

Policy and Procedure on Attendance

Grateley House School

Principal	Eva Pereira
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Ratified By	Jarlath O'Brien
Policy Level	Education
Staff Groups Affected	All Staff

Contents

1. Monitoring and Review	1
2. Terminology	2
3. Definitions	3
Authorised absence.....	3
Unauthorised absence	3
4. Legislation	3
5. Applies to:	4
6. Availability:.....	4
7. Introduction	4
The Role of the Parents/Guardians/ Carers.....	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Our Responsibilities	5
The Admission Register	5
Attendance Register	5
Failure to Attend School	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Absence	6
Requests for leave of absence	7
Long-term Absence	7
Repeated Unauthorised Absences	7
8. Standard Forms, Relevant Documents, Letters & References.....	11
9. Appendix I – School Attendance Register Codes	11

1. Monitoring and Review

- 1.1. The Proprietor will undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than three years from the date of approval shown above,

or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

- 1.2. The local content of this document will be subject to continuous monitoring, refinement and audit by the Head of Service.

Signed:



Eva Pereira
Principal
July 2023



Andrew Sutherland
Operations Director - Education Services, CareTech Group
July 2023

2. Terminology

- 2.1. Our aim is to use consistent terminology throughout this policy and all supporting documentation as follows:

'Establishment' or 'Location'	This is a generic term which means the Children's Home/school/college. Grateley House School is a school.
Individual	means any child or young person under the age of 18 or young adult between the ages of 18 and 25. Grateley House School we have children attending and/or residing between the ages of 11 - 19
Service Head	This is the senior person with overall responsibility for the Grateley House School. At Grateley House School this is the Principal, Eva Pereira.
Key Worker	Members of staff that have special responsibility for Individuals residing at or attending the Establishment.
Parent, Carer, Guardian	means parent or person with Parental Responsibility
Regulatory Authority	Regulatory Authority is the generic term used in this policy to describe the independent regulatory body responsible for inspecting and regulating services. At Grateley House School this is OFSTED.
Social Worker	This means the worker allocated to the child/family. If there is no allocated worker, the Duty Social Worker or Team Manager is responsible.
Placing Authority	Placing Authority means the local authority/agency responsible for placing the child or commissioning the service
Staff	Means full or part-time employees of Cambian, agency workers, bank workers, contract workers and volunteers.

3. Definitions

Authorised absence

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

Unauthorised absence

- 3.4. An absence is classified as unauthorised when an Individual is away from our Location without the permission of both the Location and a parent.
- 3.5. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if an Individual is away from Location without good reason, even with the support of a parent. The Location keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of five years.

4. Legislation

- 4.1. Complies with Part 3, paragraph 17 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations.
- 4.2. This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) August 2020 including Covid-19 updates , 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:

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2011

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

The Education (Student Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

Department for Education, Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities 2016

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

5. Applies to:

- 5.1. the whole Location inclusive of activities outside of the normal Location hours;
- 5.2. all staff (teaching and support staff), the proprietor and volunteers working in the Location.

6. Availability:

- 6.1. This policy is made available to parents/guardians, carers, staff and Individuals from the Location office.

7. Introduction

- 7.1. We expect all Individuals on roll to attend every day, when the Location is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
- 7.2. We do all we can to encourage the Individuals 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 Location a happy and rewarding experience for all Individuals.
- 7.3. The Proprietors are responsible for making sure the Location keeps Admission and Attendance registers in accordance with the regulatory requirements. For all day Students of compulsory school age our attendance register records which Students 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. The Proprietors also ensure that a compliant admissions register is also kept.
- 7.4. The school or college calendar and dates when the location is open can be accessed from the home page of our website Alternatively, our term dates and Calendar of Events can be obtained from Grateley House School. Emergency closures for such things as extreme weather will also be published on the home page of our website and communicated via email.

8. Policy Aims

- 8.1. Grateley House School's attendance policy aims to meet its obligations with regard to school attendance by:
 - Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
 - Implementing the children missing form education protocol where necessary
 - Ensuring every Student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
 - Acting early to address patterns of absence
 - Provide accurate and prompt information on attendance to relevant stakeholders as required
 - Ensure effective and supportive interventions take place to enable Students to maintain good attendance/return to lessons
 - We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

9. Admissions & Attendance Registers

Our Responsibilities

- 9.1. We are required to maintain two registers:
- An admission Register.
 - An attendance Register.

