day it can have a detrimental effect on their progress as they find it hard to settle and they will inevitably miss vital introductions to lessons. It also disturbs the class routines, which has a negative effect on other children's learning.

The school gates open at 8:45am and children must be in class for registration by 8:55am. If a child arrives at school after 8:55am they will need to come via the school office for their details to be recorded on the class electronic register. If a child is up to 30 mins late they are marked in the electronic register as 'late' (L), pupils arriving more than 30 minutes after the close of registration will be regarded as absent from the morning session and will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U).

There are times when your child may be late into school due to external factors (e.g. traffic if travelling from outside of the immediate catchment of the school) or if a child needs to attend an appointment; this type of lateness is marked accordingly, although the school does need to be notified prior to the lateness. If an appointment is later in the morning or afternoon it may be possible to send your child into school to obtain their 'present' mark and then collect them nearer to the appointment time. Ideally, where possible, appointments should be made for your child outside of the school day.



If you are having problems getting your child to school on time you can approach us at any time to support you and help resolve the problem. This could prevent the lateness escalation policy being applied – this will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

## First Day Contact

It is vital that you tell us as early as possible if you know your child is not going to be attending school. We have a 24hr answer phone service to help parents inform us of absence. If you don't contact the school, we will have to try to contact you, so it is important that you regularly notify us of your latest contact telephone number or any change of address. If you don't contact us and we can't make contact with you we may have to make a home visit and may have to report your child as a 'missing person'.

Failure to give the school an acceptable reason for an absence will result in an unauthorised absence mark

## Understanding types of absence:

A paper register is taken in the school every morning and afternoon (each classed as a 'session') and every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED when inputted onto the system. This is why information about the cause of any absence

is always required by the school.

- **AUTHORISED** absences are sessions away from the school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable situations. Obviously children do need to be kept off school if they are too ill to attend, however, if they are simply 'not feeling right' or are just tired then this will not be authorised. It is also important that a child returns to school as soon as possible after feeling unwell, for example, it is not acceptable not to send a child back to school on Friday simply because they have been unwell Monday-Thursday
  
- **UNAUTHORISED** absences are sessions away from the school which the school deems unreasonable. Unauthorised absences include:
  - parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
  - truancy before or during the school day
  - absences which have not been properly explained
  - children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
  - shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
  - day trips and holidays in term time

### **Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason, both authorised and unauthorised absences. Absence at this level is causing considerable damage to any child's progress and educational prospects. Please refer to the escalation policy on page 4.

#### **Unauthorised Leave of Absence (term time holiday)**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 have been amended so that from 1st September 2013 references to family holiday (including reference to head teachers allowing up to 10 school days for a term time holiday) and extended leave have been removed. The amendments make clear that a designated member of the Governing body (Normally the Chair of Governors) may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The designated member of the Governing body should determine the number of school days the child may be away from school if the leave is granted.

**At Graham James Primary Academy, the designated governor for attendance is Mr Bradley Lane.**

### **Examples of Circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:**

- Holidays taken in term time due to lower costs/parental work commitments
- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative
- Pilgrimages by parents
- Holidays booked as a surprise by relatives etc

### **Examples of Exceptional Circumstances where leave of absence MAY be granted:**

*(Evidence may be requested for the following situations)*

- Funeral of a parent, grandparent or sibling
- Wedding of children's parents or sibling – up to a max of 3 days for weddings abroad
- Sudden loss of housing through eviction or domestic violence – up to max of 3 days
- A close relative is terminally ill and the absence is likely to be the last such absence
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement
- Absence relating to Child Entertainment Performances
- Religious Observance –The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states 'on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parents belong.

Parents must apply for leave of absence in advance of taking it, failure to do so will result in the absence being marked as an unauthorised absence code 'O' rather than an unauthorised holiday code 'G'. All applications need to be made **at least 4 weeks** before the period of absence and before personal and travel arrangements are made.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday taken, the Absence Procedure will be followed as necessary. If a leave of absence is taken, **staff will not set extra work for children to do during their absence or on their return.**

## Incentives and rewards for great attendance

The following incentives and rewards are used across KS1 and KS2 to promote good attendance:

**WEEKLY rewards:** The KS1 & KS2 class with the best attendance each week are presented with 'Attendance Ted' during the weekly celebration assembly (Usually on a Monday – subject to change).



**HALF TERMLY rewards:** Each half term, children who have an attendance of 95% or above will be on the main hall '100% ATTENDANCE' or 'ATTENDANCE SUPERSTAR' wall.

