

**The Grove School Attendance policy**

The Grove School is committed to providing a full and effective, enjoyable and exciting educational experience for all students. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible in line with procedures agreed by the Governors.

It is the policy of our School to celebrate achievement and whilst attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life we feel that rewarding 100% attendance is unfair to those children who are genuinely ill. 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 is concern about attendance.

**Objectives**

* to encourage full attendance and punctuality
* to monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
* to ensure a consistent approach within school
* to ensure that attendance is monitored for safeguarding, behaviour and bullying issues when looking deeper into reasons for absenteeism.

**Statutory Duty of Schools and Parents**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive

effective full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that students arrive at School on time, properly attired, and in a condition to learn. All schools will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed. Parents are asked to sign a home school agreement which agrees to regular attendance, we expect this to be greater than 95%.

**The Educational Welfare Service and School Attendance**

The EWS is a part of the Devon Local Authority. Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

***What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)?***

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and, as a parent/ guardian, this is your responsibility. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued from Devon County Council, requiring you to pay a fine of up to £60 per parent/carer, per child (if paid within 21 days) or £120 (if paid within 28 days) if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500.

You will be given every opportunity to improve your child’s attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

**Statutory Attendance**

There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration.

**AM:** Students will be registered at the beginning of each morning (9.00am) by the teacher. Registration closes at 9.15 am; any arrivals before this time will be classified as LATE(Code **L**) Arrival after that time is recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE(Code **U**).

**PM**: Registration takes place at the beginning of the afternoon session by the class teacher.

**X**: We shall be using this code for all children below statutory school age who have an agreement for part time attendance.

All registration will be recorded on the SIMS system at the end of each week by the administrator.

Class registers must be taken at the beginning of all sessions by the teacher.

Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences.

The attendance register will be kept for three years by all schools.

**Request for absence during Term Time**

All requests must be made using the S2 form, available from the office, a minimum of 3weeks before the request absence. The school does not encourage any absence during term time and the Headteacher ***may no longer authorise absences unless for exceptional circumstances.***

No absence will be authorised during May when SATs for Years 2 and 6 take place

If a parent/carer is refused an absence request and the pupil is still taken out of a school by the parent/carer, the School / Education Welfare Officer may be informed.

**Reporting Absences**

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the School of the reason for a student’s absence as soon as possible –preferably on the first day. The School will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted by the Administrator.

In any case of absence***,*** parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods:

* By phone or email to the Administrator.
* Personal contact with Administrator at school, where a note will be passed to the teacher.
* If you are unable to contact the administrator, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the class teacher on the first day back at school.

In the case of long term illness the school should be notified.

If it is known that the student will be absent for more than 2 weeks, the EWO should be notified.

Where over the course of an academic year, a student has 20 sessions of illness, the School will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor’s note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

When the school is aware of an unexplained absence the administrator will call the parents for an explanation in the morning of the first day of absence.

**Truancy**

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the Administrator if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

**Punctuality**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving on time.

Persistent cases will be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

**COVID19 additional statement**When a child has to isolate due to COVID the parents must inform the school immediately. The school will register the child as absent due to COVID and will assign home learning. A child MUST NOT attend school if they or if anyone in their household are displaying any COVID symptoms, or if they have been told to isolate due to contact with a positive case.

***Staff guidance and procedures .***

***Reporting to Parents***

*Annual Report to parents/carers includes summative information on attendance as well as comment on punctuality*

***Distribution of Data***

*The Administrator will produce for Headteacher:*

1. *printout of all attendances for previous week*
2. *reports on persistent lateness to school in the mornings (6 or more) .*

*c) all pupils below 95% attendance*

*d) % attendance figures for all pupils half termly.*

*The Headteacher will report attendance data to the Governors termly and targets annually.*

***User Codes and reconciliation of registers***

* *If a student is absent, use Code* ***N (****unless there is already a code which has been entered.*
* *If a student is late during registration use Code* ***L*** *.*
* *Only the national attendance codes issued can be used.*

