

The Gryphon School
Attendance Policy
2017-18

Principles:

Education is important

The Gryphon School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. Missing school means missing out. Children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Poor attainment at school is often linked to poor attendance.

The Gryphon School will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All Gryphon School staff will work with pupils and their families to ensure each pupil attends school regularly and punctually.

The Gryphon School will ensure there is an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve the attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives The Gryphon School will ensure there is an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence on the part of the parent and can result in legal action by the Local Authority. Every half day absence from school has to be recorded by staff at the school as either authorised attendance or unauthorised attendance. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Definitions:

Authorised Absences are morning or afternoons away from school for a good reason, such as illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised Absences are those that the staff at the Gryphon School do not consider reasonable, or for which no 'leave' has been given. These are offences on the part of the parent and include:

- Keeping children off school without a good reason
- Truancy from a whole session
- Absences that have never been properly explained
- Children arriving at school too late to get a mark

- Taking holidays without the school's agreement during school term.
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Policy Aims:

- To improve the overall percentage of pupils at school, thereby improving attainment of individuals and the performance of the school as a whole.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, teaching staff, non-teaching staff and school governors.
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils.
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- To maintain a system of rewards and sanctions that promotes excellent attendance.
- To promote effective partnerships with the DCC and with other services and agencies.
- To promote the development of a SAST Attendance Policy.
- To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Roles and Responsibilities

Students

- Attend school on time and properly prepared for the school day.
- When unavoidably late for school sign in before joining lessons.
- Do not leave school or miss lessons without school staff authority.
- Students who miss work due to absence are expected to make up that work lost.

Parents and Carers

- Promote good attendance; recognise that missing school means "missing out"
- Parents and Carers are expected to contact the school on each day of absence.
- Parents are expected to engage with school staff to resolve any problems together.
- Acknowledge, and respond to, all communication from school concerning attendance.
- Do not take holidays during school term.
- If medical appointments must take place in school time try to arrange them for after 2:30pm.

Senior Leadership Team

- As part of the school improvement plan set targets for attendance.

- Ensure all students are aware of rewards and sanctions policy for good attendance and behaviour for learning.
- Ensure there is a robust system of recording attendance at roll call and in lessons.
- Ensure that the attendance rate is noted on every student profile / report that is sent home.
- Ensure that attendance is promoted with parents via an attendance booklet, regular items in newsletters, using presentations at parent's evenings and parents events.
- Ensure that the importance of good attendance and its link to attainment is promoted to all staff via INSET and regular reminders on bulletins and at briefings.
- Ensure that all stakeholders are involved in the review of the attendance policy and practice.
- Where appropriate Chair Attendance Panel Planning Meetings for persistent absentees and ensure effective action, including legal proceedings if necessary is taken.
- Obtain attendance data from partner primary schools on transition.
- Ensure that the Dorset CC protocol for Children Missing in Education is followed.

Heads of Year

- Ensure students receive rewards for good or improved attendance.
- Use assemblies to promote good attendance.
- Use data to identify students with less than 92% attendance and take action with those students to improve attendance (see procedures below).
- Promote academic mentoring for all students ensuring attendance is a key focus.
- When students have experienced prolonged absence provide a supportive reintegration package.
- Attend Attendance Panel Planning Meetings for persistent absentees as appropriate
- Ensure that the Dorset CC protocol for Children Missing in Education is followed.

Student Support Managers

- Receive notes from tutors and amend Progresso records as necessary.
- Make first day absence calls and follow up if absence persists without explanation.
- Liaise with HOY weekly and with the Assistant Head Teacher fortnightly supplying information on those students whose attendance is less than 92%.
- Produce permission slips for students leaving school site.
- Produce hard copies, or PDFs, of traditional am/pm registers every two weeks for tutors to enable them to pick up patterns of absence.
- Produce half termly good attendance/improved attendance certificates for distribution by HOY.
- Work closely with Attendance Officer.

Tutors

- Promote good attendance.
- Accurately take registers (morning and afternoon) according to DfE Policy mindful that they are a legal document.
- Collect absence notes and pass to SSM the same day.
- Talk to tutees, picking up on patterns of absence, supporting students.
- Boost student self-esteem.
- Refer students of concern to Head of Year for further support as necessary
- Implementing sanction letters, follow up phone calls and reports for lateness.

Teachers

- Register every lesson accurately mindful that they are legal documents.
- Promote good attendance and ensure that students who miss lessons are expected to make up work that is missed.
- Notify the Senior Leadership Team if students are missing lessons who have been in school.

Attendance Officer

- Promote good attendance.
- Contact difficult/abusive parents as necessary to support the SSM.
- Follow up all absences of assigned students with parents, visiting home as necessary.
- Process requests for absence/holiday forms.
- Ensure Year Teams are informed of issues surrounding their students.
- Attend Attendance Panel Planning Meetings for persistent absentees as appropriate.
- Produce attendance percentage reports for whole school by tutor group for Assistant Head Teacher.
- Produce a termly analysis of attendance by absence code for Assistant Head Teacher.
- Boost student self-esteem.
- Meet with representatives from DCC on a monthly basis.
- Ensure that students with lunch passes are back on site promptly after lunchtime and prevent others from leaving the site.
- Work closely with Student Support Managers.
- Following meeting with Assistant Head Teacher generate attendance follow up letters
- Liaise with Assistant Head fortnightly.
- Ensure that children who may be seen as “child missing from education” are followed up as a matter of urgency and reported to DCC using the protocol.

School Governors

- Receive and consider regular reports on attendance.
- Agree attendance policy and ensure it is reviewed annually.

Procedures

The Gryphon School has a special responsibility to reduce the number of children whose attendance is below 85% over the school year. These are called 'persistent absentees' by the Government, whatever the reason for their absence. Special procedures may be applied to children at risk of falling into this category.

The Gryphon School applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absence patterns.

- Students with attendance below 92% that is not due to an on-going medical condition – LSM sends Letter 1, tutor follows up with a phone call.
- If no improvement in attendance eg attendance drops to 90% Attendance Officer sends Letter 2 home with appointment to see parents/carers.
- If no improvement in attendance eg attendance drops to 85% Attendance Officer sends letter 3 home with appointment for parents/carers to attend an Attendance Panel. Parenting contract agreed, Attendance Officer assigned to family, parents/carers informed of likelihood of penalty notice and legal action. This is confirmed by Attendance Officer in Letter 4.
- All further absences counted as unauthorised.
- Request for Fixed Penalty Warning Notice issued after 10 missed school sessions to DCC.
- Consider request for Fixed Penalty Notice when holiday is taken in term time without permission from The Gryphon School.

If a student is absent from school and no information is provided by parents / carers the school follows the Dorset County Council procedures for reporting a child missing from education.