



Attendance Policy

Version	Date	Description	Chair of Committee	Ratified (Y/N)	Next Review Due
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The majority of our pupils at Granta School have patterns of good attendance because they enjoy coming to Granta School for their education and because of the arrangements we make to meet their individual needs.

The DFE has set out clear guidance to promote full attendance and expects all pupils to achieve 95% attendance. The government recognises below 90% attendance as persistent absence which could trigger a cause for concern. However, children and young people who experience significant health conditions should not be alarmed: reasonable adjustments can be made both to maximise attendance and recognise genuine reasons for absence.

In making decisions about pupil attendance the school will appropriately take into account medical reasons and exceptional circumstances in discussion with parents and when appropriate seek guidance from Cambridgeshire Local Authority Educational welfare officer.

As a school we are flexible with the planning of our arrangements for return to school following a health related absence and we will support families to enable access to education after operations as swiftly as possible.

In some cases a phased return or part time attendance can be organised with a bespoke plan to support exceptional health needs, including physical and emotional and mental health complexities.

PROCEDURES AND PRACTICES

Registration: Roll call registration takes place twice a day and registers close at 9.30am, then at 1.45pm.

LATENESS

At Granta School we appreciate most pupils arrive by education transport and travel to Linton can be subject to unavoidable delays. The same can be true for parents who transport their own children if they live some distance away. Any student arriving in school after registration has been closed will be recorded as 'L' (late). If they arrive after registration period has finished for reasons other than congestion they may be recorded as 'U' (unauthorised absence). In the vast majority of cases, if lateness becomes frequent and problematic, the schools first response will be one of concern and welfare and we will support the family to manage whatever barriers to timely arrival have become problematic. Parents and carers should be advised that lateness at the beginning of the day is particularly detrimental to academic and social progress because pupils rely on predictable routines to start their day well, especially pupils with autism and or Learning disabilities.

We expect pupils to begin lessons immediately after registration in all cases.

The Education Welfare officer may be asked to carry out audits of attendance at the school, to support the school in developing responses to individual or group matters of concern, or to attend meetings with the parents/ carers of the child concerned.

ABSENCES

Absences from school will be either Authorised or Unauthorised depending upon circumstance.

Authorised absences are where a student has been absent and a satisfactory and legal reason has been communicated to the school via the teacher or school office.

The school expects authorised absences to be kept to a minimum so each pupil can maximise full attendance and not fall below 95% satisfactory attendance.

Any routine medical and dental appointments should be arranged out of school hours or during school holidays when possible.

Where absence through illness has led to attendance of below 90%, parents/carers will be contacted and be expected to provide medical information and/or appointments evidence.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

Unauthorised absences are when no letter or acceptable explanation is provided by parents and carers or the reason provided is not deemed as acceptable by the school.

Examples of these may be avoidable lateness after the end of registration, shopping, excursions which have no or little educational benefit, meeting friends.

The school, using DfE guidelines, makes the final decision about whether or not any absence is seen as Authorised or Unauthorised.

Families who foresee a school absence for their child should ask for permission ahead of the date from the head teacher using the schools request form.

IMPACT OF REDUCED ATTENDANCE ON LEARNING

In order to understand the impact of attendance, find the table below that indicates the number of hours lost for learning and impact of reduced attendance from school.

We refer to this chart in discussion with parents and carers to help to maximise school attendance.

Table to show levels of school attendance and impact for days absent by hours lost for learning:

Descriptor	Attendance	Equals absent number of days	Learning hours lost
Excellent	100%	0	0
	99%	2	10
Good	98%	4	20
	97%	6	30
	96%	7.5	37.5
Satisfactory	95%	9.5	47.5
Cause for Concern	90%	19	95
	89%	21	105
	88%	23	115
	87%	25	125
	86%	27	135
	85%	28.5	142
Serious cause for concern	84%	30.5	152
	83%	32	160
	82%	34	170
	81%	36	180

SAFEGUARDING

The school reserves the right to invite parents into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns.

