



Heartlands Community Trust The Grove

Attendance Policy

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Approved:		
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Signed	Simon Garrill Executive Headteacher	Chair of Directors

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Link Policies

The attendance Policy Links to the following school policy:

- Safeguarding and Child Protection

Introduction

This policy exists to help us ensure that every child is able to meet his or her potential through regular attendance at school.

At The Grove, we value education and the chances it is able to give young people. This is underlined in our Vision to “Inspire Excellence, Challenge Potential and Empower Learning” and is reflected in our SEARCH ethos:

School Matters:	We all take pride in our school and vision
Effort:	We all work hard and try our best at all times
Achievement:	We all strive for academic, personal and collaborative achievements
Responsibility:	We all take responsibility to develop ourselves and our learning
Community:	We all participate & make positives contributions to our communities
High aspirations:	We all set challenging goals and learn skills towards achieving them

The Grove is committed to providing a full, effective and efficient education to all students (The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7) and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy contains within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

Every child has a right to access the education to which s/he is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at The Grove is maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

1. Expectations: The Grove will work to support every child in achieving 100% attendance and punctuality.

2. Responsibilities: Parents and carers are responsible in law for ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of their children.

The Grove will:

- work to ensure that the school is a welcoming and challenging place that will provide

opportunities for all students.

- ensure that the importance and celebration of good attendance are given a high profile.
- work in partnership with parents and carers to set high expectations and overcome any problems which may affect a child's attendance. This must be an equal partnership.
- recognise the external factors which influence pupil attendance and will work in partnership with parents, our family support manager, the Education Welfare Officer and other relevant services to deal with any issues.
- provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance in accordance with legal requirements.

3. Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the head of school or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

3.1 Registration

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 08.30 and afternoon registration at 13.30. The registers will remain open for 30 minutes. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Registers will be marked promptly at these times and the morning and afternoon registers will be closed at 09.10 and 14.00 respectively. Should a student arrive after the start of registration but before the registers have closed s/he will be marked as late for that session.

students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded as late before registers close.

Registers should be marked in accordance with the codes and guidelines defined on the school's MIS system. Class teachers are asked to restrict themselves to using the following codes:

/ - present for morning session
\ - present for afternoon session
L – late for session
and left blank if absent

All other codes will be completed by Senior Staff ONLY.

3.2 Absences

All absences will be recorded as either authorised or unauthorised.

Parents and carers are asked to contact the school on 0208 826 1230 if they know their child cannot

attend school that day.

If a message is not received by 9.10am a follow-up phone call or text will be sent as soon as possible thereafter to establish why the child is absent.

On the first day of the child returning to school after an absence, or on the third day of an absence, whichever is sooner, we ask parents and carers to send or bring a note into school. This should be passed to the school office, and should contain the reason for absence, signed and dated by the parent or carer, and should be submitted to the class teacher. Please note that this is the case whether or not a call has been made explaining the absence. Emails are accepted but their authenticity should be confirmed by the school office with a phone call.

For students who are on the safeguarding child protection register or are children in care, the attendance officer should inform the Senior Leader in charge of Safeguarding children on the first day they are absent.

Notes and phone messages regarding absence should please be filed except in the incidence of an attendance concern. In that case, the note should be kept in the student’s file or passed on the EWO or Safeguarding Officer. All notes / message are also scanned and recorded electronically on our MIS system.

For absences of longer than five days, we ask parents to send in a doctor’s letter or certificate.

Should an explanation for an absence not be received or should the explanation be deemed unsatisfactory then that absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Authorised reasons for absence may include ...	Reasons that will not be authorised may include ...
Illness Days of religious observance Bereavement Injury Family funeral Medical or dental appointments	Shopping Day-trips Birthdays A whole day absence being taken for a routine check-up Looking after siblings

Identified students with specific medical, therapy or additional SEND needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these students and the school
- Provide home visits where appropriate

- Recognise that some students are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our school

A Welcome Back

It is important that on return from an absence that all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to adjust to school's daily routine; catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other students.

3.3 Lateness

Students, who arrive at school after 08.30 in the morning and have not been transported on the school bus, should sign in at the school office, a reason for their lateness will be sought from the adult who is accompanying them.

Late students will receive an L in the register or a U if after 9.10 a.m. A weekly monitoring of lateness will take place as part of the school's attendance monitoring.

