

# Attendance and Punctuality

## The Role of Parents/Carers



***Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.***

Taken from 'Academy Attendance - guidance for maintained academies, academies, independent academies and local authorities' Department for Education, Nov 2016

***There is a clear link between high levels of attendance and high levels of progress. We believe that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Our minimum expected attendance target for all children is at least 96.2%.***

### Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of the appointment day as possible.

### Religious observance

Green Park Village Primary Academy recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends and will allow authorised absence for these times, in line with Reading LA guidance. Parent/carers will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### Unauthorised Absence

Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping, birthdays
- Looking after younger children in the family
- Staying at home because other members in the family are unwell
- Day trips and holidays in term time that have not been agreed
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark
- Haircut
- To get new shoes or uniform

### Persistent Absence

At Green Park Village Primary Academy 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 education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

A pupil's attendance is a concern when it falls between 90-95%.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

### Term Time Leave of Absence

Parents should make every effort to ensure that term time and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing using the appropriate form – ask at school office, to the Head Teacher (at least 4 weeks in advance of the leave being taken).

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The Head Teacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the Head Teacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the Head Teacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

We will not agree any absence during term time under the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for Year 6 pupils
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for Year 2 pupils
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

Education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Regular and punctual attendance at school is key to both academic and social development, which in turn will improve the life chances of children and young people.

## What is good attendance?

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96.2-98%	Good	5-9	1-2
95-96.1%	Satisfactory	10-13	2-3
90-95%	Unsatisfactory	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19	More than 4

Green Park Village Primary Academy expects to work closely together in partnership with parents and carers in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

## So what does 90% attendance actually mean?

**90% attendance** over a school year = ½ day absent every week!

## It's your responsibility

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually in order to optimise their learning, achieve the best they can and get the most out of their school experience.

Failure to do so is an offence under section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Parents/ carers should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and ready to learn;
- Instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly;

- Impress upon their children the need to observe the school's code of conduct and Behaviour Policy;
- Take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents' evenings and other relevant meetings;
- Work in partnership with Green Park Village Primary Academy to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance;
- Notify Green Park Village Primary Academy if their child is absent. This should be done as soon as possible on the first day of absence providing an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed – preferably in writing – when the child returns to school;
- Provide medical evidence when absence is due to sickness;
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours;
- Not book holidays during term time.

## Punctuality

Persistent lateness disadvantages children, as they miss out on valuable teaching and learning time; lateness is also disruptive to pupils already involved in lessons.

Gates open at 8.40 a.m and **school starts at 8:45 a.m.**

If children arrive after 8:55am, they are late.

Parents/carers must:

- Go to the office and sign in their child/ren. A note will be made of the time and reason for lateness.
- Children will be given a late note to take to their class to show their teacher that they have been registered.

If a child arrives after the close of registers (9:20am) they are given a mark "U" for health and safety reasons, but are regarded by law as being absent, unless an authorized reason is provided. If a child persistently arrives after the close of register the matter may be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.

## Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED.

### Authorised Absence

There may be some exceptional circumstances where the school will authorise absence such as:

- The pupil is absent with leave as authorised by the Head Teacher;
- The pupil is ill and medical evidence has been recorded;
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs;
- The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return;
- There is a family bereavement (up to a maximum of 2 days).

### Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents/carers will need to make a phone call to alert the school on each day of absence. In some cases, the academy will require medical evidence such as an appointment card or a prescription paper.

Additionally, the academy may wish to refer to the school nursing service where there are health concerns or if there is a view that illness is being used to cover other reasons for absence. The academy may also wish to seek the advice of the family GP, having first discussed the matter with parents/carers to seek their permission to do this.