



Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Greenwich Waldorf School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. The Governors, Executive Principal and Staff in partnership with parents have a duty to promote full attendance at Greenwich Waldorf School.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them.

It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent, preferably by 8.00 am. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe. Parents must ensure that contact details are up to date and that a minimum of 2 emergency contacts are provided.

If a child is absent and the parent has not contacted the school then, as part of our safeguarding policy:

- The school office will send a text reminding them to make contact or call the parent/carer
- If there is no response to the text, the office will try to make contact with the parent or carer and other emergency contacts. The purpose of this is to check on the safety of the child

- If it has not been possible to contact either the parent/carer or emergency contacts the school will give due consideration to making a home visit based on their knowledge of the child. If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a home visit will definitely be made. (See the section 'Children Missing in Education').

This process has been summarised for parents and can be found in appendix 1.

Pupils are expected to arrive on time. Parents or carers are asked to contact the school if they are experiencing difficulties getting their child to school.

The Role of the School Staff

The Executive Principal has overall responsibility for attendance and has to report termly percentages to the Local Authority. The Attendance Administrator monitors attendance together with the Executive Principal.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present or mark as an 'N' if a child is absent. The attendance officer will mark in late or absent children in the morning and telephone or text the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact. It is the responsibility of the attendance officer to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence within 2 hours of the register having been taken. If no reason is provided, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised'.
- Where there has been no communication, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence.
- When a reason has been provided the Attendance administrator ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes – see appendix 2).

Only attendance administrator or Leadership team can change attendance codes (e.g. changing N to O), that member of staff will date, initial and give a brief reason for the change.

Illness and Medical Appointments

When a child is unwell, parents are expected to contact the school before 8.00am on the first day of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

1. Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
2. An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments.
3. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
4. If a child is absent due to vomiting and/or diarrhea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.

5. For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness, the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card or a copy of a prescription).
6. Where there are concerns about a child's attendance (particularly when it drops below 90%) the school will request medical evidence for any absence.

Moving School

If a family are moving out of the area there are a number of things we require them to do:

- Notify us in writing one term in advance, including contact details for where they are moving to and if possible the details of the school their child will be attending.
- Notify us in writing when the child has started their new school.

We will also:

- Request an email from the new school to confirm when the child started regardless of the country the new school is in.
- If we do not hear from the family about their child's new school, we will contact the local authority where they have moved to find out whether the child is in school. If they are on the waiting list or have started school, we will request a confirmation email and off roll the child after one week following this confirmation. We cannot off roll your child until we have confirmation from the new school/Local Authority.

Children Missing from Education (CME)

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Executive Principal and the Attendance Service.

If no reason has been given for a child's absence after 3 days and the school have not been able to contact parents/carers or any emergency contact, a home visit will be arranged. If a visit takes place and there is no one home the school may contact the police (having sought advice from the LA).

If a child has been absent from school for 2 weeks with no reason given, or if they have moved and no new school has contacted Greenwich Waldorf School, a referral is made to the CME (Child Missing in Education) team.

Lateness

At Greenwich Waldorf school the register is taken at 9.00am and 1.50pm. Pupils arriving after these times must enter school by the main entrance and report to our Receptionist who will record their name and reason for lateness and pass it over to the attendance administrator. The pupil will be marked as late when registration has closed (Code 'L').

The register will close at 9.00am for Kindergarten, Class 1-5 closes at 8.45am and Class 6 to 11m at 8.30am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration (Code 'L'), pupils arriving after the above times will be marked as 'U' which is an unauthorised absence.

Parents will be contacted by the school if their child is late regularly. If punctuality continues to be a concern the Attendance Administrator will meet with parents to discuss any issues which are causing lateness and how things can be improved.

Please note that persistent lateness after 9.30am, when children are marked as 'U' may result in a meeting with the Leadership team/DSL.

