



Grove School

Pupil Attendance Policy

Mission statement:

"Enjoy, learn, achieve"

September 2020.

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Our Grove Expectations

Pupils, staff and parents are:

- Good listeners and thoughtful speakers
- Are honest and tell the truth
- Are kind and don't hurt others or their feelings
- Respect all property
- Are supportive of others
- Always do our best
- We treat others as we would like to be treated

Mission statement: "Enjoy, learn, achieve"

Our whole school attendance target for 2020-2021 will be the national target for pupil attendance.

GOV.UK issued guidance for schools on reopening in September 2020:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

This policy has been written with regard to DFE School Attendance, July 2019 and Children Missing Education, September 2016.

School attendance DFE July 2019

School attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects schools to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The government expects parents to:

- Perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

What does the law say and what do I have to do?

This guidance summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in: • The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5) • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010 • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016 The Admission and Attendance Registers .

The law requires all schools including independent schools to have an admission register and, with the exception of schools where all pupils are boarders, an attendance register. All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers. The proprietor of a school who fails to comply with these regulations is guilty of an offence and can be fined

2. Contents of Admission Register

The admission register must contain the personal details of every pupil in the school, along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and carers and details of the school last attended.

3. Expected First Day of Attendance

Schools must enter pupils on the admission register and attendance register from the beginning of the first day on which the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year. If a pupil fails to attend on the agreed or notified date, the school must establish the reason for the absence and mark the attendance register accordingly. All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest

year – for example pupils who are registered at a secondary school at the start of Year 7 - unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided.

4. Pupils Moving to a New Address and/or School

Where the parent of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil will live at another address, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the full name of the parent with whom the pupil will live, (b) the new address, and (c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address. Where a parent notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school, schools must record in the admission register: (a) the name of the other school, and (b) the date of when the pupil first attended, or is due to start attending, that school.

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1 **Attendance – Our Vision**

100% attendance for every child

At Grove School parents, children, staff and governors believe that:

- Every child is important to and is valued by the school
- The school has a commitment to providing the highest possible standard of pastoral care, guidance, support and education and this is harder to achieve if children have poor attendance/punctuality
- Good attendance and punctuality prepares children for adult life
- We do not want children to experience feelings of isolation, being behind with work or being left out of school events.

It is therefore the responsibility of the whole school community to ensure all children attend school regularly and form good habits in punctuality.

2 **Aims of the school policy on attendance**

- To ensure we protect children from the negative outcomes of poor attendance and support all children to develop their full potential
- To ensure all staff, parents and the Governing Body are fully conversant with the school policy on attendance
- To ensure that there are procedures in place to monitor pupil attendance effectively and these are followed, resulting in good attendance for all pupils
- To ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to education throughout their school life
- To ensure that parents and carers are supported by school and external agencies through a process of early intervention and collaborative information sharing
- To promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- To act early to address patterns of attendance

3 **Completing attendance registers**

All schools are required to have an attendance register which must be completed twice a day at roll call.

* The school doors open at 8.30am. Pupils can come into school from 8-30am. Parents are welcomed into the school at the end of the school day.

* Electronic registers are completed between 8.45 and 8.50am. The school uses SIMS. *In the autumn term 2020 the school gates will close at 8.50am to allow pupils to enter school and have their temperature taken. Registers will be taken at 8.50am and at the start of the afternoon teaching session: nursery 12.15pm, Reception and year 1 12.15pm, Year 2 12.45pm, Year 3 1.15pm and Years 4, 5 and 6 1.30pm.*

* Teachers complete the register on SIMS and record, on a specially designated whiteboard, the date, the number of pupils present and the full name of each pupil who is absent. When all late pupils are in class an administrator goes to each class to check the attendance board.

* At *8.50am* the doors to school are closed and staff electronically record late arrivals of pupils at the school gate. They are recorded as L (late arrival before the register has closed) on the school register, this is then changed to present by an administrator. A member of the administrative team takes children who arrive late in school to class.

* After *8.55am* a child will be marked as late.

* After *9.25am* a child will be marked as late, unauthorised, code U.

* In Key Stage Two if a child is frequently missing part of the first lesson due to late arrival at school the child will be required to complete their work at playtime under the supervision of a member of staff.