This could be to follow up a range of child protection concerns of risk of significant harm such as neglect, child sexual exploitation, domestic violence, forced marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and radicalisation.

In addition if the school suspects that a pupil may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the Safeguarding designated persons for Granta School reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies which will be social care or police using the child protection procedures.

The school will usually notify parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However in exceptional circumstances it may not be appropriate to do so and therefore, depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern, a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

CHILDREN MISSING FROM EDUCATION

The school recognises that when a child is missing from education at school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or a risk indicator of sexual abuse or exploitation. The school follows the LSCB procedures.

Under section 8 h of the Education Regulations Act (2006) the school will make 'reasonable' enquiries into the location of pupils with 10 days continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time.

A referral will be made to the Local Authority Education welfare that a trace cannot be established to enable this to be investigated further by the police.

Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents to ensure the child is safe and well. Parents and carers should be advised this may include home visits by the EWO / Police to establish a child is safe and well.

The school will contact relevant agencies after first day of absence without confirmation from parents / carers if the child is subject to a 'Child in Need' or 'Child Protection' plan or due to risk assessment is considered extremely vulnerable.

RELUCTANCE TO GO TO SCHOOL

Sometimes pupils seem anxious about leaving home to go to school, or vice versa. They may tell you (or us) that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You (or we) may notice that they are worried from the things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case please contact the school immediately to speak to the class teacher. If we have concerns we will also contact you. Many children with special needs experience high levels of anxiety over small upsets but it is important that their concerns are attended to by us all.

HOME EDUCATION

On rare occasions parents and carers make enquiries about home education in schools. Granta School has supported families to move their children back into the school system when special education needs have not been met previously.

In all instances the child found it difficult to adapt to a new placement due to lack of routine attending school and needed sensitive support and a phased integration.

The school can not agree to home tuition for one of its pupils without the consent of the local authority. The school can not accept pupils from other places to follow “home tuition” programmes on the school site without the agreement of the local authority. Granta does not support the implementation of specific approaches such as ABA programmes which sit outside the usual classroom range of personalisation. For example, we do not host children to attend classes with their own supporters and engaging only within their own programme parameters. We will however work in partnership when such a programme foresees transition into full time Granta education. We will not rearrange other children’s school experiences to accommodate specific programme approaches for individuals.

The Local Authority will determine whether or not to accept home education requests or challenge the request due to parental capacity to meet the special educational needs provision required to enable a child to make expected progress overtime.

Parents should be advised they are unable to withdraw their child from any school if they are subject to a ‘School Attendance Order’.

Any request for home education must be put in writing to the Head Teacher in the first instance to enable the school to arrange an Education Health and Care Plan review with the Local Authority. It will not be deemed acceptable to withdraw a child for any reason prior to an EHCP review and agreement from the Local Authority.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PUPIL ATTENDANCE AT GRANTA SCHOOL

We expect all staff to be excellent role models by having outstanding attendance and punctuality records. The Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and our Family Support Worker can help with any concerns or questions regarding attendance & punctuality.

PARENTS/CARERS

If your child is absent from school for any reason (appointments, illness or other) or is going to be late, you should inform the school office before 9.00 am on the morning.

If your child is late to school they will need to be signed in at the school office.

Any child taken out of school due to illness or appointments need to also be signed out at the school office and also signed back in in on their return. The school should be notified in advance of all known appointments so that children with autism can be prepared for a change of routine in their school day.

TRACKING ATTENDANCE

We know that data is part of whole school information that enables school senior managers to have discussions with teachers and to ask questions to seek wider school improvement. That constant questioning is more likely to affect change and to help the school to become more responsive to pupil circumstances.

The school currently has an electronic register system on SIMS that closes at 9.30am and 1.45pm.

Our Family Support Worker checks for absences and follows up with families. She also notifies the Senior Leadership Team via email at 10am of all absentees so that leaders are able to deploy staff effectively and monitor regular absence.

Registers are also an important part of fire evacuation procedures and “lock down” procedures.

