



Race Leys
Junior School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Date: September 2023
Review Due: September 2024
Reviewed Annually

At Race Leys, we believe that punctuality and good attendance are essential for all pupils, to ensure they can benefit fully from the Proud Traditions, Wide Horizons and High Achievement that Griffin Schools offer. We aim to ensure that all pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any barriers to this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible.

Regular and punctual attendance provides the means for children to take advantage of all educational opportunities. It ensures continuity, promotes responsibility and a purpose which can be carried into adult life. A pupil who is late or absent, misses the introduction to a lesson or a new concept, causes disruption to others and is likely to have missed the instructions to the lesson, thus putting themselves at a disadvantage.

The purpose of this policy is to clearly state what our expectations are and that attendance and punctuality can only be achieved when home and school work together.

Rationale: The Legal Framework

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend regularly.

- Regular attendance is an essential pre-requisite of effective schooling.
- The law requires that all children aged 5 to 16 years of age are required to attend full time education unless alternative provision is agreed for them.
- The state schooling system of which Race Leys Junior School is part requires attendance at school on 190 days.
- For children who are attending nursery, who are not of compulsory school age (i.e. the term after the child's fifth birthday and onwards), the expectation is that they attend every day on time. This sets out to establish a routine and patterns of attendance that is part of school life as the child progresses at Race Leys.

Race Leys Junior School will support parents to improve attendance where it is of concern.

Registration

The governing body is responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present or absent at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

An entry must be made on the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll. The school follows the Department for Education (DfE) guidance when coding attendance for Nursery children.

Regular Attendance

Parents/guardians have a legal responsibility to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise, as outlined in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996:

'Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.’

A “parent” of a child:

“includes any person—

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or
- (b) who has care of him.” (Education Act 1996, s. 576)

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Prosecution

“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his parent is guilty of an offence.” (Education Act 1996, s.444)

The local authority may use legal enforcement, where it is necessary, to ensure that parents ensure their children attend school regularly.

Penalty Notice

Local Education Authorities, Head Teachers and Police are able to issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence from school and will do so in accordance with the local authority code of conduct relating to the issuing of penalty notices.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 for failing to ensure a pupil’s attendance at school.

Absence

Categories of Absence:

There are two categories of absence:

- (i) Authorised (approved)
i.e. when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has been advised by the parents of this reason
- (ii) Unauthorised (not approved)
i.e. when a child is away from school without permission of the school (even if the parent has authorised the absence)
A child arriving after the close of registers without good reason or truancy will also be classified as an unauthorised absence.

Absences can only be authorised by the Head Teacher (or designated member of staff)- parents do not have this authority.

A form which should be completed by parents to request authorisation for a school absence can be found in the appendices.

Reporting an Absence

If a child is absent for any reason, the parent/carer (not family friends or siblings) should inform the school before 8.55am on each day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return and reason for absence.

This should be followed up in the form of a written note on return to school outlining the reasons for absence and duration of absence. Any absences for which the school have received no explanation or when the school has reason to doubt the offered explanation will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

Wherever possible, parents are expected to make routine appointments such as dental or medical, outside of school time and/or in school holidays. The school requests confirmation of medical appointments during school hours. Evidence may include an appointment card, letter, prescription or prescribed medication.

Punctuality:

When pupils arrive late, they miss out on essential instructions given at the beginning of the lesson, which can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability and can contribute to their feelings of discomfort.

Punctuality is a vitally important life skill that reaches into employment in later life. Pupils who are persistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of others. 10 minutes of lateness a day is equal to 31 hours of education being lost per academic year.

	AM Session	PM Session
Registration	8.55 am	1.00 pm
Close of Register (unauthorised late)	9.10 am	1.15 pm

The bell will be rang by SLT at 8.45am. Children are expected to line up in their classes. Teachers will collect their classes from the playground at 8.45 am. The school day officially starts at 8.55am, when the register is taken. If a child arrives after the start of registration but before the close of registers, they will be marked as late, and receive an 'L' code. If a child arrives in school after registers have closed, the child will receive a 'U' code, which is an unauthorised absence mark.

At 8.50am doors to all buildings will be closed and locked. Pupils who arrive late must enter the school via the doors to the School Reception, where the reasons for lateness will be recorded and the child will be escorted to their class by a member of staff.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a Punctuality Letter will be sent to notify a child's parents / carers of the lateness and offering them the opportunity to discuss this. If punctuality remains of concern, the child / parents may be invited to a meeting to discuss this, to enable the reasons for lateness to be understood. If appropriate, a Punctuality Action Plan will be put in place.

Where the total attendance of a child whose punctuality is of concern falls below the whole school attendance target, the Staged Approach of this policy will have precedence.

Persistent Absences:

The government uses the term Persistent Absence to refer to absence of 10% or more, whether authorised or unauthorised.

There are good reasons (especially illness), which make attendance at school sometimes difficult. Nevertheless lessons missed cannot be repeated and 'catching up' on work is never as good as the original learning experience. Pupils who do not have persistent absence are more likely to attain their full potential at school, to stay in education after leaving school, and to enjoy other positive outcomes.