**IN CLASS:** Each half term, children who have an attendance of 95% or above will be displayed in their classroom.

**TERMLY rewards:** We reward good attendance by issuing certificates to pupils who have achieved 95%+ attendance in a term (certificates are given out every Christmas, Easter & Summer) – Prizes may also be awarded (subject to cost)



**END OF YEAR rewards:** all children with an attendance of 95%+ for the academic year will be awarded a certificate for their achievements. Those children with 100% will receive a special treat for their achievement (End of Summer term celebration assembly)

- Please note - Individual pupil incentive schemes are used for pupils with low attendance, this is done sensitively to encourage and reward pupils for achieving their personal attendance target.

## Engaging Parents

The school will engage parents as early as possible at the informal attendance stage. In most cases, this will help support with attendance. However, there will be occasions when the formal stages will need to be applied. The formal stage will utilise standard letters for information. Standard letters will be sent out when:

- Attendance has fallen to 95% or below (stage 1)
- Attendance has not improved since 95% letter sent, this letter includes a Support Action Plan meeting Invite (stage 2)
- Attendance has still not improved since 95% letter sent, this letter includes an Attendance Panel meeting Invite (stage 3)
- There is a high incidence of late marks (5 lates in a term – Stage 1 lateness)
- There is a persistent high incidence of late marks (10 lates in a term – Stage 2 lateness, 15 lates in a term – Stage 3 lateness)

All letters referring to a fall in attendance have a reply slip attached to acknowledge receipt of the letter and parents have the opportunity to respond accordingly. These letters also give an invitation to come in to the school to discuss any attendance issues or difficulties if required.

We will do our best to help you with any problems that affect your child's attendance, but we cannot help you if you do not tell us. In fact, where parents consistently fail to cooperate with the school, the absences will be unauthorised. However, before we get to that point, we will invite you to a Support Action Plan meeting. The purpose of this meeting will be to give you the opportunity to discuss the reasons for your child's poor attendance/persistent lateness and for us therefore to support you in ensuring your child gets to school where possible. At the meeting an Action Plan will be drawn up with targets for your child to meet with respect to their attendance (This meeting will be chaired by a member of the Senior Leadership team (if available) and possibly the class teacher).

We review children's attendance half termly and we will on occasion request evidence for medical appointments and parents unable to provide evidence will find absence is unauthorised.

## Exclusion

A pupil of compulsory school age who has been excluded from school, either for a fixed period or permanently is not allowed to be present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of the exclusion, without reasonable justification. The parent must have been notified in writing by the school at the time of the exclusion of this and the days to which it applies.

## Those responsible for attendance matters in this school:

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the

home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the following staff has specific attendance related responsibilities:

- **Class Teacher** – To complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily; to be alert to early signs of issues which may result in non-attendance; to inform the Senior Leadership Team of any attendance concerns. The class teacher may also make phone calls/ arrange meetings in order for attendance to be challenged at a very early stage. The class teacher will also discuss attendance at Parent/Carer evening which take place twice throughout the academic year (November & March).
- **Office Staff** - To ensure children who are late or absent are added to the electronic register including recording reasons and first day absence calls are made when parents have not notified the school of an absence; to alert the Designated Safeguard Lead if unable to make contact as a home visit may be necessary or the child may need to be reported as missing; to notify the Designated Safeguard Lead of any issues concerning pupil absence.
- **Deputy Head Teacher (or Assistant Head Teacher in their absence)** – To oversee the registration process and liaise with class teachers over attendance concerns; to alert parents over pupil absence and for frequent lateness and to closely monitor all identified children; promote good attendance within the school with assemblies, achievement certificates and rewards.
- **Head Teacher and Governors** – To ensure all attendance procedures are carried out in accordance with the Attendance Policy and to work with the Deputy Head Teacher to raise the profile of attendance within the school and deal with the attendance issues that arise.

## Re-integration programmes

Where children have been absent from school for some time, they may need to return on a gradual basis. Individual cases will need to be discussed with the relevant members of staff and agreement reached as to the pace and time scale of any return.

## **Policy Summary**

Whilst we do understand that children are ill from time to time, individual pupil's academic attainment/progress does suffer if they miss school on a regular basis. Also, coming in late to school can have a detrimental effect on a child's progress as they find it hard to settle and will inevitably miss vital introductions to lessons. It also disturbs the class routines, which has a negative effect on other children's learning.