3.4 Term-Time Holidays

The school strongly urges parents to avoid booking family holidays during term-time. Leave for such holidays will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. Applications in writing, with full reasons, must be made to the Head of School.

3.5 Staff Roles

The Teacher

Teachers at The Grove are responsible for taking the register promptly and closing them at the appropriate time. There is an expectation that the register is completed within the first 10 minutes. Class teachers are also responsible for;

- checking the attendance of their students each day
- referring to their line manager to set meetings with families and, where appropriate students, if a pattern is detected
- contacting the school office with any information that may have come to light about a student's absence at the end of each day
- contacting the family support manager if support for a family may be needed
- reporting any safeguarding concerns to the designated lead for safeguarding and child protection

The Attendance Officer (As carried out by the school office)

The attendance officer is responsible for coordinating the attendance process and ensuring accuracy and follow-up to absences, liaising with parents, tutors and senior staff. S/he is asked to:

- make same day absence calls / texts to the parent or carer of any student not in school by 9.10am that day
- ensure that the correct attendance code is added to each child's register daily
- send a letter home if a child has returned to school but an absence has not been explained and five school days have passed

- work with class teachers to detect patterns of lateness or absenteeism, and send out the standard proforma letters
- make a call home if a child goes missing during the day, and ensure that the class teacher or line manager is informed
- inform the designated lead for safeguarding and child protection as soon as possible if a child on the safeguarding register is absent.
- attend meetings as necessary to discuss individual attendance matters and overall attendance policy
- ensure keeping of the registers in line with legal requirements and safeguarding procedures
- work with Safeguarding Officer and the EWO to maintain a list of referrals and vulnerable students
- maintain the attendance tracker on a weekly basis
- ensure registers are up to date and printed out in case of an evacuation or other emergency incident
- during an evacuation to ensure that any missing students are reported to the SLT lead

The Family Support Manager

- To undertake day to day case work so as to improve levels of school attendance and punctuality, and to ensure parent/carers are aware of their legal responsibilities to secure the regular attendance of their child.
- To contribute to whole school initiatives and/or group work to improve school attendance and punctuality.
- To establish clear communications with parent / carers and provide regular feedback to the SLT lead so as to ensure appropriate and speedy outcomes for the young people concerned.
- To work with Admin staff to ensure that attendance data is amended accordingly to ensure that roll figures are accurate and up-to-date and an up to date case work log is maintained and published each half term.
- To provide information on support services for families in need of support
- To monitor attendance and punctuality of students on the case load.
- Meet regularly with SLT to ensure individual students and families are identified for support.
- To provide the necessary evidence of school action preceding the referral to the Education Welfare Service and relevant statements for Court proceedings.
- To attend school and professionals meetings where required.
- To attend core group, child protection and other relevant courses, as required to be aware of current initiatives related to Attendance and personal wellbeing of families.

The SLT lead for Attendance

The SLT lead is responsible for ensuring the smooth introduction of this system, and of reviewing it half-termly ensuring they;

- meet with Heads of Department on a regular basis to identify safeguarding concerns arising from poor attendance (anything under 95%)
- devise an annual Attendance Plan to maximize attendance beyond National Averages
- arrange a termly attendance panel to follow up serious cases of concern.
- Feedback to the Governors, Head of School and SLT every half term the attendance progress and plan.

3.6 Attendance Data

A range of attendance data will be collected each half term in order to identify particular students whose attendance causes concern. As part of this process a PAR (Persistent Absentee Register) will be maintained and regularly reviewed.

Students for whom there are concerns around absence will be added to the school's Multi-Agency Team meeting - Signs of Safety where their case will be tracked and monitored regularly.

3.7 Persistent Absence Policy

The attendance lead will work together with the family support team and class teams to support students with attendance below 95%. The school will only investigate students whose attendance is below 90%.

3.8 Communication

The Grovel Attendance Policy will be communicated through:

- a précis in the parents prospectus
- the Home-School agreement
- regular newsletter items
- Guidance and advice in the staff handbook
- The website
- Family trainings and open evenings/events

3.9 Evaluation and Review

This policy will be evaluated every two years but changes in legislation will be implemented immediately.

The SLT lead with responsibility for attendance should try to identify trends within attendance, with particular relation to ethnicity, children in care, gender, illness, behavior, and holidays in term time, and absence on particular days.