The school tracks attendance:

- on a daily basis by the Family Support Worker who will alert the Headteacher to any urgent potential concerns
- The Family Support Worker and Headteacher meet regularly to review attendance for students below 90% and agree next steps, such as informal letters, formal meeting invitations and referrals to other agencies
- for inclusion in annual reviews/ CIN meetings / PEP meetings and other pupil meetings where their general wellbeing is under discussion

Overall performance:

- Termly reporting to Governors via the Heads report at termly Full Governing Body meetings
- Tracking using inclusion indicators for Pupil premium, LAC, ethnicity and our vulnerable groups
- In “keeping in touch” data provided to the local authority

WE FOLLOW UP PUPIL ATTENDANCE USING A ‘THREE LETTER SYSTEM’

The school follows the Cambridgeshire Local Authority procedures using a three letter system, which includes an informal letter alerting the decreasing attendance, a follow up letter inviting parents/carers to a meeting with the Headteacher and a letter to address unrequested holidays taken during term time.

WORKING WITH PARENTS AND CARERS TO MAXIMISE TIME FOR LEARNING

The following information has been taken directly from the Cambridgeshire County Council website:

TERM TIME HOLIDAYS

Children of school age who are registered at a school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Regular attendance is the best way of ensuring that a child makes the most of the educational opportunities which are available to him or her.

When a child is absent from school, he or she misses not only the teaching provided but is also less prepared for the lessons after his or her return.

There are only 190 statutory school days in one year and 175 days (weekends and school holidays) available to use for holidays. Therefore every school day counts!

KEY INFORMATION

Prior to June 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 allowed for head teachers to grant leave of absence for a term time family holiday in 'special circumstances' and for extended leave in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to these regulations remove references to family holidays and extended leave. The amendments make it clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and that head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

At Granta School we appreciate there might be very rare occasions that parents and carers may wish to apply for absence to be authorised for exceptional circumstances. Parents and carers are invited to apply with reasons in advance to the Head Teacher and mark the envelope confidential.

Holidays in school term time will not be sanctioned other than for exceptional reasons such as the availability of disability accommodation, disability travel arrangements, access to carers or an exceptional off site learning opportunity.

Your Childs attendance data is available to you at any point and may be very helpful in discussions with your child's medical team, social care team or carers.

YOUR PARENTAL AND CARER RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

If your child is registered at school you must ensure that s/he attends regularly to aim for full attendance. Parents should be aware we will always contact the parent where the child lives to follow up attendance matters because we recognise that in cases of any shared parental responsibility this can be pragmatic.

The DFE regulations make it clear that parents, carers or relatives do not have any right or entitlement to take a child out of school for the purposes of a term time holiday or other any other reasons unless they are exceptional.

If parents take their child on a regular holiday in term time this will be counted as unauthorised absence and listed on your child's school record. This will be considered the same as truancy and you will be at risk of a Penalty Notice being applied and a fine.

If parents wish a relative or adult to pick up their child at the end of the school day to suit their family circumstances we require notification and proof of identification for safeguarding purposes.

REVIEWING THE IMPACT OF THE ATTENDANCE POLICY

The Head Teacher will report the overall progress with pupil attendance and any issues arising to the Governing Body.

GOVERNANCE

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every two years unless regulations for attendance from the DfE change.

APPENDIX 1 – SCHOOL REGISTER CODES

The DfE offers a comprehensive set of register codes which all schools are required to use. These codes are as follows:

/ \ - Present am/pm

B - Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.

C - Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.

D - Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) – Approved Educational Activity.

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 during term-time (provided this has been agreed by the school) - Authorised Absence.

I - Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.

J - Interview - Approved Educational Activity.

L - Late (before registers close) - Present.

M - Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.

N - No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.

O - Unauthorised Absence.

P - Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity.

R - Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.

S - Study Leave - Authorised Absence.

T - Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.

U - Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation – Unauthorised Absence

V - Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity.

W - Work Experience - Approved Educational Activity.

X - Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances.

Y - Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.

Z - Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.

- School closed – not counted in possible attendance.

Teachers are required to use these codes in the register for accurate recording.

The Local Authority Education Welfare officer will be consulted in cases of any query.

