

# Gresham Primary School

Headteacher: Ms Karen Steele

## Gresham Attendance Policy

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Gresham Primary School.

At Gresham Primary School all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate. Our school encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that **“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly”** (DfE 1999).

### Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Regular attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

### **Punctuality**

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that children are not on the school premises before 8:30am unless attending Breakfast Club
- To ensure that children are on the playground by 8:50am. The bell is rung at 8.55am and the side gate to the playground will be locked at 9am.
- To ensure children who are late report to the school office to sign in.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

### **Absences**

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:30am or as soon as possible. Parents should leave a message on the answer machine giving a *specific* reason for absence.
- To provide medical evidence where possible, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, parents are expected to provide evidence of the appointment in advance, and the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.
- Registers are taken at 9 am and 3.05 pm.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:30am.

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## Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points above, if a child is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription etc.

The school will automatically request medical evidence for any illness absence taken immediately before or after a school holiday.

## Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

If there are exceptional circumstances, parents/carers must complete a leave of absence request form in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Head Teacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office.
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Head Teacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.**

## Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Head Teacher. These requests must be discussed with the school. Absences for close family member's weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing, of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

## Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to attend an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

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## **Role of the Education Welfare Officer**

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

## **Children Missing in Education**

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a total of 10 days, the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority.

## **Persistent Latecomers**

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:55am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer does unannounced gate checks.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after 9:15am are given a 'U' code, which is the equivalent of an unauthorised absence and this will affect the child's attendance figures. Fixed penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children persistently arrive after this time.