***Absence from School***

***Authorisation of absences from school :***

* *Parent provide written, signed note from parent/carer on students return, unless parents/carer has contacted the school by another acceptable means. (see above)*
* *Teacher to record on registration system using appropriate code.*
* *Teachers to hand in absence notes/records at end of every week to the Administrator. These will then be archived for 3 years.*

***Follow up procedures for unauthorised absence or persistent absence (including illness) from School:*** *See attached flow chart ‘Encouraging Good Attendance’*

***Follow up procedures for lateness to school in the morning:***

*Admin contacts home or sends standard letter if student regularly arrives late at school.*

*Admin will alert Head to any pupil who has 6 or more lates in any half term. Head will contact parents.*

*Where there is no improvement if lateness continues to persist the Head will refer the pupil to EWO who may consider instigating legal procedures.*

***Roles and Responsibilities***

***Role of Governing Body:*** *Reviews policy, receives a termly report via Head’s Report to Governors with whole school attendance figure, the SEN attendance figure and the vulnerable children attendance figure.*

***Head:*** *Oversight and implementation of policy.*

***Administrator****: Administration of attendance and punctuality data within the framework of this policy, first day contacts.*

***Teachers:***

*Keep an accurate register and follow up of absences and lateness within the systems and procedures of this policy.*

***Education Welfare Officer****: Implementation of LA procedures in enforcing attendance and assisting year teams with advising students and parents of the legal consequences of failing to meet these obligations. The EWO is the attendance enforcement arm of the LA. The EWO for our schools will be fully informed of all absences giving cause for concern and will have full access to the electronic registration system*

***Policy updated May 2021***

**Encouraging Good Attendance**

**Ongoing**

**Intervention**

**Teachers**

* Keep Accurate AM and PM register.
* Follow up Absence promptly.
* Inform Head Teacher of any attendance concerns.

**Teacher and Admin**

* Weekly Attendance Data provided to Admin.
* First Day Calling.

**Leave of Absence**

* No requests to be authorized.
* Send absence request Refusal Letter.
* If absence still occurs consider

Penalty Notice.

**Lateness**

* If Persistent lateness, Head to send Late letter.
* Discuss lateness with parents/carers.
* If no improvement escalate to EWO

**20 Sessions – Illness**

* Consider sending Medical Evidence Letter.

**Under 95%**

* Send Green Letter.
* Teacher meets and discusses with parents/carers.

**95%**

**94%**

**Under 94%**

* Send Amber Letter.
* Head meets and discusses with parents/carers.
* Agrees action plan with parents/carers and child.

**Under 92%**

* Send Red Letter.
* Head Teacher meets and discusses with parents/carers.
* Plan immediate improvement.
* Discuss with EWO.

**If No Improvement**

* School and EWO consider Fast Track or alternative action.

**92%**

**92%**

**Head Teacher**

* To co-ordinate and monitor the above.
* Ensure Escalation Process consistently followed with discretion where appropriate.
* Responsible for Pupil & School Attendance Data and meeting Local and National Attendance Targets.
* To co-ordinate / monitor attendance of vulnerable groups (SEN / CIC / EAL / Travellers).

***Insert School Address***

***& Date***



16th May 2018

Dear Parents/Carers,

We believe passionately that every school day matters in a child’s education.

This is backed up by plenty of research to show how crucial regular attendance is in ensuring children reach their full potential in our education system and develop into confident, well-rounded adults who are equipped for life. This also prepares them for the future, whether that be college, university or the work place. There is also a great deal of research and evidence that children being away from school impacts their own education and the education of other children and their learning. This is because staff need to spend time with the child who has been absent, as children cannot be left with gaps in the knowledge and understanding so lessons need to be revisited and compensated for which also increases the teacher and staff workload.

At The Grove School we have high expectations of students’ attendance and punctuality. With this in mind, we have reviewed our Attendance and Punctuality procedures and wish to remind you of our commitments.

