



THE  
GRANGE  
ACADEMY

ASPIRE FOR EXCELLENCE

# Attendance – Leave of Absence Policy 2021- 2022

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**Academy Link:** Mr T Hutton



Regular attendance at school is a prerequisite for school achievement, thus at The Grange Academy we seek to ensure that all our students from the earliest outset receive a full-time education, through a curriculum that is relevant, differentiated and motivating. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality and aim to ensure the enjoyment and achievement of all of our students.

Fostering good attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers, School and the Local Authority.

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude, ability and any special educational needs a child might have.

This attendance policy has the following intentions;

- To share the responsibility for promoting school attendance amongst everyone in the Schools and the broader school community;
- To develop and implement an effective Attendance Policy that touches all aspects of school life, and relates directly to the schools' values, ethos and curriculum. To these ends staff particularly strive:
  - i. to encourage all students to reach their true potential and eventually become independent students who value learning with and from others, i.e. have a positive attitude to life-long learning;
  - ii. to value application, perseverance, initiative and independence of thought and action, as well as co-operative endeavours.

The success of the policy relies upon:

- The close monitoring of attendance and all absences.
- A strong school/parent partnership, where all recognise the need for good attendance.
- The importance of responsibility being placed on parents and students for communicating absence to the school via clear information systems.
- The importance of staff in identifying trends in absence and carrying out their responsibilities to inform others via the agreed system.

## General aims:

- This Attendance Policy and its implementation is intended to encourage all students to attend school regularly by the implementation of specific measures, e.g.
  - i. registering students accurately and efficiently;
  - ii. setting attendance targets for individual students and year groups;
  - iii. contacting parents, the same day when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
  - iv. regularly monitoring student attendance and punctuality;
  - v. reporting school attendance statistics to parents, Local Authority (LA) and DfE as appropriate.
  
- To reinforce good attendance and to encourage improved attendance by using such measures as:
  - i. informal comments from student support and subject staff;
  - ii. by the more formal issue of attendance certificates in tutor time and assemblies;
  - iii. by the use of rewards at regular intervals.
  
- To monitor and evaluate this policy and its implementation by, amongst other means, rigorously collecting and analysing data about attendance to check our progress against measurable outcomes, e.g. National and LA-level targets.

## *Rationale*

- Good habits of attendance and punctuality will assist to develop self-discipline and responsibility in preparation for future employment.
- Through monitoring attendance, staff can ensure the safety and academic progress of each student.
- Regular attendance promotes the effective and continuous learning of all students.
- Regular attendance promotes positive friendships and well-being.

## ***General guidelines for checking students' attendance***

- When a student is absent, the school will telephone home that morning to establish the reason why.
- Parents and carers are asked to contact the school on the first morning of absence either by phone or Email and contact each day the absence continues.
- Medical evidence will be requested if a student has an absence of 5 or more consecutive school days or if they fall below 90% attendance.
- If a student is absent and the school is unable to contact parents designated staff responsible for attendance will make a home visit for specific identified target groups.
- If absence continues or a pattern is seen to be developing the Progress Leader and designated staff responsible for attendance should be alerted.

- The EWO will work with year teams to invite parents into school for an attendance surgery meeting when a student's attendance falls below government guidelines and causes concern.
- If truancy is detected the parents/ carer should be informed by telephone.
- Where the school based strategies are deemed inadequate in combating truancy or poor attendance the Educational Welfare Service should be informed by the Attendance Officer or Progress Leaders.
- Students will be rewarded for meeting specific thresholds of attendance throughout the year, including; postcards and letters home celebrating good attendance; certificates; weekly prize draws in assembly; attendance celebration weeks; end of term rewards activities.
- Regular communication with home will be made via the newsletter, the school website and social media, letters and phone calls from staff.
- At any point during an absence a member of staff may visit in order to satisfy safeguarding regulation and offer support where necessary.