4 **Our absence procedures**

* If a teacher receives a letter giving a reason for absence, then it must be passed on to a member of the administrative staff in the main school office. Letters and telephone calls from parents/carers are used to provide a code for an authorised absence by a (See Appendix A: Absence Codes). Letters from parents/carers are maintained on file.

* An administrator makes first day absence calls to ascertain the reason for a child's absence. The reason for absence is recorded on SIMS using the absence codes. Administrators are present in the school playground from 8.30-9.00am. Parents can inform them if their child is not present and the reason for their absence.

* Any child, for whom we have no recorded reason for their absence from school, has a letter sent to the family home detailing when the child was absent and requesting the return of a letter to update our records. N codes should remain on register no longer than two weeks, following a two-week period the absence becomes unauthorised.

* An absence of three days or more with no contact with the child's family or a pattern of poor attendance will trigger a home visit.

* An administrator discusses absent pupils, especially those whom the school has identified as vulnerable, with the senior management team on a daily basis.

* When teachers note a pattern of absence, reduced attendance or have concerns about a child's attendance they will ask to meet with the parent/carer to discuss their child's absence record.

* If the child's attendance does not improve within the half term the year group leader/assistant head teacher will write to a parent to invite them to meet to discuss school's concerns about attendance

* Monthly meetings held by the Deputy Head teacher and Attendance Administrator identify pupils for whom there is a pattern of none attendance, the staff who work with the child, usually the class teacher and/or support staff will arrange to meet with the parent at the end of the school day. Any support offered is recorded and the child's attendance is monitored.

* School can offer support through an Early Help meeting and a Family Plan to help parents improve attendance and/or punctuality.

* If attendance continues to be a concern the school may issue a medical evidence letter. A parent will be required to obtain medical evidence for absences.

* If attendance does not improve the school may issue a Head Teacher concern letter.

* If attendance does not improve parents will be invited to a School Attendance Review Meeting (SARMs) with the Deputy Head

**If school has concerns regarding a child's continued absence, we may refer to outside agencies.
We may offer support through an Early Help assessment
School also use the Fast Track to improve attendance programme.**

Continued poor attendance and/or punctuality may indicate a child is at risk of harm and school will refer to Birmingham Children's Trust by completing a Request for Support form.

5 Monitoring Attendance

At Grove all staff are responsible for monitoring attendance. All staff are proactive in improving attendance and punctuality of pupils. The school attendance target is the national figure for 2020-2021.

As well as our daily first day absence procedures we monitor attendance in the following ways:

- Year group team meetings
- Assistant head teacher meetings
- Weekly monitoring of pupils who have attendance below 90%
- Monthly reviews of those pupils who are persistently absent
- Fast Track to Improve Attendance
- Referrals to Child Missing in Education Team
- Leave in Term Time Penalty Notices.

6. Fast Track to Improve Attendance.

From September 2020 Grove school will be following the procedures issued by Birmingham City Council, July 2020. These are detailed in section 12.

From June 2018 the school follows the Fast Track scheme (this replaces Spotlight).

Details can be found at: BCC_FAST_track_Guidance_Sept_2018.

The Designated Liaison Person is Ms J. Baker
The lead administrator for attendance is Mrs M Murphy

All administrators are required to complete first day call procedures.

There is a link to Fast Track on the school website:
www.grove.bham.sch.uk/parents/attendance

7. Children missing from education, DFE September 2016

School governing bodies, academy trusts, and other school proprietors must have regard to the statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Schools should put in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who go missing from school, particularly on repeat occasions.

For every pupil, schools should hold an emergency contact number for more than one person. Emergency contact numbers should be provided and updated by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides. This goes beyond the legal requirement but is good practice. Doing so provides schools with additional options for making contact with a responsible adult when a child is missing school and is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern.

Where school staff have concerns about a child, they should use their professional judgement and knowledge of the individual pupil to inform their decision as to whether

welfare concerns should be escalated.

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as it is possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure that they receive full-time education.

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the

register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information

to be provided.

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information:

- the full name of the pupil;
- the full name and address of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- at least one telephone number of any parent with whom the pupil lives;
- the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil is expected to start living there, if applicable;
- the name of pupil's other or future school and the pupil's start date or expected start date there, if applicable; and
- the ground prescribed in regulation 8 under which the pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register.