APPENDIX TWO – PENALTY NOTICES FOR NON-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – CAMBRIDGESHIRE LOCAL AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

PENALTY NOTICES

NON-SCHOOL ATTENDANCE

CAMBRIDGESHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL LOCAL AUTHORITY CODE OF CONDUCT

Introduction

1. Under Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 local education authority officers, head teachers and the police have the discretionary power to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school.
2. The new power provides an alternative to prosecution of parents under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and enables parents to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty of £60 if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days.
3. Should the Penalty Notice remain unpaid or have been paid only in part at the end of the 28 day period Cambridgeshire County Council must prosecute the parents for the offence to which the notice relates, or, in specified circumstances (see section 29 below), withdraw the notice.
4. Penalty Notices may only be issued in Cambridgeshire in accordance with the terms of this Code of Conduct. The purpose of the Code of Conduct is to ensure that the power is applied fairly and consistently across the County Council and that suitable arrangements are in place for the effective and efficient administration of the scheme.
5. In implementing this Code of Conduct the County Council will liaise when appropriate with neighbouring education and police authorities.
6. This Code of Conduct has been drafted in accordance with the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004: Statutory Instrument 2004 No 181 and guidance issued by the Department for Education and Skills.
7. In preparing this Code of Conduct the County Council has consulted with Cambridgeshire headteachers and the Chief Officer of Cambridgeshire Constabulary. This complies with The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

Circumstances in which Penalty Notices may be issued

8. Penalty Notice may be considered as an alternative to prosecution for failure to ensure regular school attendance in any given period of unauthorised school attendance as below:

A. UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE: As the Government changed the PA (Persistent Absence) threshold to 90% (in effect from Sept. 2015), the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice in relation to a child whose attendance at school is less than 90% over a given period. To allow time and opportunity for early intervention work with the family, attendance will be monitored by school and Local Authority before enforcement actions are considered. Such a Fine is intended to offer a rapid intervention, which may be used to address non-school attendance before it becomes entrenched, following guidance in section 13.

B. UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE (includes Holiday): Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave for 6 consecutive sessions (3 days) or more over a 4 week period, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Therefore Penalty Notices will be issued for single event absences of at least 3 consecutive school days or more where these absences are unauthorised because they are neither exceptional nor unavoidable. The absences must be recorded with a 'G' code in the attendance register. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice. *(The Supreme Court Judgement in the case between Isle of Wight Council v Platt (6th April 2017) clarified the meaning of regular school attendance in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996. To attend school "regularly" means "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school".)*

Procedural guidelines

9. The key consideration in deciding whether to issue a Penalty Notice should be whether it is considered likely to be effective in helping the child to whom it relates to return to regular attendance.

10. Before issuing a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence (refer to section 8A), due consideration should be given to other strategies which may help return the child concerned to regular school attendance. Such strategies might include:

- a) writing to the child's parents to remind them of their legal responsibilities;
- b) meeting with the child's parents;
- c) ensuring a first-day response to any absence;
- d) setting targets for improvement;
- e) referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- f) involvement of other services/agencies.

NB. Above strategies do not apply to term time leave / holiday. (refer to section 8B)

11. It is expected that schools will communicate with parents and issue a warning about potential Penalty Notice fine being issued for unauthorised absences. This warning can be in the form of communication sent to parents via school Newsletters, School Web page as well as any direct mail sent to individual parents

12. Head teachers and police officers should only issue a Penalty Notice following consultation, discussion, reflection and joint decision with a County Council Education Welfare Officer.

13. The Education Welfare Officer will not agree to sanction the issuing of a Penalty Notice unless he/she considers that with regard to the offence to which it relates there is sufficient evidence to secure a conviction under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Evidence could be letters sent to parent, minutes of meetings and record of telephone conversations.

14. A maximum of three Penalty Notices may be served on any one parent over a 12-month period.

15. There is no statutory right of appeal against the issuing of a Penalty Notice.

A parent should therefore, if possible, be given warning of the possibility of a notice being issued (refer section 13) in order to allow him/her to make representations should he/she wish to do so. If a head teacher refuses to authorise any absence or requests for holidays during term time and parents are not happy with the decision, they should make representations to the Governing Body of the school. They should not wait and make a representation to the County Council once a Penalty Notice has been issued.