## **Procedures to Promote Attendance, Punctuality and to Combat Truancy**

**Truancy from School:** Is staying away from school for any reason other than:

- Illness of the student
- When the parents have obtained the school's prior permission by providing a detailed explanation for a request for absence in order for the School to determine if the absence will be authorised.

Note that truancy is often condoned by parents, but legally, it is still truancy. The sanctions are will be in-line with the schools' Behaviour for Learning policy.

The investigation of absence and truancy is the responsibility of the Pastoral Team who will report to; The Home School Liaison Officer, Progress Leader, Personal Tutor and Education Welfare Officer.

### **Punctuality:**

#### **Reception and Key Stage One (Year one and Year Two)**

Parents should ensure students are in school for 8:40a.m. for morning registration and 1:00p.m. for afternoon registration. A student arriving after 8:45am will be marked late after the register closes.

A student arriving in school after 8:40a.m. has to be brought to the school's main reception and the parent to report to the office staff for the child's name to be put in the late book.

## **Key Stage Two (Years Three to Six)**

Parents should ensure students are in school for 8:40a.m. for morning registration and 1:10p.m. for afternoon registration.

A student arriving after 8:45a.m. and 1:10p.m. will be marked late.

A student arriving in school after 8:40a.m. has to be brought to the school's main reception and the parent to report to the office staff for the child's name to be put in the late book.

## **Secondary Phase**

The main door for student entry will open at 7.45a.m.

Students are in school for 8:30a.m

A student arriving after the bell at 8.35a.m. will be marked late.

A student arriving in school after 8.35a.m. should enter through reception where their details and reason for lateness will be recorded and passed onto Progress Tutors and Progress Leaders.

- Students arriving late twice in a week will receive a letter home and parents may be requested to attend a meeting to seek a resolution. Where a student continues to arrive late after the register closes, tiered sanctions will be applied.
- In the secondary phase all students that arrive late will complete a detention during the school day. Failure to attend the set detention will result in the after-school detention with the Progress Tutor or Year Team and parents/carers will be informed.
- All students arriving late will receive a text message home that day.
- If a student arrives at school after 9.30am they will be recorded as having an unauthorised absence.

We understand that there may be occasions when students will be late for school due to unavoidable reasons. If this is the case, we ask that this is supported with a note or phone call from parents or carers.

## **Class Teacher/Progress Tutor:**

Personal Tutors and Progress Leaders must enforce this policy rigidly. If a student is absent without explanation when the register is called, the school should contact the parents the same day wherever possible. The absence should also be followed up with the parent to ensure that a written note is received explaining the absence. Where no reply is received, a further letter should be sent from The Attendance Officer to the parents requesting an explanation for the student's absence.

### **Subject Teachers:**

When a student is missing from their lesson for no apparent reason subject teachers should send a safeguarding email that will trigger the Pastoral Team to immediately investigate the reason for their absence. Subject teachers should monitor their class registers to check for patterns of irregular attendance. Subject teachers can also contribute to the reduction of unauthorised absence by delivering interesting and engaging lessons and insisting on punctuality for themselves, colleagues and students.

### **Police:**

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 the police now have powers to remove truants found in public places and to return them either to their schools or a place of safety designated by the LA.

**Internal Truancy:** Is either, registering and then leaving school, or, missing particular lessons.

- A register should be marked by the class teacher in every lesson. Subject Leader should check that this is done. The Attendance Officer should check the missing register report throughout the day and report any registers that have not been completed.
- All incidents where students receive an absence mark during the day should be checked with the class teacher, subject teacher, Key Stage Leader, Progress Team and Progress Tutor.
- The Progress Tutor should check the register from the previous day to see if there were any incidences of absent marks for lessons. If internal truancy is discovered, then the Personal Tutor should take this up with the student; inform the Progress Team or Key Stage Leader and Attendance Officer.
- Persistent offenders will be sanctioned in-line with the Behaviour for Learning Policy.