The school has a responsibility to discourage parents from removing their children from education for any reason as absences may have a negative impact on a pupil's educational attainment and progress. A pupil who takes 10 days absence a year will actually be spending more time at home than at school in that year and will only attain 94.7% attendance. 10 days absence means a child misses 50 hours of education.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance; equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All staff within the school are committed to working with both parents and pupils to ensure that attendance within the school is as high as it can be so that the pupils receive the best education that they can which will improve their life opportunities.

# ***Appendices to Graham James Primary Academy***

## ***Attendance Policy***



## REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE IN EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES

This form must be completed by the parent or carer and forwarded to the Governing Body of the Academy **at least 4 weeks prior** to the period of absence.

Name of Child: ..... Class: .....

Period for which leave of absence is sought:

From: ...../...../..... To: ...../...../.....

Name of other siblings (if any) for whom leave of absence is being requested:

Name: ..... School/ academy attended: .....

.....

.....

The Governors at Graham James Primary Academy would like to stress:

1. There is no 'right' to leave of absence during term time.
2. Schools & academies have a duty in law to keep pupil absence to a minimum.
3. Nationally, Government policy is to encourage schools and academies to minimise the amount of teaching and learning time lost as a result of term time holidays and schools and academies are expected to adopt a much more challenging response to such requests.
4. For all of the above reasons, requests from parents and carers for children to be allowed to take holidays during term time at Graham James Primary Academy will normally be refused and, if taken will be deemed to be an unauthorised absence and may result in further action being taken.

At Graham James we understand the challenges of booking family holidays out of school term however the Academy will not grant holidays in term time unless under exceptional circumstance/s.

### **Exceptional Circumstances**

The Governors at Graham James Primary Academy will consider requests for leave of absence where there are exceptional circumstances. These may include:

- A close relative is terminally ill and the absence is likely to be the last such absence.
- The absence is for a one-off, never to be repeated occasion which can only take place at the time requested (e.g. wedding of child's parents/ sibling etc).
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3), states 'on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parents belong'.

There are other exceptional circumstances where absences may be granted, such as for an approved educational activity, for example:

- An audition for a prestigious performance or admission to a specialist organization
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement (direct communication with the organisation may be needed, therefore, contact details could be asked for).

Even in exceptional circumstances leave of absence will not normally be granted:

- If a child’s attendance is below 96% for the current academic year
- If the period of absence coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

Please give the specific reasons for the requested leave of absence. This section **must be completed** in order for the request to be considered.

.....

.....

.....

I have read and understood the school’s policy on leave of absence during term time contained on this form and have also read the ‘Pupil Attendance Policy’ which can be found on our website, or a copy can be gained from the academy reception.

Date: .....

Signature: ..... Parent/Carer

<b><u>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY:</u></b>	Number of school days requested	.....
	Current academic years attendance	.....
	No. of days authorized, if any	.....
	Authorised by .....	Date.....

To: ..... Name of child: .....

Your application for leave of absence from ..... to ..... has been:

a) Approved by the governors

b) Refused for the following reason(s):

.....

.....

Signed: ..... (Chair of Governors/ Governor)

# Agenda for Support Action Plan/ Attendance Panel meeting

---

## 1. Introductions:

Who is on the panel and their role in the school

## 2. Background:

A brief synopsis of the reasons for inviting the parents to the panel meeting, including details of the efforts made by the school to address the issue and any support offered.

## 3. Parent's Response:

An opportunity for the parents to give any reasons for the poor attendance and to comment on the situation.

## 4. Outcome:

Completion of the action plan, with a clear designation of responsibilities and actions in accordance with a discussed time scale. Discussion should take place as to whether a CAF needs to be completed and if so an appointment made to do so.

## 5. Review Date:

Agree and set up a date to review the action plan and its impact on the attendance of the child.

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Attendance/ Lateness Action Plan**

Meeting purpose:                      Attendance                                      Lateness

Present:

Child's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Year Group: \_\_\_\_\_

Summary	Sessions	%
Attendances		
Authorised absences		
Unauthorised absences		
Possible absence		

Including: Approved Ed. Activity Lates before the reg closed Lates after reg closed Unexplained absences Total number of minutes missed due to lateness			Class: _____
			Previous attendance: _____

Sessions missed due to illness: <i>(no. and %)</i>	Sessions missed due to holiday: <i>(no. and %)</i>
--	--

Comments:

Actions: *(who will do what and when)*

Review date:

