

Green Park School Attendance Policy

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Role:	Deputy Headteacher
Committee approving Policy	Standards Committee
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Signed by Chair of Committee	Rev S Skidmore

Our Mission

Green Park aims to provide access to high quality education and learning experiences, both in school and in the community and seeks to maximise each pupil's achievement as part of his or her lifelong learning. It is the school's aim to be a centre of Educational Excellence in the heart of the community.

Rationale

Regular school attendance is vital for all children, but especially so for those with learning difficulties. This point is stressed to all pupils and parents when they are first admitted to the school. It is also referred to in the School Prospectus.

The children at our school are aged between 3 and 19 and all pupils have severe or profound learning difficulties and with this many of the pupils have complex health needs. It is essential for our pupils to attend school every day in order to provide continuity, reinforcement and stimulation to assist their learning and so enable them to achieve their full potential.

The main features of our teaching methods are as follows:

- A multi-sensory approach
- Total communication approach
- Carefully structured, individual work programmes
- Regular periods of reinforcement
- A focus on Life skills, independence and mastery and application of these skills.
- Confidence building
- Ample opportunities for success and praise, thus raising self-image
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Aims

1. To encourage regular attendance so that pupils can benefit from our specialised teaching, therapy, and medical support.
2. To establish a pattern of punctuality and routine early in life to provide the foundation of good practice throughout their school careers and into adulthood.
3. To enable children to enjoy school and to want to come back the next day, and the next.

If a child is to attend school regularly then the school must be regarded as a happy and secure place and be welcoming to both children and their families. Every child must be made to feel a special and worthwhile member of the school community. Praise for even the smallest achievement should be given, thus increasing self-confidence. A good relationship with parents is extremely important and they too should be made to feel welcome when visiting the school. The Headteacher or class teacher should try to be available to parents as soon as possible if an emergency or problem occurs. Parents are treated as partners in the learning process and are expected to supervise and check the home school diary nightly and respond to letters, attend school meetings, support home learning activities (including the use of the EFL app) and ensure that they communicate regularly with school. Frequent short term or long-term absence could considerably hinder a pupil's progress.

Registration Procedures

Pupils arrive at school at 9am - 9.20am. If a late arrival is due to attending an appointment early in the morning then the absence is recorded as medical.

On arrival at school, pupils and passenger assistants or parents are met by a staff member of the child's cluster team. If a child is not at school and a phone message has already been received on the school answerphone, then the member of staff will pass on any verbal message to the class staff about the pupil's absences and the reasons for this.

If no message has been received, initial calls are made by a member of the class team, (we cannot except messages from the passenger assistants or drivers to ensure safety of all our pupils). If there is no reply or an unsatisfactory reason is given for the absence, then the class team must refer the matter to the Pupil Welfare officer before 9.45am.

It is possible that a child has gone missing so the sooner we pursue an absence we can ensure that they are ill and not missing from school or transport.

Parents bringing their child into school late are asked to report to main reception and give the reason for this late arrival/ absence. A child who is absent at registration should be marked as absent but if s/he arrives before 9.30am the present mark is also marked. If a child arrives after 9:30am, this is then simply a 'Late'.

First Day Absence

Parents/Carers will be expected to contact the school office and leave a message stating the name of the pupil and reason for absence. If a call has not been received by 09.30am when registers close the Class team will contact the parent/carer to establish the reason for absence. This information will then be relayed to the person responsible for each class register, to record as required. If there is no reply, then please refer the matter to the Pupil Welfare officer who will try again and send a text message asking parents to call school as soon as possible. In her absence please refer this to the school clerk. If necessary, a letter will be sent home for the parent to complete with a reason for the absence. (Appendix 1) This process will continue until the child returns to school and /or a reason for absence is received.

Absence notes

Notes or messages in the home school diary received from parents explaining absence should be kept for the remainder of the academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes may need to be retained for a longer period in their main blue pupil folder. All calls home should be recorded on CPOMS

Registers

Registers are kept electronically on SIMS, with teachers completing a Register sheet each session for that week. The registers are printed off after each session and kept in the Main Office after registration is complete and act as a fire drill register. If the Pupil Welfare officer is out of school or absent, then the school clerk will complete this task and also pursue parents of pupils who are absent without a reason.

On a weekly basis the attendance marks are checked to ensure all absences have a reason entered. Any letters regarding absence are kept with the Pupil's main file, Reports can be produced from SIMS either for individual pupils or groups as required to monitor absence rates.

Upon returning to school after a period of absence it is important that all adults involved with that child are positive and welcoming. Some may need sympathetic handling on their return.

Exceptional Leave Request

Families do not have a right to take their children out of school for family holidays or trips abroad during term time. Government guidance instructs Head teachers **NOT** to authorise leave of absence in term time except in the most exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of absence during term time should be made to the Headteacher in writing. Each request will be judged on a case by case basis. In making a decision a child's attendance pattern will be considered. Our aim is for 91% attendance for all pupils.

Applications for Exceptional Leave

1. Parent/carer collects Local Authority Leaflet, or download a request from the following web address: -
<http://www.wolverhampton.gov.uk/CHttpHandler.ashx?id=6003&p=0>
2. Parent/carer returns completed application form at least four weeks before the date of absence.
3. Headteacher applies approval criteria
4. Application forwarded to Welfare Officer who informs parent/carer of outcome by appropriate letter – Applications are processed within seven working days (appendix 2)
5. Leave of absence that is approved is an authorised absence
6. Leave of absence that is not approved is an unauthorised absence

The Headteacher and governing body approve leave of absence only in exceptional circumstances such as bereavement, serious illness, and significant events such as a family wedding or cultural/religious reasons. As decided by the governors of the school, the Head teacher, apart from highly exceptional cases, can only authorise up to 5 days leave of absence in an academic year. Any further leave of absence in that academic year will not be authorised.

If any further leave of absence exceeds 5 days in succession the school will contact the Education Welfare Service who may serve a penalty notice.

The government and schools realise that it is more expensive to go on holiday during the school holiday period than at other times of the year. However, it is the view of the DfE that a child should be in school for the 39 weeks of the academic year and that holidays in term time in whatever form are not considered to be 'exceptional' circumstances. Holidays are not a good enough reason for taking a child or young person out of school.

If the request for leave of absence is not approved by the Head teacher but the parent/carer takes their child away, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and the Head teacher may refer the matter on to the Education Welfare Service. The parent is then at risk of receiving a £60.00 fixed penalty notice per child per parent. (Appendix 3)

Non Return from Exceptional leave period

It may occur that a child does not return within the stated period of leave of absence. Initially normal school absence procedure are follows;

- If the child has not returned within five days, after the stated period of leave of absence the following procedure is as follows:
 - Case referred to the EFEO by the Attendance Officer.

- Letter is sent by post to parent by Attendance Officer on behalf of the Headteacher.

New CME guidance has been issued by the Department of Education (DfE) in September 2016 for Children Missing in Education. The main changes are:

- All schools must inform their Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be removed from the school roll for any of the 15 reasons given under Section 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. (Except for standard transition points)
- Green Park School will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the LA before deleting the pupils' name from our school register. We will use the Child Missing Education Enquiry Form to support this and send a copy it to the Local Authority
- Green Park School will complete the local authority off registration form. The local authority will be notified in advance of the deletion.

Appendices

1. Model letter will be sent home for the parent to complete with a reason for the absence.
2. Letter informing parents/carers of outcome of exceptional leave request
3. Model letter if Leave of Absence not approved.