Appendix 1
Attendance Codes

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity (Counts as present)
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity (Counts as present)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity (Counts as present)
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity (Counts as present)
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity (Counts as present)
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity (Counts as present)
X	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

Appendix 2: Reason for Absence note (Template)



Please note that my child..... was absent from

school on the following dates:

.....

The reason was as follows:

.....

.....

.....

(Please note that a doctor's note must be attached for absences over five days)

Signed:

.....

.....

Relationship to student: Date:

.....

Appendix 3: Application to take Leave in term time



Please use this form to request taking your child on leave during term time.

Please note that schools are advised not to authorise leave during the term time. However, in very unusual circumstances, the Head of School may use their discretionary power to authorise a period of leave in term-time, taking into account:

1. the effect the absence will have on your child's education and ability to achieve;
2. your child's previous attendance record, previous leave taken during term time;
3. your child's welfare;
4. other circumstances surrounding your child's education at this school.

Please complete this form and send into the school office, the school will reply within a week.

Name of student: _____ Class: _____

Dates requested: _____

Reason for this request: _____

_____ (please continue overleaf if necessary)

How this trip will help your child's education: _____

Name of parent / carer making request: _____

Relationship to student: _____ Date: _____

Appendix 4: School letter



Request for Leave to be taken during term time – Leave not granted

Dear Parent /Carer,

Re: Request for Leave to be taken during term time.

Child's name and date of birth: Dates requested: from to
.....

Thank you for your request for a period of "Leave" to be taken during term time.

Before a school can use its discretionary power to authorise any Leave during term time, we must take into account:

1. the effect the absence will have on his/her education and ability to achieve;
2. your child's previous attendance record, previous Leave taken during term time;
3. your child's welfare;
4. other circumstances surrounding your child's education at this school.

I have now had the opportunity to consider your request, and have decided not to authorise your request, for one or more of the reasons specified: **(Please specify)**

Should you decide to take your child on Leave regardless of this decision, his/her absence will be registered as unauthorised absences.

In such circumstances one or more of the following may result:

- Your child may lose their school place. Should this happen, you must re-apply for a school place. There is no guarantee that it would be at this school.
- You may incur a Fixed Penalty Notice. This is a £50 penalty, payable within 28 days, and issued as a result of your child being absent for unauthorised reasons. Should the penalty

not be paid within 28 days, it will increase to £100. Should this not be paid, you may be prosecuted.

- You may be prosecuted in court by the local authority, in accordance with section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The current maximum penalty, on conviction, is a fine of £2500 per parent per child, and/or a custodial sentence of three months.

Although I have not authorised this Leave request for the reason(s) indicated above, any future requests would be considered based on the circumstances at that time.

Yours sincerely
Head of School



Request for Leave to be taken during term time – Leave (all or in part) granted

Dear Parent /Carer,

Re: Request for Leave to be taken during term time

Child's name and date of birth: Dates requested: from to

Thank you for your request for a period of "Leave" to be taken during term time.

Before a school can use its discretionary power to authorise Leave during term time, we must take into account:

1. the effect the absence will have on his/her education and ability to achieve;
2. your child's previous attendance record, previous Leave taken during term time;
3. your child's welfare;
4. other circumstances surrounding your child's education at this school.

I have now had the opportunity to consider your request, and have decided to authorise part of/your entire request. (delete as appropriate)

I have authorised the holiday from to

Your child must return to school no later than (date) at (time).

Should your child not be able to return on this date and time, it is important that you contact us and tell us why. A decision will then be made whether to authorise any further days absence. However, if your child does not return to school on the date above, without good reason, any subsequent absence will be unauthorised absences. In such circumstances, one or more of the following may result:

- Your child may lose their school place. Should this happen, you must re-apply for a school place. There is no guarantee that it would be at this school.
- You may incur a Fixed Penalty Notice. This is a £50 penalty, payable within 28 days, and issued as a result of your child being absent for unauthorised reasons. Should the penalty not be paid within 28 days, it will increase to £100. Should this not be paid, you may be prosecuted.
- You may be prosecuted in court by the local authority, in accordance with section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, for failing to secure your child's regular attendance at school. The current maximum penalty, on conviction, is a fine of £2,500 per parent per child, and/or a custodial sentence of three months.

Leave taken during term time is discouraged, as it will necessarily leave your child with an amount of work to catch up when he/she returns. I cannot therefore authorise any further Leave requests made during this academic year, except in exceptional circumstances.

Yours sincerely

Head of School