

Greenfields Federation

Littlehaven Infant School and Northolmes Junior School



Growing Together, Aiming High

Our vision at Greenfields Federation is that we will work together as a community to ensure all pupils achieve their best and everyone feels valued and respected. We will prioritise the well-being of our children and have high expectations for behaviour. We will create an inspiring and motivating learning environment where all children can deepen their knowledge, acquire new skills and develop as well-rounded, happy, confident individuals.

Attendance Policy

Review date:	September 2023
Ratified by the Governing Body:	
Next review:	September 2024 (or before if guidance changes)

Aims

Greenfields Federation are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Greenfields Federation strongly believes that good attendance is important because it enables children to have the best start to life. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and perform less well academically. Poor attendance also impacts on a child's social and emotional development. It can impact on friendships, lead to children missing out on important events and celebrations and can leave children feeling more isolated from their peers. Good attendance promotes both academic and social and emotional development, which is vital for all our children.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ \(updated April 2023\)](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Roles and responsibilities

The Governing Body

Greenfields Federation's Governing Body is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Greenfields Federation's Link Governor for Attendance is: Mrs Kate Leyshon

The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance

The designated senior leaders are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leaders responsible for attendance are Mrs Samantha Cox (Headteacher), Mrs Kathryn Saunderson (Assistant Headteacher) and Miss Lyndsay Woodland (Assistant Headteacher/ Inclusion Lead). They can be contacted through the school office:

office@littlehaveninfant.school or office@northolmesjunior.school

The attendance officers

The school attendance officers are responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officers are Mrs L. Bailey and Mrs B. Atkinson and can be contacted via the school offices.

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of every morning and after lunch each day.

Class teachers are also responsible for playing an active role in promoting good attendance, in line with the Federation's ethos that attendance is everyone's responsibility.

This includes:

- Reminders on the gate to parents who are late about expectations
- Speaking to parents in the playground where children have been absent to check in
- Phone calls to parents where appropriate for attendance and punctuality to discuss missed learning- this can be alongside work being done by SLT to
- Reminding parents of expectations at parent's evenings and parent meetings (reports to be given out at parents evening providing attendance details for every child)
- Liaising with SLT re attendance concerns.
- Celebrating good attendance in class and through assemblies

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the class teachers and Headteacher/ Assistant Headteachers in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

Recording attendance

Attendance register

Greenfields Federation will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and at the start of the session after lunch every day and record whether a pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Greenfields Federation also records:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.40am at Littlehaven Infant School and 8.50am at Northolmes Junior School. This is when the register will be taken.

The register will also be taken straight after lunchtime for all children.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carers must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office.

Office staff will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- At Littlehaven Infant school, a pupil will be marked with an 'L' code (late) if they arrive between 8.40 and 9.10. They will be marked with a 'U' code if they arrive after 9.10 when the registers have been closed.
- At Northolmes Junior school, a pupil will be marked with an 'L' code (late) if they arrive between 8.50 and 9.20. They will be marked with a 'U' code if they arrive after 9.20 when the registers have been closed.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Flow Diagram for monitoring attendance

Week 4: Attendance check at both schools (Autumn 1)

If attendance is below 95% then a letter setting out attendance expectations will be sent (Appendix 2).



Week 8: Attendance check (Autumn 2)

If a child who received the letter in Appendix 2 has had no further days off, they will receive a letter as set out in Appendix 3.

If a child who received the letter in Appendix 2 has had more days off and therefore their attendance percentage has fallen further, they will receive the letter as set out in Appendix 4, followed by a phone call from either Kathryn Saunderson or Sam Cox to discuss attendance concerns.

The letter set out in Appendix 2 will also be sent to any children who were above 95% at the previous check but who have now fallen below.



Attendance check in the final week of Autumn 2

Letters and phone call as set out above.

If a child who has received both a letter and a phone call still has declining attendance at this point then a discussion will be held with Sharlene Brooks (Early Help) to discuss if a referral to Early Help is appropriate.

A meeting will then be arranged with parents to discuss next steps.

These 4 weekly checks will continue through the Spring and Summer term following the structure above.

Mrs Samantha Cox, Mrs Kathryn Saunderson and Miss Lyndsay Woodland will work alongside agencies such as Early Help, Pupil Entitlement and CAMHS where it is felt additional support for families is needed.

