

GRIMOLDBY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy on Attendance

1 Introduction

- 1.1 We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will reward those children whose attendance is very good. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the register, and will inform the school office, which will endeavour to contact a parent or guardian.
- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence or they may telephone the school and inform the school office the reasons for the child's absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.

- 3.5 We encourage parents to inform the school by telephone if their child is absent from school. This is recorded on a daily absence sheet and this is taken round to each class 15 minutes after the start of school. If a child is absent and the school has not been informed the child's name is added to the sheet and when this is returned to the office a phone call is made to find out why the child is absent. If parents phone the school we do not require a note when the child returns to school.

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend, e.g. a special event. We expect parents to contact the school at least a week in advance, but normally this request will be granted.
- 4.2 Parents do have the right to withdraw their children from school for up to ten days for an annual holiday. We naturally prefer parents to take their family holiday in the normal school holiday periods, but if this is not possible, the school will, of course, grant the leave of absence.
- 4.3 Special circumstances include;
- a. * Service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term time, if the holiday will have minimal disruption to the pupils education
 - * when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
 - b. Holidays which are taken for the following reasons will not be authorised;
 - * availability of cheap holidays
 - * availability of the desired accommodation
 - * poor weather experienced in school holiday periods, and
 - * overlap with the beginning and end of term
 - c. Whilst the application must be made by the parent(s) that the child normally resides with, there is no restriction on who the holiday is taken with. This is a matter for the parent(s) not the school.
 - d. If the local code of practice allows, parents can be given a penalty notice or prosecuted for periods of unauthorised holidays.
- 4.4 In exceptional circumstances, parents can apply for extended leave of absence or extended holidays. In these circumstances the Head teacher will discuss with parents the possibility of changing their plans to overlap school holidays and thereby reducing the effect on their child's education.
- 4.4 In a small number of cases where the school could have concerns about the pupils welfare, such as the pupil being forced into marriage whilst abroad, the Head teacher will ask for support from the local authority.
- 4.4 When considering a leave of absence request the following criteria will be considered;
- * the amount of time requested
 - * age of pupil
 - * the pupils general absence/attendance record
 - * proximity of SATs and public examinations
 - * length of proposed leave
 - * pupils ability to catch up on the work

- * pupils educational needs
- * general welfare of the pupil
- * circumstances of the request
- * purpose of the leave of absence
- * frequency of the activity, and
- * when the request was made

4.5 School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving reasons for the decisions. It will include;

- * the expected date of the return to school
- * that the parents are expected to contact the school if anything delays the pupil returning to school when expected, and
- * what action will be taken if the pupil fails to return when expected.

Similarly, a letter refusing a request for leave of absence will explain the reasons for the refusal and what action will be taken if the parents ignore the refusal and take/keep their child away from school.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who will visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance in any one year will receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded in the final assembly of the school year.

8 Monitoring and review

- 8.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

- 8.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 8.3 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 8.4 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

Signed: Mrs. M. Barnes

Date: 26th September 2007

Review Date: September 2009