# Griffydam Primary School
# Achieving Together

# Attendance Policy
# January 2025 - 2028

We are a happy, caring, respectful community where children are encouraged to explore an exciting curriculum and become independent, resilient and confident learners, that are ready to take the next steps on their learning journey

This policy is reviewed every three years and was agreed by the Governing Board of Griffydam Primary School in January 2025 **and will be reviewed again in January 2028**
Signed: _____ Chair of Governors
Date: _____

**REMEMBER: If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!**

**Introduction**

Our Attendance Policy has been amended to reflect the new attendance national framework, to be brought in by the government from August 19th 2024.

At Griffydam we strongly believe and agree, that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. This includes pupils, parents, school, doctors, dentists, social care etc. We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We do all we can to encourage the pupils to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all pupils. We will also make the best provision we can for those pupils who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them. Research shows the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment. Research also shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential and in extreme cases, may be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Where a pupil's attendance is irregular or unsatisfactory we will endeavour to work with the pupil and family to resolve this and put the right support in place. However, should improvements not be made further action will be taken. It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure that the school has all current contact details, and a home or mobile telephone number must be provided.

**The Law and School Attendance**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have.

**Parents**

- It is a parents' duty to ensure their child attends school regularly (unless they have chosen for their child to receive an education other than at a school).
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends every day that school is open, except in a small number of circumstances (e.g. being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school).

- It is a legal requirement that parents/carers ensure that the school has at least two current contact details and it is the parents/carers responsibility to keep school informed should these details change.

**School**

- School will have appropriate procedures in place to monitor attendance.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers.
- Class teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session. Teachers may delegate this task to another member of staff. Registers are legal documents and may be called for as evidence by the court.

**Governors**

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration, England) Regulations 2006 it is the governing board's responsibility for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that is collected termly through the School Census.

**Registration**

Registration at Griffydam Primary School is as follows:
It is an expectation that pupils arrive at school and are in their classrooms by 8:45am with the library door open and children welcomed into school from 8:35am. Children from class 1 will be welcomed at the classroom door by the teacher.

We call the register twice a day – once at the start of the morning session (8.45am) and once at the start of the afternoon session (1.00pm).

The registers should be taken online within a 10-minute window (8:45-8:55/1:00-1:10)
Officially, in the morning, the registers are 'open' for a further 15 minutes (8:45: -9:00). Children arriving within this time, but after their name is called, will be recorded as late (coded 'L') before registration closes.

Registers will 'close' after 15 minutes (9:00am). Children arriving after this time will be recorded as late after registration closes which is an unauthorised absence (coded 'U') unless there is an acceptable reason.

**Definitions**

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parent/carers) as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing or by telephone. Only the Headteacher can confirm and authorise instances of 'leave'.

**Authorised Absences**

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer or guardian. For example, if a pupil has been unwell and the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. In some circumstances, parents/carers will be asked for evidence to be provided in order for the Headteacher to authorise an absence.

If a pupil has an increasing number of authorised absences, this may be classed as 'persistent absence' and a referral to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Paula Rene (paula@childrensattendance.co.uk) may be made.

The school may also make a referral to our EWO if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety.

Parent/carers are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

**Unauthorised Absences – coded as 'O' or 'G'**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent/carer. Examples of this are

- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Parent/carers keeping pupils off school because they themselves are ill
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed
- An absence will also be coded as unauthorised if a parent/carer fails to provide medical evidence when requested to do so.

**Repeated unauthorised absences**

The school will contact the parent/carer of any pupil who has an unauthorised absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, a letter will be sent home, and the parent/carers will be invited to a meeting at the school to discuss the absences and the best way in which school can support the family.

If the pupil continues to accrue unauthorised absences the school will make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer, who will make contact with the parent/carers to arrange a meeting and seek to ensure that the parents understand the seriousness of the situation and to offer support.

Where parents fail to engage, or improvements are not made rapidly enough and where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

*"If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence."*

The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.

**If a pupil is absent**

Parent/carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence either by telephone on 01530 222281 or leave a message by 9:00am, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness.

When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent/carer by telephone or email if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the pupil and the reason for the absence. If after several attempts have been made, we will then make contact with other emergency contacts held on file. Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety, our EWO will be contacted and a 'Safe and Well' check will be carried out.

When the pupil returns to school, parent/carers must ensure that a note or verbal confirmation is provided to explain the reason for the absence if this has not been given to the school.
A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parent/carers are asked to provide the appointment card/letter for the absence to be recorded as 'medical' and therefore authorised.

If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a pupil, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the pupil.