### **Progress Leaders should:**

Liaise with the Attendance Officer and Progress Tutors, to ensure that the system is working and organise a full year attendance check where it is deemed appropriate. Look for patterns of non-attendance, internal and external truancy in consultation with the Attendance Officer and where appropriate refer to the Educational Welfare Officer.

## **Roles and Responsibilities:**

All children of compulsory school age should receive suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child is registered at school, parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that their child attends regularly. In addition to statutory obligations parents have all signed the Home-School Agreement; a section of which describes the agreed responsibilities of the parents: The Home-School Liaison and Agreement Policy is available upon request.

## **Parent/Carer Responsibilities:**

To help fulfil their important role in their child's education, and to be as informed as possible in any communications or discussions with teachers, parents are requested:

- To ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- To notify the School if their child cannot attend for any reason with a phone call to the school on the first day of absence; this is for the child's safety as well as administrative reasons;
- To work with the School and Education Welfare Service to resolve/alleviate any attendance problems or protracted absence;
- To ensure they obtain 'leave of absence' for their child if required during term time in exceptional circumstances only.
- Take an interest in their child's school work;
- Support the School in its efforts to control poor behaviour;

## **Students:**

- Students are actively encouraged to attend school regularly and to arrive punctually at school and at the start of lessons.
- Students should inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to their absence, e.g. bullying, racism, personal issues etc.
- **Students will pass on absence notification from parents to their tutor.**

## **Local Authority (LA) & Educational Welfare Service (EWS):**

**Prosecution.** The LA has a statutory responsibility to ensure that a parent of a child of compulsory school age is registered at a school and attends regularly. If a parent fails to do this the LA may bring prosecution under the Education Act (1996). As a parent you are legally responsible for ensuring that your child attends school regularly and is punctual. If you fail to ensure this you are committing an offence under the Education Act (1996) which may lead to a fine of up to £2500 and/or a prison sentence. You may find yourself issued with a penalty notice.

**Penalty Notice** The LA in conjunction with the School may issue a Penalty Notice if a child has 10 or more unauthorised sessions where the student's attendance is causing concern and, or below 90%, if the student has been excluded from school and is found in a public place during the first 5 days of exclusion, late after the register has closed or has holidays in term time. The Penalty Notice is £60 per child for each parent. The fine is to be paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the fine and the amount is doubled to £120 to be paid within 28 days of the initial notice. Non-payment of fines can lead to prosecution under the Education Act (1996).

### **The Governing Body:**

The Governing Body is legally responsible for many aspects of school management including the attendance register and so it is registered with the Data Protection Registrar under the Data Protection Act 1998. However, the Principal manages the day-to-day running of the School and in so doing takes responsibility for the day-to-day implementation of this policy. The School will ensure that the register is marked with the standardised codes in accordance with the 2006 registration regulations. A copy of the registration regulations is available on request

### **Initiatives to Improve Attendance Rates:**

The School has considered initiatives that are best for the School and always takes into account a student's individual circumstances, e.g. setting reward schemes such as certificates, for 100% attendance or effort to attend. Other helpful initiatives include:

Rewarding good attendance and punctuality via:

- Postcards and letters home celebrating good attendance
- Certificates
- End of Year Assemblies
- Weekly attendance prize draws in assembly
- Attendance celebration weeks
- Half termly rewards
- End of term rewards activities

Introducing attendance:

- This will be displayed weekly on the IWB during form time
- On corridors – showing achievements for individuals, overview of year groups and/or whole school attendance

Communicating attendance and punctuality information to parents/carers, students and staff via;

- Regular slot in the school newsletter
  - School website and via social media platforms
  - Parents' evenings, including individual profiles and general attendance information
  - Use of attendance letters following student absences
  - Phone calls from staff
- 
- Having a senior member of staff responsible for attendance;

### **Monitoring and referral system:**

School will:

- Attempt to contact parents/carers on first day of a student's absence, where no notification has been received from the parent/carer by 9a.m. to ensure the safety of the student
- Monitor the attendance of all children within the school
- Monitor specific individuals and cohorts where attendance is highlighted as a cause of concern
- Apply the waved attendance system for students with attendance difficulties
- Support a Common Assessment where complex and significant factors requiring a multi-agency response is identified
- Work proactively to engage with parents and carers to resolve any difficulties which may be affecting school attendance, through parents' evenings, student reviews and home-school agreements.
- Provide a full and diverse curriculum to engage and motivate students
- Make parents/carers aware of the impact of poor attendance on attainment.