8. Home Educated Children

The school follows the Birmingham City Council policy for Elective Home Education.

This policy can be found at: www.grove.bham.sch.uk/parents/attendance.

Information from Birmingham City Council can be found at:

https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/692/home_education

Birmingham Local Authority encourages parents / carers to inform them directly of the withdrawal of a child from school, even though schools will also notify the local authority.

We request that parents inform the Head Teacher of their intent to home educate in writing.

9. Medical evidence

If a child's attendance becomes a concern to school we can request medical evidence. Telephone calls and handwritten notes from a parent/carer are not acceptable as medical evidence. A child sent home from school, by school is medical evidence.

We will write to parents of children who we require medical evidence for. Medical evidence can include the following:

- a copy of the prescription
- slip with date, pupil's name and surgery stamp signed by the receptionist
- medical appointment card with one appointment entered
- letters concerning hospital appointments
- print screen of medical notes
- doctor's medical certificate
- doctor's letter

Once the school receives medical evidence the absence is authorised. Non production of medical evidence results in an unauthorised absence being recorded.

10. Celebrating Success

Recognising and rewarding good attendance is an important part of the work of all staff. We celebrate success in the following ways:

- i. Letters sent home to congratulate children on improved attendance.
- ii. Weekly assembly with a certificate for the class with the highest attendance.
- iii. 100% attendance for the term assemblies bronze, silver and gold – certificate, badge, prize and a wristband.
- iv. 97% - 99.9% attendance for the term assemblies – certificate, badge, prize
- v. 100% attendance for the year awards and prizes.
- vi. Attendance newsletter every term.
- vii. Attendance displays.
- viii. Attendance reported on the school website.
- ix. Attendance celebrated in school newsletters.
- x. *Fantastic Friday assembly awards*: one pupil from each year group is awarded a prize if they have attended 100% in the previous week.
- xi. 20 Day Challenge three times a year to reduce absence at the end of a term
- xii. Individual attendance charts for pupils

10. Taking pupils off roll

If a child has 20 unauthorised absences school consult with Admissions and Appeals and/or Child Missing In Education Team to make a decision as to whether the pupil should be taken off roll.

Update for September 2020

Birmingham School's Noticeboard, 10.07.20

This information is also contained with the school risk assessment, July 2020.

Pupil Attendance

Colleagues will now be aware that, from September 2020, attendance at school will be compulsory for those children who are registered with you. Consequently, the Department for Education has requested that the local authority and schools set out their expectations for parents in relation to attendance from next term. We have revised the 'Whole School Letter' used for our legal processes to take into account the impact of Covid 19. We would advise schools to send this out to parents by email, or post or by pupil post, as well as placing the letter on your website. Even if your school does not use legal processes usually, we would advise that you ensure parents receive a copy. The letter should include the school's logo and, preferably, should be signed by the Head teacher. The letter can be found on our webpage under both FAST-track and the Leave in Term Time

sections: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/20014/schools_and_learning/690/pupil_attendance_advice_for_schools/2

For the first half term it is important that schools continue to work in partnership with parents to encourage full attendance, using Early Help and other resources such as those provided by the #you'vebeenmissed campaign. Meetings should be informal and supportive in the early stages. We would like schools to refrain from calling formal FAST-track 'School Attendance Review Meetings' (SARMs) in the first half term. Whilst schools are free to use the Leave in Term Time letters (LD1 and LD2) now for leave requested next academic year, the Education Legal Intervention team will not be accepting referrals for unauthorised leave taken in the first half term. This is to take into account any confusion as to whether attendance was compulsory or not when the parents booked their leave. When reviewing requests for leave in term time, schools may also need to think about whether parents have been key workers during the pandemic, or whether the family has suffered loss due to Covid 19 in the last few months.