The Admission Register

- 9.2. This gives particular information about Individuals who are currently registered as attending this location. For the purposes of day to day management, the admission register will be contained on the school's administration system, although selected information will be printed and placed in key location in the school admin office, to facilitate ease of access of information. The register will comprise information that is compliant with regulations set out in the education (Student registration) (England) regulations 2006, which have superseded the regulations of 1995 and the amendments of www.opsi.gov.uk. For each Student, the admission register will contain:
- Name in full
 - Sex
 - Name and address of every person known to the Governor to be a parent of the Student (and an indication of the parent with whom the Student normally resides)
 - At least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency
 - Day, month and year of birth
 - Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the school
 - Name and address of the school last attended, if any
 - An indication of boarding/care order or day attendance (external placements)

Attendance Register

- 9.3. We are required to ensure that the attendance register for all Individuals on the Register is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Each Individual must be marked on the register in one of the following categories:
- **Present**
 - **Engaged** in an approved educational activity away from the school site (approved by the Principal and supervised by a person approved by the Principal, including sporting activities, educational visits or residential trips)
 - **Absent / Unplanned Absence**
 - Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the school site or part of it)
 - Taking **authorised absence** (granted leave of absence by the Principal or a person acting on their behalf, unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause, observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs)
 - Taking **unauthorised absence** (if no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later when the reason is established).

10. School Attendance Procedures

- 10.1. Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for a Student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification of absence (e.g. illness). All other absences are treated as unauthorised. Authorised absences include: medical or dental appointments, days of religious observance, visit's to future schools, suspension and family bereavement. All

requests for absence must be made in writing to the Principal, giving the school plenty of time to consider the request and will be treated on an individual basis at the Principal's discretion.

Absence / Unplanned Absence

10.2. If an Individual is absent

- The school will record the absence in the register and will inform the school office.
- Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence, by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible. Parents must notify the school by contacting the main reception via telephone or email Laura Anderson, Administrator at laura.anderson@cambiagroup.com.
- Parents are also encouraged to include their child's tutor in any email correspondence.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of an Individual, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. Laura Anderson of Grateley House School will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the Individual.
- Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.
- If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, Grateley House School may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

Medical or dental appointments

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. However, we do encourage parents and carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the Student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Parents and carers can notify the school via the main reception via telephone or email, in addition to this parents and carers can communicate the appointment with the tutor team, who must then notify our lead administrator.
- Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in the ' Authorised and Unauthorised Absence' section.

Lateness and punctuality

- A Student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code. (*See Attendance register for specific Student's lateness*). Students are expected to arrive in school by 9:00 on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9:30 and will be kept open until 10:00.
- The rationale for this final timing is based on the journey times and traffic for Students travelling a greater distance by transport. *Specific Students will not receive a late mark for arriving after 9:30am*. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:45 and will be kept open until 14:15. A Student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code. Grateley House School will aim to support parents and carers to develop a plan if there are persistent punctuality issues, this will involve the tutor teams initially with guidance from DSL and SLT. Each plan can be bespoke for the individual.

Following up absence

- 10.3. The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.
- 10.4. At Grateley House School, our data manager, behaviour lead and administrators work closely to monitor each case of unauthorised absence, information comes to the DSL on the day and an administrator will contact parents and carers. If persistent, the DSL will make phone calls to assess and this could lead to potential home visits. Each case

is treated on its own merit. At Grateley House School we will adhere to the protocol for children missing from education as per Department for Education, Children Missing Education: Statutory Guidance (2016).

Reporting to parents

- 10.5. At Grateley House School attendance data is communicated with parents and carers via reports twice per academic year, in addition to annual review meetings and any other meeting such as safeguarding meeting etc.
- 10.6. However, Parents and carers can request attendance data at any time by contacting the lead administrator or Tutor. Tutor teams make weekly phone calls home to parents and carers, any points of punctuality and attendance can also be discussed during these calls.

Requests for leave of absence

- 10.7. We believe that Individuals need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for an Individual to attend a specific event.

Long-term Absence

- 10.8. When Individuals have an illness that means they will be away from our 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. Any ongoing absences, 'lates' or unauthorised absences for holidays are followed up as quickly as possible.

Repeated Unauthorised Absences

- 10.9. The school will contact the parent of any Individual who has an unauthorised absence. If an Individual has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

11. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Granting Approval for Long-Term Absence

- 11.1. The Principal will not grant a leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. Exceptional circumstances may include:
- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
 - Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
 - The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Principal is satisfied that the circumstance is truly exceptional.
 - Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sports operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this events will be required.
 - Religious observance reason. The Education Act 1996 S444(3)(c) states 'on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs.'