There will be a waved response for students who need further action to support falling attendance or periods of unauthorised absence. This will be in the form of:

- Telephone calls home
- Letters home
- Home visits by key staff and/or Education Welfare Officer
- Consider referral to Education Welfare when school action has failed to bring about an improvement in the student's attendance.
- School meetings (school based staff, parent/carer and student)
- Attendance panel meeting (multi-agency and Governor where applicable)
- Parenting contracts
- Action by Education Welfare Officer (APM, issuing of penalty notices, court action including applying for Education Supervision Orders and Parenting Orders where necessary).

At each of the above stages, there will be offers of support to families, which can include;

- Re-integration packages (for students attending school after long term absence.)
- Attendance surgeries.
- Targeted re-tracking work with school based staff to combat specific issues, eg: friendships, assertiveness, self-esteem, bullying, social skills, etc.
- Referral to or support from external agency professionals including School Health Nurse, Education Welfare Officer and Addaction, Connexions, etc. (KS 3&4 only).

### **Categories of Authorised Absence:**

For all absence known in advance students should be encouraged to give advance notice and to supply written evidence, such as dental appointment cards, a letter of invitation for interviews, etc. In all cases tutors should consider criteria such as the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the student's overall attendance pattern, etc.

### **Illness, medical and dental appointments:**

Students should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. A student receiving medical treatment on site should be marked 'present'. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools and EWOs can consult the School Health Service, or the student's GP and medical verification may be sought.

### **Interviews with prospective employers, or for a place at another school (including entrance examinations):**

If the interview takes place during Year 11 and the School is satisfied it is linked to future education or employment prospects, absence can be recorded as 'approved educational activity.'

### **Dual Registration:**

Where a student is dually registered at two institutions, e.g. a mainstream school and a Student Referral Unit (PRU) or special school, the student is registered as having an approved education activity while they are attending the other institution. A similar situation arises whilst traveller children are traveling; during this time, they should enrol with another school. N.B. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not acceptable alternatives to attendance at school.

### **Public performances:**

The Local Authority must license a student aged 5 – 16 to take part in a public performance. Licensed participation should therefore clearly be treated as authorised absence.

**Birth of a child to a student:**

A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed up 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child; any other absence related to the birth should normally be treated as unauthorised.

**Approved educational activities off-site:**

The following activities show when the approved educational activity category can be used:

- Field trips and educational visits, in this country and overseas;
- Participation in or attendance at approved sporting activities;
- Interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher education establishment (Year 11 only);
- Link courses, whereby students attend an FE college for part of the time;
- Students receiving part of their tuition off-site at another location while remaining under overall supervision of the home school, i.e. a flexible arrangement short of formal dual registration. This can include special tuition for dyslexic children and children with medical issues that remain on the school roll that receive home tuition.
- Approved work experience placements.

**Employment:**

While children are of compulsory school age, they may not be employed full-time. They are; however, free to undertake a range of part-time jobs. All children of compulsory school age who choose to work part-time must be registered with the Local Authority. For further details, contact your local Education Welfare Service.

**Early Leaving:**

A child enrolled in a school remains on the register until the last Friday in June in the year of their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**Leave of Absence****I. Aims**

The aim of this policy is to set out the way in which the School monitors and promotes the attendance and punctuality of its students. The School is committed to maximising the potential of every child and good attendance and punctuality are essential to this aim. We feel this will be achieved, with the support of parents/carers by ensuring that leave of absence is not taken in school time. Absence during term time for any reasons interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning and disrupts the educational progress of students.