Draft BCC Education (Penalty Notice) Code of Conduct

The Department for Education has also asked local authorities to review their code of conduct for issuing penalty notices, to take into account the issues raised by Covid 19. Any change to codes of conduct must be subject to consultation with schools. You will find the draft document at <https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/school-attendance>

The main changes are:

- as directed by the DfE no penalty notices or prosecutions will be instigated for Covid 19 absence

- penalty notices will now be issued for a second subsequent offence relating to unauthorised absence. A third offence would mean the case would be referred straight to Court.
- the threshold for 'straight to court' cases, where the offence is considered too serious for penalty notices to be issued, has changed from 40 to 60 sessions
- the overall threshold for issuing penalty notices is still 20 sessions but in relation to unauthorised Leave in Term Time referrals, the number of required unauthorised absence sessions for the previous 12 calendar months is now 12 and the number of G codes prompting referral has reduced to 8, which will help schools with those families who try to avoid sanctions by going on leave for 4 days not 5.
- '12 calendar months' will not include the 5 month period between March and the beginning of September which can be discounted.

If you have any comments please send them by 24th July 2020, marked for the attention of Edwina Langley, to attendance@birmingham.gov.uk.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/actions-for-schools-during-the-coronavirus-outbreak/guidance-for-full-opening-schools>

1. The system of controls: protective measures

Having assessed their risk, schools must work through the below system of controls, adopting measures to the fullest extent possible in a way that addresses the risk identified in their assessment, works for their school, and allows them to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for their pupils, including full educational and care support for those pupils who have SEND.

If schools follow the guidance set out here they will effectively reduce risks in their school and create an inherently safer environment.

2. System of controls

This is the set of actions schools must take. They are grouped into 'prevention' and 'response to any infection' and are outlined in more detail in the sections below.

Prevention:

- 1) minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school
- 2) clean hands thoroughly more often than usual
- 3) ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach
- 4) introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often, using standard products such as detergents and bleach
- 5) minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible
- 6) where necessary, wear appropriate personal protective equipment (PPE)

Numbers 1 to 4 must be in place in all schools, all the time.

Number 5 must be properly considered and schools must put in place measures that suit their particular circumstances.

Number 6 applies in specific circumstances.

Response to any infection:

- 7) engage with the NHS Test and Trace process
- 8) manage confirmed cases of coronavirus (COVID-19) amongst the school community
- 9) contain any outbreak by following local health protection team advice

Numbers 7 to 9 must be followed in every case where they are relevant.

3. Prevention

1. Minimise contact with individuals who are unwell by ensuring that those who have coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms, or who have someone in their household who does, do not attend school

Ensuring that pupils, staff and other adults do not come into the school if they have [coronavirus \(COVID-19\) symptoms](#), or have tested positive in the last 7 days, and ensuring anyone developing those symptoms during the school day is sent home, are essential actions to reduce the risk in schools and further drive down transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). All schools must follow this process and ensure all staff are aware of it.

If anyone in the school becomes unwell with a new, continuous cough or a high temperature, or has a loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell (anosmia), they must be sent home and advised to follow '[stay at home: guidance for households with possible or confirmed coronavirus \(COVID-19\) infection](#)', which sets out that they must self-isolate for at least 7 days and should [arrange to have a test](#) to see if they have coronavirus (COVID-19). Other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms.

If a child is awaiting collection, they should be moved, if possible, to a room where they can be isolated behind a closed door, depending on the age and needs of the child, with appropriate adult supervision if required. Ideally, a window should be opened for ventilation. If it is not possible to isolate them, move them to an area which is at least 2 metres away from other people.

If they need to go to the bathroom while waiting to be collected, they should use a separate bathroom if possible. The bathroom must be cleaned and disinfected using standard cleaning products before being used by anyone else.

PPE must be worn by staff caring for the child while they await collection if a distance of 2 metres cannot be maintained (such as for a very young child or a child with complex needs). More information on PPE use can be found in the [safe working in education, childcare and children's social care settings, including the use of personal protective equipment \(PPE\)](#) guidance.

If a child in a boarding school shows symptoms, they should initially self-isolate in their residential setting household. Most children will benefit from self-isolating in their boarding house so that their usual support can continue. Others will benefit more from self-isolating in their family home. For more information on how to care for a symptomatic child while protecting the welfare of other pupils and staff, read the [guidance on isolation for residential educational settings](#).

As is usual practice, in an emergency, call 999 if someone is seriously ill or injured or their life is at risk. Anyone with coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms should not visit the GP, pharmacy, urgent care centre or a hospital.