Leave of Absence

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Executive Principal's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The Executive Principal may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Executive Principal, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Executive Principal's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The Executive Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation, a letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

A written application must be made to request a leave of absence, the Executive Principal will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child's past attendance history. The application for leave of absence must include a return date. Children who return 10 days or more after the expected date will be reported to the local authority as a 'Child Missing in Education' and may be taken off the school roll.

Where leave has been granted this will be marked 'C' in the register, where a family request leave and it is not granted this will be marked as 'G'. Unauthorised holiday of 10 sessions (5 days) or more can result in a meeting taking place with the Leadership team.

The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays
- Absence of child as a result of another member of the family's illness or medical appointment

Monitoring Attendance and Lateness

Our expectation is that a child's attendance is 96% or above at the end of the school year. The school closely monitors attendance and lateness to try to minimise poor attendance and punctuality through:

- Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise
- The Attendance Administrator contacting families whose attendance is below average to try to find ways to improve
- The Leadership Team writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve

The school monitors children's attendance when it drops below 96%. A series of letters is sent when attendance does not improve, approaches or drops below 92%

Letter 1 – advising parent or carer that attendance is low and requesting medical evidence if appropriate

Letter 2 – raising concerns that attendance has not improved and setting the expectation that all future absences need to be accompanied by medical evidence. This may be accompanied by a telephone call from the Attendance Administrator

Letter 3 – either a meeting with Attendance Administrator or someone from the Leadership team to review attendance

Attendance Levels

CHILD'S ATTENDANCE	ACTION
96%+	Excellent attendance
94 – 95%	<p>Good Well done</p> <p>Strive to build on this</p>
Below 95%	<p>Causing concern</p> <p>Children's attendance is below average and they will be missing out on what other children are learning and doing. Parents need to work closely with the school to improve the situation. The children's attendance will be carefully monitored and families written to whenever there is a broken week. Contact will be made by the Attendance Administrator if attendance does not improve.</p>
Below 90%	Possible penalty notice/legal proceedings

Any child whose attendance falls below 92% is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence. The Government is very concerned with this and has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children. Schools have targets to reduce the levels of persistent absence and the school and local authority work closely with families to support them in getting their child to school each day.

Persistent Absence

TERM	NUMBER OF SESSIONS MISSED SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR (A SESSION IS HALF A DAY)
Autumn 1	7 or more
Autumn 2	14 or more
Spring 1	20 or more
Spring 2	25 or more

TERM	NUMBER OF SESSIONS MISSED SINCE THE START OF THE YEAR (A SESSION IS HALF A DAY)
Summer 1	31 or more
Summer 2	38 or more

Support from the school

The school understands that from time to time situations may arise which make it difficult for parents to ensure their child is in school. For example:

- Housing issues
- Health issues
- Children’s behavioural issues
- Financial issues

Please let us know if there are issues which are affecting your child’s attendance.

Covid-19

Children who are self-isolating due to suspected or confirmed cases of Coronavirus will not be penalised, the appropriate code will be used on the register.

Appendix 1

Protocol for contacting parents or carers of children absent from school

*For the purpose of this document the term parents also covers carers

- It is the school's expectation that parents* contact the school before the start of the day if their child is going to be absent
- When they call the school regarding illness, parents are asked to say when they expect their child to return to school (for example in cases of vomiting or diarrhea the child will return after 48 hours). If the child is still unwell after this time the parent must contact the school again
- It is school policy that if a child is off for more than 3 days then medical evidence must be provided in order to authorise the absence
- If a parent does not contact school when their child is absent the school will send a text asking them to do so
- If a parent does not respond to the text, then a phone call will be made to the parent before lunch time
- If it is not possible to contact the parent, then the office will phone the emergency contact numbers provided
- If it has not been possible to ascertain the child's whereabouts after all these avenues have been explored then a home visit will be undertaken by the school within a maximum of 3 days. If there is no response from the home, then the school may contact the police (advice will be sought from the Local Authority)

Appendix 2

Attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance:

Register Attendance Codes

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work Experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
Unauthorized absence		
G	Unauthorized holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorized absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

CODE	DEFINITION	SCENARIO
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day