Authority to Issue a Penalty Notice

16. An Education Welfare Officer / CCC Legal Panel may issue a Penalty Notice to the parent of a child who is a registered pupil at a school in Cambridgeshire or who is a registered pupil at a school in an authority, which has an agreement to that effect with Cambridgeshire County Council.

17. A head teacher or an authorised deputy or assistant head teacher may issue a Penalty Notice to the parent of a child who is registered at his/her school, in consultation with a CCC Legal Panel.

18. A police officer, including a community support officer or other accredited person, may issue a Penalty Notice.

19. Head teachers and Police Officers should comply with the terms of this Code of Conduct when issuing a Penalty Notice and should provide a copy of any notice issued to the relevant Education Welfare Officer.

Form and Content of Penalty Notices

20. A Penalty Notice should give the following particulars alleged to constitute the offence to which the notice relates and should contain:

- a) the name and address of the person to whom the notice is issued;
- b) the name and address of the child who is failing to attend school regularly and the name of the school at which he/she is a registered pupil;
- c) the name, title and official details of the authorised person issuing the notice;
- d) the date of the offence and of the issue of the notice;
- e) the amount of the penalty which is to be paid and details of the timescales and any variation involved;
- f) the address of the County Council office at which the penalty is to be paid and to which any correspondence relating to the notice may be sent;
- g) the method/methods by which payment may be made;
- h) the specified period within which the penalty should be paid;
- i) a statement that full payment within the specified period will discharge any liability for the offence;
- j) an explanation of the consequences should the penalty not be paid in full before the expiry of the specified period;
- k) an explanation of the grounds on which the notice may be withdrawn.

21. Should there be more than one person liable for the offence (Section 576 Education Act 1996) a separate notice should be issued to each person, per each child.

22. Should the offence involve more than one child a separate notice should be issued for each child, per each parent.

Service of Penalty Notices

23. A Penalty Notice may be served by:

- a) giving it to the recipient; or
- b) leaving it at the recipient's usual or last-known address; or
- c) sending it to the recipient at that address by first-class post.

24. Service by post is deemed to have been effected, unless the contrary is proved, on the second working day after posting the notice by first-class post.

Methods of Payment

25. The preferred method of payment of a Penalty Notice would be on-line payment via the Cambridgeshire County Council website. However, alternatives methods are available on request. Late or part payments (including instalments) will not be accepted and no reminders will be sent.

Failure to Pay a Penalty Notice

26. Should the recipient of a Penalty Notice fail to pay the full amount before the expiry of the period for paying it the County Council will either begin proceedings against the parent under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 or withdraw the notice in accordance with specified conditions (see section 29 below).

27. An electronic record will be retained to monitor that the recipient of a Penalty Notice has or has not paid the amount due on or before the date specified and presented as evidence in any subsequent Section 444 Education Act 1996 proceedings.

Withdrawal of a Penalty Notice

28. A Penalty Notice may be withdrawn by the County Council, regardless of whom within the authority issued it, if it is deemed that:

- a) the notice ought not to have been issued (i.e. where it has issued outside of the terms of this Code of Conduct or where no offence has been committed); or
- b) the notice ought not to have been issued to the person named as the recipient.

29. Should a Penalty Notice be withdrawn:

- a) notice of the withdrawal should be given to the recipient;
- b) any amount already paid by the recipient should be reimbursed;
- c) any proceedings under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 instituted against the recipient should be discontinued.

Retention of Receipts and Revenue Collection

30. The County Council will retain all revenue from the issuing of Penalty Notices in order to cover the costs of issuing and enforcing notices and the cost of prosecuting those recipients of the notices who fail to pay.

31. The County Council will produce an annual audit statement as part of its usual audit procedures in order to show that income received from Penalty Notices does not exceed enforcement costs as defined above. Any surplus acquired will be surrendered to a consolidated fund.