Any members of staff who have helped someone with symptoms and any pupils who have been in close contact with them do not need to go home to self-isolate unless they develop symptoms themselves (in which case, they should arrange a test) or if the symptomatic person subsequently tests positive (see below) or they have been requested to do so by NHS Test and Trace.

Everyone must wash their hands thoroughly for 20 seconds with soap and running water or use hand sanitiser after any contact with someone who is unwell. The area around the person with symptoms must be cleaned with normal household bleach after they have left to reduce the risk of passing the infection on to other people. See the [COVID-19: cleaning of non-healthcare settings guidance](#).

Public Health England is clear that routinely taking the temperature of pupils is not recommended as this is an unreliable method for identifying coronavirus (COVID-19).

2. Clean hands thoroughly more often than usual

Coronavirus (COVID-19) is an easy virus to kill when it is on skin. This can be done with soap and running water or hand sanitiser. Schools must ensure that pupils clean their hands regularly, including when they arrive at school, when they return from breaks, when they change rooms and before and after eating. Regular and thorough hand cleaning is going to be needed for the foreseeable future. Points to consider and implement:

- whether the school has enough hand washing or hand sanitiser 'stations' available so that all pupils and staff can clean their hands regularly
- supervision of hand sanitiser use given risks around ingestion. Small children and pupils with complex needs should continue to be helped to clean their hands properly. Skin friendly skin cleaning wipes can be used as an alternative
- building these routines into school culture, supported by behaviour expectations and helping ensure younger children and those with complex needs understand the need to follow them

3. Ensure good respiratory hygiene by promoting the 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach

The 'catch it, bin it, kill it' approach continues to be very important, so schools must ensure that they have enough tissues and bins available in the school to support pupils and staff to follow this routine. As with hand cleaning, schools must ensure younger children and those with complex needs are helped to get this right, and all pupils understand that this is now part of how school operates. The [e-Bug coronavirus \(COVID-19\) website](#) contains free resources for schools, including materials to encourage good hand and respiratory hygiene.

Some pupils with complex needs will struggle to maintain as good respiratory hygiene as their peers, for example those who spit uncontrollably or use saliva as a sensory stimulant. This should be considered in risk assessments in order to support these pupils and the staff working with them, and is not a reason to deny these pupils face to face education.

Public Health England does not (based on current evidence) recommend the use of face coverings in schools. This evidence will be kept under review. They are not required in schools as pupils and staff are mixing in consistent groups, and because misuse may inadvertently increase the risk of transmission. There may also be negative effects on communication and thus education. Face coverings are required at all times on public transport (except children under the age of 11), when attending a hospital as a visitor or outpatient, or when in a shop or a supermarket.

4. Introduce enhanced cleaning, including cleaning frequently touched surfaces often using standard products, such as detergents and bleach

Points to consider and implement:

- putting in place a cleaning schedule that ensures cleaning is generally enhanced and includes:
 - more frequent cleaning of rooms and shared areas that are used by different groups
 - frequently touched surfaces being cleaned more often than normal
- toilets will need to be cleaned regularly and pupils must be encouraged to clean their hands thoroughly after using the toilet - different groups being allocated their own toilet blocks could be considered but is not a requirement if the site does not allow for it

Public Health England has published revised [guidance for cleaning non-healthcare settings](#) to advise on general cleaning required in addition to the existing advice on cleaning those settings when there is a suspected case.

5. Minimise contact between individuals and maintain social distancing wherever possible

Minimising contacts and mixing between people reduces transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19). This is important in all contexts, and schools must consider how to implement this. Schools must do everything possible to minimise contacts and mixing while delivering a broad and balanced curriculum.

The overarching principle to apply is reducing the number of contacts between children and staff. This can be achieved through keeping groups separate (in 'bubbles') and through maintaining distance between individuals. These are not alternative options and both measures will help, but the balance between them will change depending on:

- children's ability to distance
- the lay out of the school
- the feasibility of keeping distinct groups separate while offering a broad curriculum (especially at secondary)

It is likely that for younger children the emphasis will be on separating groups, and for older children it will be on distancing. For children old enough, they should also be supported to maintain distance and not touch staff where possible.