We think that everyone in our school community has a part to play in school attendance.

- The Governing Body gives strategic direction to attendance. This includes: developing a policy, promoting an ethos of good attendance, setting any targets, planning, monitoring and reviewing attendance, and appointing a member with responsibility for attendance.
The School has set an attendance target of 96%, and a persistent absence target of 90%.
- The Head and Senior Leaders ensure that the School's attendance is effectively managed. This includes: ensuring that accurate records are kept in line with Government guidance; evaluating whole school attendance data and individual cases where attendance is of concern; planning appropriate interventions; reporting to the Governing Body; and appointing a member of staff to lead on attendance.
- School Staff promote the school's ethos and set an example of attendance and punctuality; enable the school to keep accurate records of attendance; and work in partnership with parents to enable children to attend regularly.
- Parents are expected to ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually. If a child's attendance is 90% or below, he/she is regarded by the government to be a 'persistent absentee'.
- Children are expected to be on-time for lessons and ready to learn.

Leave of Absence

- The Head **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- The Head will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent, i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised, which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service has the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council's Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council's Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Monitoring and Responding to Absence

- The school is committed to the well-being and development of pupils. It would wish to consider a family’s needs and offer additional support where possible to enable children to attend regularly. Parents should approach the class teacher to arrange time to discuss attendance with the most appropriate member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties.
- A First Day text system is used to follow up pupil absence; this is followed by subsequent texts. After a period of 3 days absence, without notification, a verbal referral is made to the Inclusion Manager who makes a telephone call.
- If no notification is received following a child’s return to school, a letter is sent to Parents/Carers and they are given 5 days in which to explain a child’s absence before the absence is recorded as unauthorised. These letters are posted to the home address by Royal Mail.
- In line with Child Missing from Education procedures, absences in excess of 10 days are referred to Child Missing from Education (CME), as appropriate.
- **Weekly Monitoring:** Attendance data for all pupils is collated on a Friday afternoon of each week using the SIMs Attendance module. From this:
 - Unexplained absence letters are sent home by Royal Mail
- **Half-Termly Monitoring:** The school’s Inclusion Manager will review attendance data half-termly. Data may be evaluated against the school’s target, past performance, and in relation to specific groups and individuals. From this:
 - The Inclusion Manager will identify children whose is attendance is of concern and consider appropriate intervention in accordance with the staged approach below.
 - The Inclusion Manager will share whole school attendance data with senior leaders to enable further evaluation, planning and reporting.
- **Annual Monitoring:**
 - The Governing Body considers the annual whole school attendance alongside attendance of previous years and national statistics, to determining a challenging but realistic whole school attendance target.
 - An electronic attendance report is created for each class close to the end of the Summer Term.
 - Attendance for individual pupils for the academic year is reported to parents via the child’s annual report. It includes attendance and absence, including any unauthorised absence.

Staged Approach to the Management of Attendance		
Whole school attendance is monitored at a minimum of every half term but more frequently as appropriate to the needs of the school. The whole school attendance target is based on an evaluation of the last 3/5 years previous attendance. Attendance is more closely evaluated of pupils whose attendance is below the whole school target.		
Stage	Trigger	Outcome
1	Attendance falls below the whole school target and the child’s attendance is of concern.	Letter 1 will be sent to parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expressing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of ‘persistent absence’ • Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further.

		Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.
2	Parents have received a Stage 1 letter and attendance remains of concern.	<p>Letter 2 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the nature of 'persistent absence' • Notifying parents that the child's attendance is being monitored and of the duration of the monitoring period. • Welcoming the parents to arrange contact the school if they wish to discuss attendance further. <p>Attendance is monitored for a fixed period.</p>
3	Parents have received a Stage 2 letter and attendance remains of concern.	<p>Letter 3 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of current attendance • Enclosing a registration certificate • Reminding parents of their legal responsibilities and the definition of 'persistent absence' • Requesting that the parents provide medical evidence of absence for illness, to enable the school to consider the authorisation of absence. • Inviting parents to an appointment with the Attendance Lead on a specific date, with the purpose of discussing attendance, agreeing an action plan of support, considering whether it may be appropriate to involve outside agencies, and setting an internal school attendance target. • Notifying parents that should they chose not to attend, the meeting may take place without them and a target set.
4	Parents have failed an internal school attendance target and attendance is below the level of Persistent Absence (90%)	<p>Letter 4 will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing parents of ongoing concern about attendance • Informing the parents of attendance during the target period. • Enclosing a registration certificate • Notifying parents that the school intends to discuss their child's attendance with its Education Casework Officer, of the Warwickshire Attendance Service's Traded Service, and may make a formal referral.
	During a monitoring period, attendance improves.	<p>A Letter of Praise will be sent to parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informing the parents of attendance during the monitoring period. • Notifying parents that the school will continue to monitor attendance to ensure sustained improvement.

Promoting Attendance

Excellent attendance is promoted through the consistent messages delivered in assemblies, school newsletters, PSHE lessons, pupil rewards, posters, letters home, parent information sessions, parent consultations and school reports. Attendance is everyone's responsibility and we use every opportunity to communicate this.