Authorised Absence

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

- 11.3.** A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion. Valid reasons for an authorised absence include:
- Illness and medical/dental appointments, including a student's mental health
 - Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the Student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
 - Traveller Students 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 Student is attending educational provision
- 11.4.** Circumstances that are not considered 'exceptional' include:
- Holidays during term time, due to lower cost / parental work commitments
 - Travelling abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative (except where that person is seriously ill). Medical evidence may be requested.
 - Parental work commitments
 - A student not wanting to be in school

Study Leave

- 11.5.** Study leave is not granted by the school by default. However, it can be granted, for students in Year 11 and Post 16 at the discretion of the Principal and in agreement with the local authority and parents. All parties must be in agreement that the decision for study leave is in the best interest of the student, and considers the requirements outlined in the EHCP and other possible vulnerabilities and safeguarding arrangements. Provision will still be made for students who want to study and revise in school.

Flexi-schooling

- 11.6.** The Principal may agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents formally request this on medical grounds on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week.
- 11.7.** These arrangements will not be suggested by the school.
- 11.8.** The Principal will consider any such requests from parents very carefully before agreeing to them and are advised to draw up a written agreement with the parent and the local authority. Where agreement has been reached, Students will be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C).

12. Legal Sanctions

- 12.1.** Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests

with the Principal, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 student 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

13. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- 13.1. At Grateley House School we want to create an ethos around the importance of having an excellent attendance record. We recognise and celebrate attendance half termly by giving awards to students in specific attendance brackets. Examples of awards are reward visits, certificates and parental contact.
- 13.2. Students with poor attendance will be supported on an attendance plan to promote the improvement of their attendance. This will be monitored through the child's form tutor, the Head of Education and the Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- 13.3. We work closely with parents and carers to support consistently high attendance, looking to support our Students and their needs to maintain attendance. Tutor teams make weekly contact to discuss the week and address any concerns arising. The SLT and Designated Safeguarding Lead are informed of support required and make decisions on a case by case basis to support Students in moving forward.

14. Attendance Monitoring

- 14.1. At Grateley House School, the Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead and administrators monitor student absence on a daily basis.
- 14.2. Parents are expected to call the school before 9:00am on the morning of every day their child is going to be absent (see unplanned absence section). If a parent does not contact the school, a member of the school staff will contact the parents to ascertain the reasons why their child is absent and remind parents of their duty to inform the school.
- 14.3. On the third day of absence the school will attempt to conduct a well-being call or visit. The aim of which is to visually see the student to ensure they are safe and well, in line with safeguarding recommendations outlined by the DfE. A well-being visit can be done through various means, including a welfare phone call, a virtual discussion via an online platform or a home visit.
- 14.4. If a child is on a Child Protection Plan, the school will attempt to undertake a well-being call or visit on the first day of absence. If a child is a Child in Need, the school will attempt to undertake a well-being visit on the second day of absence.
- 14.5. If after contacting parents a Student's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the Safeguarding team at the school.
- 14.6. Grateley House School defines the persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a Student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee. Students will be placed on an attendance plan and this will be supported by all staff at school.
- 14.7. Student-level absence data is 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. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with Regional Leads. Grateley House School collects our data on a hard and electronic copy this enables reporting to be undertaken.

Specific Students or key groups are able to be tracked and plans can then be put in place to support specific Students and then evaluated after a set period of time.

15. Roles of Responsibilities

The Regional Leads, in their capacity as school governors

- 15.1. The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

Principal

- 15.2. The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the Regional Leads. The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual Students and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead & Administrator (responsible for attendance)

- 15.3. In their capacity of monitoring attendance, the Head of Education, Behaviour Lead and Designated Safeguarding Lead will:
- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual Student level
 - Report concerns about attendance to the Principal
 - Work closely with colleagues to create and implement attendance plans that are shared with parents and effective in improving attendance.
 - Work with the Head of Education and the Head of Care to tackle persistent absence
 - Arrange home visits, calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
 - Advise the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices
 - Work closely with external agencies to support attendance improvement

Administrative staff

- 15.4. Administrative staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- 15.5. Administrative staff will oversee the recording and use of correct codes on the school system.

Parents and Carers

- 15.6. Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school.

15.7. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

16. Standard Forms, Relevant Documents, Letters & References

16.1. Equality and Diversity Policy

16.2. Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)

16.3. Admissions Policy

16.4. Inclusion Policy

16.5. [School Attendance Guidance - for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#)

17. Appendix I – School Attendance Register Codes

CODE	MEANING
/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
B	Off-site educational activity(education is supervised and safeguarded)
P	Participating in supervised sporting activity
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
	AUTHORISED ABSENCES
C	Leave of absence authorised by school
E	Excluded
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness
M	Medical/Dental appointments
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
	UNAUTHORISED
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed)
N	Reason for absence not yet provided
O	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
	ADMINISTRATIVE
X	Not required to be in school
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Student not on roll
#	Planned school closure – induction days; half-terms; bank holidays; non-educational days etc)