## **2. The Law**

From 1 September 2013 The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 amends the 2006 regulations and makes clear that Head Teachers and Principals may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

## **3. Leave of Absence during Term Time**

- (i) The School will not routinely grant permission for leave of absence to be taken in term time and discourage parents/carers making an application for leave except in “special or exceptional circumstances”.
- (ii) The School will only consider leave of absence for one period of absence within an academic year.
- (iii) The School will not grant permission except when special/exceptional circumstances exist for leave to be taken in term time:
  - During transition time when a student is settling into school.
  - During preparation time for examinations.
  - During school and public examination periods and in the period of time surrounding course work deadline dates for All Year Groups.
  - The student already has unauthorised absence.

## **4. Special and Exceptional Circumstances**

The Principal or person designated by the Principal may consider that the following circumstances are “special” or “exceptional”.

- To allow a student to return to their country of origin for family, religious or cultural reasons
- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by evidence from the employer
- A family member is seriously ill
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family and leave may promote the child’s well-being

## **5. Additional Information**

The Grange Academy will ensure that all parents/carers have access to a copy of this Leave of Absence in Term Time Policy which forms part of the school attendance policy.

- Parents/carers will be required to complete a Leave of Absence request form available from the school office and return it to school before booking a term time leave at least 6 weeks prior to the proposed date of the request.
- Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview at the school to discuss their request for leave of absence during term time.
- Parents/carers will normally be notified in writing of the outcome of their application for leave of absence in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

Where a student is taken out of school for the purpose of leave of absence in term time, without the prior permission of the school, the parent/carer of the student may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent per child by the Local Authority. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority will commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court.

Parents/carers may be required to attend an interview with the designated member of staff to discuss their request for term time leave.

Parents/carers will normally be notified of the outcome of their application for leave in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

When leave of absence in term time is agreed by the school, the absence will be recorded as 'C or H' on the school attendance register, dependent upon the reason. This will mean that the absence has been recorded as authorised absence on the school attendance register.

If the leave of absence in term time is not agreed by the school, but the student is absent on the requested dates, the absence will be recorded as 'G or O' (family leave not agreed) this will mean that the absence has been recorded on the school attendance register as unauthorised.

Where a student is taken out of school for leave of absence during term time without the prior permission of the school, the parent/carer of the student may be issued with a £60.00 Penalty Notice per parent per child. If the notice remains unpaid after 21 days the penalty increases to £120.00. If the notice remains unpaid after 28 days the Local Authority will commence proceedings under section 444(1) of the 1996 Education Act in the Magistrates Court.

Where in "exceptional" circumstances family leave in term time is agreed for a period of more than 10 school days, the school will require that a return date is agreed by the parent/carer prior to the commencement of the extended leave. If the student fails to return by the agreed date, the student may be taken off the school admission and attendance registers.

## **6. Children Missing Education**

Parent/Carer responsibilities:

Parents of compulsory school age children are responsible for ensuring that they are receiving suitable full-time education. If you elect to educate your children at home and withdraw them from school you can do so at any time, unless subject to a School Attendance Order.

Children with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans or statements of special educational needs (SEN) can be home educated. Where the EHC plan or statement sets out SEN provision that the child should receive at home, the local authority is under a duty to arrange that provision. Where the EHC plan or statement names a school or type of school as the place where the child should receive his or her education but the parent chooses to home educate their child, the local authority must assure itself that the provision being made by the parent is suitable. In such cases, the local authority must review the plan or statement annually to assure itself that the provision set out in it continues to be appropriate and that the child's SEN continue to be met.

Schools' responsibilities:

Schools must enter students on the admission register at the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the student will attend the school. If a student fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school should undertake reasonable enquiries to establish the child's whereabouts and consider notifying the local authority at the earliest opportunity.

If a student has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the student can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

The Academy will arrange full-time education for excluded students from the sixth school day of a fixed period exclusion.

The Academy will investigate any unexplained absences in line with the Keeping children safe in education statutory guidance.