**Requests for leave of absence**

Any time missed from school is detrimental to progress and has a negative impact on a child's achievement. At our school we view regular school attendance should be at least **97%** and encourage all parent/carers to support us in ensuring that their child's attendance does not fall below this level.

The school and its staff regard the regular attendance of children at school as being vital to each child's education and their ability to flourish. It is for this reason that non-attendances (however short or infrequent) are treated seriously. It remains the policy of the school to only sanction non- attendance during term time in exceptional circumstances.

We do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. a family crisis. We expect parent/carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence on the official school form. The Headteacher will respond to the request as soon as possible.

**Holidays in term time**

Government guidelines prevent Head teachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during term-time does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday.

In order to request a family holiday for 'exceptional circumstances', Parent/carers must complete a 'leave of absence' form, outlining the reason and the specific dates when leave is required. The Headteacher will consider the request on a case-by-case basis and inform the Parent/carers of their decision in writing.

Holidays taken without permission will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' – family holiday not agreed ('G' Code). A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer who will pass the matter on to the Local Authority to issue parents with a penalty notice.

**Issuing a penalty notice**

The parent/carer(s) of any pupil who has absences recorded as a result of persistent absence or an unauthorised family holiday, may each receive a penalty notice of £80 which must be paid within a 21-day period.

Failure to pay the penalty notice within this timescale, will result in the penalty notice being doubled to £160, which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original fine being issued.

If the fine(s) remain unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parent/carers may face legal action under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

If found guilty of an offence under this Act, Parent/carers will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £3000 and/or a community order or imprisonment up to 3 months.

Parent/carers can seek further clarification from our current Education Welfare Officer via email,

paula@childrensattendance.co.uk

**Long-term absence**

When pupils have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork. This work must be completed and returned to school so that the school can monitor the pupil's progress.

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons the school will make a referral to our EWO to ascertain if any alternative provision for education can be requested. Parent/carers will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to mainstream education. Also refer to our policy 'Children with Health Needs that cannot attend school'.

Parent/carers must provide the school with medical evidence when their child is going to be off from school for long periods, but alternative provision is not being sought. The school may refer this for further

investigations to our EWO who will make contact with the parent/carers.

**10 Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive punctually; the library door is opened and the children welcomed into school from 8:35am and be ready to learn in classrooms at **8:45am.** The library doors are locked from 8:45am and any pupils arriving after this time must enter school through the main entrance and a parent/carer stating the reason for the lateness.

Registers are open between 8:45-9:00am and pupils arriving during this time will be marked as 'Late' on the class register ('L' code).

Any pupil that arrives at school after the register has closed (9:00am) will be coded as a 'U' code. This equates to an unauthorised mark. Parent/carers may be requested to meet with the EWO if this becomes a regular problem. Legal action can be taken when a child has 'U' codes as this is deemed to be an unauthorised mark.

Where possible parent/carers must ensure that they try and book all medical appointments either before school starts or after school finishes. We ask parent/carers to provide the school with the appointment card and/or letter for any medical appointment. All medical appointments will be coded as an M, which does equate to an authorised absence.

A referral to the EWO, may be made to those parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late and who are not engaging with school and any agreed support plan.

Legal action may be taken when a child has 'U' codes, as this is deemed to be an unauthorised mark.

If you are unexpectedly delayed and are unable to collect or will be late collecting your child from school at the end of the day, please contact the school office immediately. If you arrange for another adult to collect your child, you must let the school know the details of that person.

If contact has not been made within an hour of school ending, a telephone call will be made to social services, informing them of the situation and providing them with the necessary details including:

- Child's name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Address
- Parents' name and address
- Telephone contact details
- Any previous incidents of not being collected from school
- Any current or previous child protection concerns

- Any SEND/SEMH or medical needs.

In the event that the child is in immediate need of protection, the school will follow its Child Protection policy.

**Attendance targets**

The school sets its own attendance targets each year. The targets are challenging yet realistic and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school carefully considers the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

**Monitoring and review**

We expect high standards of attendance from all pupils, and we will work with other agencies to improve attendance across the school.

We will monitor attendance data on a weekly basis to identify any pupils who are persistently absent or who continually arrive late and will take action where this falls below a satisfactory level or where we identify patterns of poor attendance.

In instances where attendance and punctuality are of concern, or where a pattern is spotted, parents will be informed by way of a letter. We will discuss this with parents and seek to understand any barriers which are preventing good attendance, facilitating support (e.g. Early Help) where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

Where absence persists and support is not working, or parents fail to engage with the support, formal action will be taken.

The school will keep accurate attendance records electronically, for six years from the date the data was entered.

Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance and punctuality in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a pupil's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular pupil, this will be reported to the Headteacher.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher.

The governing board also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.

The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them and seek to ensure that attendance figures are appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing board every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.