* If a child is late to school, this will be noted in their records and the Education Welfare Officer for Devon County Council will be made aware of persistent lateness and a meeting with parents will occur.
* If a child is absent from school, this will be noted in their records and the Education Welfare Officer for Devon County Council will be made aware of persistent absents and a meeting with parents will occur.
* If more than 5 school days are missed due to unauthorised absence, the Local Authority will fine the parents for the child’s absence. If there are repeated offences please note this can lead to a criminal record for the parents.
* If a child is ill for more than 5 days then the school need evidence, ie. copy of the appointment which can be obtained from Leatside Surgery or Catherine House surgery (this is due to a number of parents claiming their child is ill when they have had a holiday).
* If an absence is planned the school requires prior notice of at least 2 weeks in order to process forms and inform teachers of planned disrupted learning. We will accept late notice if it is unavoidable eg a funeral

School starts at 9:00am and the doors and gates open at 8:45am. Late entry to the school is via the main reception and all children must be signed in and out by the person bringing them to school or taking them out (this applies from Reception to Year 6 as late children should not be unaccompanied)

If you would like further advice and support on your child(ren)s attendance in school then please do not hesitate to let us know. Please see the other side for frequently asked questions around attendance.

It is important to us that all children benefit from the education offered to them every day in school. I hope you feel the same and will support us in our attempts to ensure that your child(ren) attend school regularly and on time.

Kind regards

The Grove School

**FAQs about Attendance**

**What is good attendance?**

There are 190 school days each year. To ensure a child fully achieves their potential, they should be in school for at least 96% of this time (180 days). We encourage all our students to be in school as frequently as possible and aim for 96%. Any child who falls below 90% is classified as a persistently absent student, in line with national guidance.

A student with an attendance rate of 90% is missing a half a day each week, which over the course of a year is equivalent to 4 weeks of absence. If a child is taken out of school for a 2 week holiday in term time then any further absences e.g. through illness will immediately put that child below the 96-90% and would be at risk of meeting the persistent absent threshold.

**Can I take my child out of school for a holiday in term time?**

Head teachers should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion. Leave of absence forms (L5) can be found on the school website or requested from the school reception. If a child is taken on holiday but the school is informed that they were ill this will be treated as an unauthorised absence, children should not be encouraged to lie about this.

**What do I do if my child is absent from school?**

Parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the school if their child is absent and provide a valid reason for the absence. This includes any appointments that your child(ren) may have during the school day, although we would encourage you where possible to try and arrange these out of school hours.

We encourage parents either to ring the school (01803 862018) or contact us by email (admin@the-grove-primary.devon.sch.uk) as early as possible **on the first day of absence and each day of absence until your child(ren) return to school**. Where we have not received a message about your child(ren) you will receive a message from our administrator enquiring about the reasons for your child’s absence from school.

**What about lateness?**

The law states that parents are legally required to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. Persistent lateness can be every bit as harmful to a child’s education as missing school. We encourage all children to be in school before **9:00am** ready for their lesson to start promptly. It is extremely disruptive for the teacher and the learning of the rest of the class when a child arrives late.

**How do we deal with persistent absence?**

We like to keep parents/carers informed about their child’s attendance so we provide termly reports for every child who looks at risk of having a low attendance record. We also make contact with parents/carers of children whose attendance is a cause for concern. The purpose of these communications is to identify the reasons for persistent absence and to identify any support the school or outside agencies can give to ensure the child’s attendance improves. Where there is significant and ongoing concern about a child’s attendance, the school has a legal obligation to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service.

**What can I do as a parent/carer?**

As parents/carers, we all want the very best for our children and key to this is a good education. We are proud of what we do for our children here at The Grove School. We endeavour to provide educational experiences tailored to a child’s developmental needs which feed their interests, enthusiasm and specific abilities and talents. For this to work, they need to be with us for as much of the journey as possible so we urge that, as parents you:

* ensure that your child arrives at school on time each day;
* ensure that your child only misses school for reasons which are unavoidable or justified, such as illness or days of religious observance; A child should only not come to school through illness if they have been sick or need to be in bed, minor coughs and colds are normal and children should be in school
* always notify the school as soon as possible - preferably on the first morning of any absence;
* avoid booking family holidays during term-time; and
* talk to the school if you are concerned that your child may be reluctant to go to school.

Dear

**Persistent Absence - Green Letter**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

**Re: Attendance below 95%**

I would like to bring to your attention that our absence records show xxxxxx attendance is currently xx.xx %.