Please note that if Mrs Samantha Cox, Mrs Kathryn Saunderson or Miss Lyndsay Woodland have concerns about declining attendance of specific children, they will take earlier action and will not wait for the attendance checks to be completed.

Fines may also be issued for extended periods of unauthorised absence (ten sessions of unauthorised absence, including lateness, in a ten week period).

Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may carry out a home visit or contact a social worker where there is one allocated to the family. If there are any safeguarding concerns, then the school may also contact the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider contacting Pupil Entitlement and will consider if a safeguarding referral is needed.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through termly parent consultation meetings and through letters and phone calls as set out in the flow diagram above where there are concerns regarding either attendance or punctuality.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks, before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include

- Illness
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Term time holiday will not be granted by the Headteacher under any circumstance.

Other exceptional circumstances that may lead to an absence being authorised include

- Funeral of an immediate relative
- Religious observation on a date that cannot be moved
- Compassionate leave
- Close family wedding
- Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day
- Music/Ballet Exam
- Educational visit to another school

Legal sanctions

Greenfields Federation or the local authority (West Sussex County Council) can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by the Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for promoting attendance

Assemblies are held at the start of each term to set out expectations and remind children of the importance of being in school every day.

Weekly celebration assemblies are held at both schools and attendance is celebrated during these.

At Littlehaven Infant School, the class with the highest attendance earns a marble for the attendance display and the class with the highest attendance at the end of the half term will be rewarded by an additional break time

At Northolmes Junior School, an attendance trophy is awarded each week to the class with the highest attendance. Each child in this class also receive 5 dojos (reward points).

Targeted children at both schools may receive individual support e.g. through sticker charts to encourage good attendance on an individual level.

Monitoring attendance

Greenfields Federation will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- For some pupils of concern, their attendance may be monitored more often to ensure it is closely tracked.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

Greenfields Federation will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

Using data to improve attendance

Greenfields Federation will

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence

- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually or as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated.

At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy
- Children Missing in Education policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed (within 30 minutes of school starting)
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 employer/educational establishment
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
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Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised 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	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence

U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed (after 30 minutes of school starting)
Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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

Appendix 2 – initial letter

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We need your help, please.

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} sessions of school out of a possible {#} sessions so far this year.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-call-the-doctor/child-when-to-call-the-doctor/) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Northolmes Junior School / Littlehaven Infant School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on your child's absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes. We want to work with you to achieve this – please call or come in and meet myself or Mrs Saunderson if there is anything we can do to support you or your child. We appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

We will be in touch again to request a meeting with you if we have ongoing concerns about your child's attendance.

Kind regards

Mrs S Cox
Headteacher

Appendix 3 – 2nd letter, no further absence

Dear Parent/ Carer,

Following our attendance check this week, we are pleased to see that _____ has had no further days off school since the previous letter was sent out.

We want to thank you for your continued support and for working with us to improve your child's attendance.

Kind regards

Mrs S. Cox
Headteacher

Appendix 4 – 2nd letter, further absences

Dear Parent/Carer of {Pupil Name}

We need your help, please.

{Pupil Name} has been absent for {#} sessions of school out of a possible {#} sessions so far this year. Unfortunately, {Pupil Name} had had further periods of absence since our previous letter.

We know that sometimes our pupils cannot come to school because they are really unwell - and that's the right thing to do for them and other students. Medical advice is clear however that children with mild illness will often be well enough to attend - for example if they have a cough, or cold, without a temperature. The NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school? - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/when-to-call-the-doctor/) is designed to support parents in their decision making about mild illness.

We also know that pupils fall behind their friends and classmates when they miss school. At Northolmes Junior School / Littlehaven Infant School we want the amount of missed education to be reduced as much as possible. We believe that our community is stronger together, with all of our pupils in school, on time, every day. We are building life skills, life-long friendships and preparing your child for future success.

We also know that you can have a significant effect on {Pupil Name}'s absences this academic year and we would really appreciate your help and support ensuring that {Pupil Name} comes to school every day so that they can get the best possible outcomes.

We want to work with you to achieve this – we appreciate that every family's situation is unique.

Either myself or Mrs Saunderson will be making contact with you to discuss how we can support you to improve {Pupil Name}'s attendance.

Kind regards

Mrs S Cox
Headteacher