

Attendance Policy for:-

Great Dunmow Primary School

Statement/Mission of Intent:-

Great Dunmow Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all its pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a School, we will organise and do all we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there are concerns about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Rights and Responsibilities:-

Great Dunmow Primary School expects pupils to attend school regularly, on time, properly equipped and ready to learn.

Great Dunmow Primary School will encourage good attendance and will communicate with parents as soon as possible if there is a problem with attendance or punctuality.

Great Dunmow Primary School staff will set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality and will promptly investigate all absenteeism and lateness.

Great Dunmow Primary School will work in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve issues, which affect attendance or punctuality as quickly as possible.

Great Dunmow Primary School will include in reports to parents on achievement, pupil's attendance at least annually.

Pupils will ensure that they attend school regularly and on time.

Pupils will attend all lessons punctually.

Pupils can expect to be welcomed and receive assistance following periods of absence in order to catch up.

Pupils will be listened to and respected.

Pupils will have individual records of attendance/punctuality acknowledged by the school.

Parents are responsible for ensuring their child regularly and punctually attends school, properly dressed, equipped and ready to learn.

Parents are responsible for immediately informing the school of the reason for any absence by telephone call on the first morning of any absence, **this must be confirmed in writing when their child returns to school** (consideration should be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language).

If attendance problems do develop, the school expects parents to work actively with school staff and the Education Welfare Service, to solve them.

Parents do not have a *right* to take children on holiday in term time. Leave of absence must be granted in advance by the school. Any application will be considered against the pupils' attendance record, family circumstances and timing with regard to assessments and examinations. Holidays will not be authorised if the leave of absence is requested within 2 weeks following a half term break or 2 weeks at the beginning of a term.

Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's attendance/punctuality record.

Registration

Type of Registration and general register maintenance

At Great Dunmow Primary School a manual registration system is used to register pupils. The register is then scanned to go onto the computer.

Manual registers must be marked in ink and where an alteration is necessary this must be clearly identified showing both the original entry and change. Correction fluid must not be used.

Registers will be returned to the school office at the end of the registration period for safety and will be secured but accessible in case of an emergency.

All notes from parents regarding a pupil's absence will be stored on the pupil's file and retained for three years.

Start and Close of Registration

Great Dunmow Primary School will complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 30 minutes of the start of the lesson.

Registration begins at 8.55am and 1.05pm each school day and registers will be closed 30 minutes after these times.

If a pupil arrives after the register has closed, they should report to reception to be entered into the late record book.

Pupils arriving after the register has closed, without an acceptable reason, will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for that session.

Use of Symbols

The following symbols are used in registers:

Code	Description
/	Present am
\	Present pm
B	Educated off site (not dual registration)
C	Authorised Circumstances (not covered by any other code)
D	Dual Registration (Approved Education Activity)
E	Excluded
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)
G	Family holiday <u>not agreed</u> (unauthorised)
H	Family holiday (authorised)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closes)
M	Medical/Dental Appointments
N	No reason yet provided (unauthorised)
O	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
T	Traveller Absence
U	Late (after register closes) Unauthorised
V	Educational Visit
W	Work Experience
X	Non-compulsory School Age Absence
Y	Enforced Closure
Z	Pupil not yet on roll
#	School closed to pupils

The Legal Status of Registers

The register is a legal document and must be marked accurately, recording pupils attendance or absence and in the latter case if authorised or unauthorised.

A certified extract of the register can be used as evidence in legal proceedings against parents for failing to ensure their child's regular

attendance or in seeking an Education Supervision Order in respect of a pupil.

Registers must be kept for a minimum of 3 years following completion at the end of the academic school year.

Staff responsible for processes

The head teacher is responsible for attendance issues and will check the registers on a regular basis to identify any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The head teacher will meet regularly with the Education Welfare Officer to discuss any attendance/punctuality concerns.

The administrative team are responsible for ensuring that registers are kept safely and are available for inspection to relevant professionals.

The administrative team are responsible for logging attendance information onto the computerised system.

The class teacher is responsible for taking the register daily, once for the AM session and once for the PM session.