I do appreciate that some of these absences may be due to illness or other authorised circumstances, but I would like to remind you that low attendance could be detrimental to your child’s educational progress and attainment. If you would like a copy of xxx’s registration certificate to review, then please do not hesitate to contact the office.

If I can provide any further support, please do not hesitate to contact me via the office.

Yours sincerely

**Hilary Priest**

**Headteacher**

***Insert School Address***

***& Date***

Dear **<<Name Name>>**

**Persistent Absence - Amber Letter**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

Following our previous letter advising you of your child’s low level of attendance, our records show that your child’s attendance still falls below the acceptable level allowed for our school. Due to our continuing concerns over low attendance, we now ask that you meet with myself, the Head, at ***a mutually convenient time within the next week*** to discuss and resolve this issue as a matter of urgency.

I must make you aware at this stage that if your child’s attendance does not improve with immediate effect, then the school has to advise the Education Welfare Service which could lead to possible legal proceedings. The purpose of this meeting is to help you to address any issues so that this can be avoided.

I have attached a copy of your child’s attendance record so that you can see the seriousness of the situation and carefully consider the reasons for it before the meeting.

Please arrange your attendance at this meeting by contacting the school on ***<<School Contact Details>>*** on receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

***Insert School Address***

***& Date***

Dear **<<Name Name>>**

**Persistent Absence - Red Letter**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

As a result of continuing low attendance, your child is now considered to fall into the category of a Persistent Absentee as designated by the criteria laid down by the Department for Children, Schools and Families.

The matter has now had to be referred to the Education Welfare Service, who will monitor attendance and will be looking for immediate and significant improvement. To assist you in achieving this, the Head Teacher would like to meet and agree a plan of action which will meet this aim on ***<<Date>>*** at ***<<Time>>***. The Education Welfare Officer, **<<Name Name>>** may also be present at this meeting.

Please confirm your attendance at this meeting by contacting the school on ***<<School Contact Details>>*** on receipt of this letter.

Yours sincerely

***Insert School Address***

***& Date***

Dear **<<Name Name>>**

**Unauthorised Leave Request.**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

As you will be aware, leave during term time is not a parental right and is entirely at the discretion of the school. It is both School and Totnes Federation of Village Schools Policy not to grant leave unless it is for exceptional circumstances. Unfortunately this means that we have had no option but to refuse your application for /leave on **<<dates from/to>>**.

We believe that if **PUPILS** are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement and full attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career.

I must take this opportunity to remind you, that should you choose to take your child out of school unauthorised, then you make yourself liable to receiving a Penalty Notice from the Education Welfare Service. This absence will make you liable for a £60/120 (per parent/carer per child) Penalty Notice.

This policy is shared by the entire cluster of schools within the Totnes Federation of Village Schools. We understand the disappointment that this refusal may cause and we apologise, but as you can appreciate this policy represents the schools responsibility and commitment towards ensuring your child’s full and efficient education.

Yours sincerely

***Insert School Address***

***& Date***

Dear **<<Name Name>>**

**Persistent Lateness to school.**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

Our records show that your child’s punctuality falls below the acceptable level allowed for our school. You will be aware that regular and punctual attendance at school is vital so that pupils are able to take full advantage of the opportunities available to them.

I have attached a copy of your child’s attendance record for you information.

I hope that by bringing this matter to your attention we can work together to help resolve the matter as working together is often the most effective way of making progress in improving both your child’s punctuality, attendance and their learning.

Yours sincerely

***Insert School Address***

***& Date***

Dear **<<Name Name>>**

**Persistent Absence - Medical Evidence Required**

**NAME OF YOUNG PERSON:**

**DATE OF BIRTH:**

**ATTENDANCE PERCENTAGE:**

Any absence for sickness is authorised purely at the discretion of the school. Currently the school are authorising your children’s absence with a medical coding. However, as your child has now had in excess of 20 missed sessions due to sickness and in line with both school and Totnes Federation of Village Schools policy, this school will now be requesting medical evidence in order to authorise future absences. If they do not receive this they may record the absence as unauthorised.

***Please ensure that all future absences are covered by medical evidence (this can be a GP’s note, GP’s appointment slip or copy of a prescription).***

Yours sincerely