The class teacher is responsible for register maintenance of their own class OMR register. Including the following:

- ◆ using the correct colour ink
- ◆ ensuring that symbols used are appropriate
- ◆ not using correction fluid
- ◆ ensuring all mistakes are amended with the original information still clear and corrections clearly marked

Great Dunmow Primary School will ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process and receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.

Each pupil should be called by name when the register is being taken.

Procedures for following up absence/lateness

It is the responsibility of the parent/carer to contact the school on the first morning of the child's absence. This can be done by leaving a message on the answer phone or phoning when the school office opens at 8.15am. In any case parent/carer should contact the school prior to 9.30am. If this contact is not made then Great Dunmow Primary School will:

- Contact the parent by telephone, or if the parent is unobtainable;
- Write a letter requesting information

If the above actions do not elicit an explanation for the absence and the absence continues, a further letter will be sent to the parents/carers.

If this letter does not elicit an explanation for the absence a second letter will be sent to the parent/carer; the school's Education Welfare Officer will be informed and the parent may be invited in to the school for a meeting by the Head Teacher. This meeting will be to identify and resolve the difficulties which are preventing the pupil from attending school. The parents/carers will be made aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance.

If the pupil's difficulties are not resolved at this meeting then a formal referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer, and a formal intervention planned.

If the pupil is returning to school after an absence of longer than two weeks, in exceptional circumstances there will be provision to allow the pupil to ease back into the school system. In the event of a pupil returning after a long term absence then an individual reintegration programme (IRP) will be implemented. The IRP will include all members of the school staff and will be designed to be as supportive of the pupil as possible.

Where a pupil is persistently late the school will write to the parent/carer inviting them to a school based meeting.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

THE DFES CIRCULAR NUMBER 10/99 STATES THAT PARENTS MAY NOT AUTHORISE ABSENCE, ONLY SCHOOLS CAN DO THIS.

Absence for the following reasons could be authorised where parents have confirmed the absence in writing on the child's return to school (consideration should be given to procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language):

- ◆ Sickness
- ◆ Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- ◆ Days of religious observance
- ◆ Exceptional family circumstances i.e. bereavement
- ◆ If permission for absence has been granted in advance by the head teacher
- ◆ Transport arranged by the LEA has failed to arrive where the pupil lives beyond statutory walking distance

Absence may be recorded as unauthorised when due to:

- ◆ Shopping
- ◆ Haircuts
- ◆ Missed bus
- ◆ Slept late
- ◆ No uniform
- ◆ Looking after brothers or sisters or unwell parents
- ◆ Minding the house
- ◆ Birthdays
- ◆ Unapproved holidays

It may be necessary for the school or Education Welfare Officer to ask the parent/carer to provide the school with written evidence of reason for absence e.g.

- ◆ Appointment cards/letters
- ◆ Medical certificate
- ◆ Letter from GP

If there is an extensive period of absence due to medical reasons the school or the Education Welfare Officer may ask for the permission of

the parent/carer to contact the child's GP to confirm that the medical condition prevents the child from attending school and to establish a possible return date for the child.

Strategies for promoting attendance/punctuality

In the belief that pupil's are more likely to attend regularly if the curriculum is lively and meets their needs the curriculum will be regularly reviewed

Attendance statistics will be collected and used to inform pastoral and curriculum practices

Expectations are made clear to parents with regard to attendance and punctuality in the Home School Agreement, School prospectus and annual report from the governors

Opportunities to maintain awareness through newsletters, parents' evenings and pupil reports will be used

Parents, pupils and staff will be regularly reminded of what constitutes authorised and unauthorised absence

Pupils with a known attendance problem being admitted to school will be interviewed with the parents and will be set targets for improvement

Parents will be kept regularly informed of all concerns regarding attendance and punctuality

Pupils who have been absent for an extended period of time will be reintegrated back into school through a structured and individually tailored programme

All issues, which may cause a pupil to experience attendance difficulties, are to be promptly investigated by the school

Great Dunmow Primary School will have regular meetings with the Education Welfare Officer, in order to identify and support those pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties. The EWO will organise termly/regular Register Sweeps. A letter is sent out to parents if a child is a persistent absentee.

Our absence Target for 2007/08 is 4.80%
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This policy will be reviewed to its effective implementation on an annual basis and updated as appropriate.