

Attendance Policy

This School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

This school is committed to helping all pupils attend school continuously and successfully in order for them to achieve the best possible outcomes.

I don't care how you get here, just get here if you can - Oletta Adams

Date Created	Date 1st Review Due	Date Reviewed	Version	Next Review Due
March 16	March 17	October 16	2	October 17
		October 17	3	October 18
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Introduction

We, at The Green Room, understand the issues which stop pupils feeling they can attend school; and when they come to our school we put in place a raft of support, including cultural, practical and therapeutic measures to help every pupil attend continuously and successfully, and to help their parents/carers to support them appropriately.

Each pupil is assisted in accordance with their needs to facilitate their transition from their previous education to The Green Room School, and all our staff work together with the pupils to achieve their goals. We consistently offer encouragement and support throughout the pupil's time at The Green Room, and if attendance drops for some reason after transitioning to The Green Room, we aim to eliminate all barriers stopping a pupil attending school and provide a tailored plan to get the pupil back on track.

Like, all schools, there are rules and procedures imposed on us by law which we have to comply with. These are explained below. Additionally, if our approach does not work with a pupil we are obliged to carry out our 5 step sanction programme which is also explained below and in the attached flowchart.

Our aim is to be pro-active as oppose to reactive with regards to attendance. If we see attendance issues arising we will do our best to keep them on track. Similarly if at home there are any hints of future attendance being a problem, it is essential to keep us informed. Our first option is communication.

Why is Attendance Important?

Regular attendance at school is about far more than just turning up everyday 'because I have to'. Attending school regularly enables a pupil to develop many attributes. Only through regular and consistent attendance can a pupil hope to realise their own innate abilities and interests. Only through regular and consistent attendance can a pupil hope to discover what is unique about themselves and to be able to focus on that in a supportive and caring environment. Only through regular and consistent attendance can a pupil develop a truly inquisitive nature, gain access to previously un-encountered and unimagined ideas and receive the information necessary to absorb and retain as wide ranging and as relevant a knowledge-base as is possible. Only through regular attendance can a pupil hope to build character, to find themselves inspired, to learn how to be kind, brave and honest but above all else be happy. In short, regular attendance is about far more than turning up 'because I have to' - it's about finding the purpose and drive to achieve and better ones self every single day.

Ultimately, regular attendance will enable a pupil to gain what is required in order to confidently take the next step in life. 'What is required' may be the grades necessary to move on to a chosen college course, apprenticeship or employment but it also means the relationship building skills and respect for routine and responsibility which is undeniably needed for success in a life beyond school.

Any absence affects the pattern of a pupil's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect development. Pupils can only benefit from and make the most of their educational journey if they attend school regularly and on time. The Green Room goal is 100% attendance.

90% attendance, for instance, may sound acceptable, however it is not and would mean that a pupil misses:

- One half day, per week.
- Four weeks per school year.
- One whole school year in a school career.

Our Registration Process

Morning Session Registration:

- All lower school pupils are to arrive on the school site by 9:45am.
- All pupils are to ensure that they attend Circle Time at 9:55am in order to be registered.
- Pupils arriving after this time should follow the procedures as in the 'Lateness' section.
- All pupil are registered for a second time at 12:55 (Afternoon registration).

Pupils are in the duty of care of The Green Room between the hours of 9:30am - 2:45pm. If a pupil gets a Council-funded taxi to school, then that taxi is considered an extension of school and thus duty of care does not end until the taxi journey arrives at its predetermined destination. If a pupil refuses a taxi, changes the taxis destination themselves or cancels a taxi themselves, it will be viewed as absconding and the appropriate sanction will be applied.

If a taxi is to be rearranged/cancelled for a particular reason, it needs to be done at least 1 day in advance. Parents/guardians can alter taxis personally and subsequently inform The Green Room or parents/guardians can request that The Green Room alters a taxi on their behalf. Pupils may never alter taxis.

Lateness

Pupils are late if they arrive at school after 9:55am. Pupils will be marked as late unless there is an unavoidable reason for them not being at Circle Time. Pupils arriving at school after the morning registration must sign-in at the school office, giving the time of their arrival and the reason for their lateness.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence will be granted at the discretion of The Green Room School's senior management team.

The school must be informed on the first day of absence, preferably by telephone call to the Green Room office or mobile or before 9:00am, even though the absence may continue.

Absences that may be Authorised:

- Illness
- Emergency situation of a family member e.g. sudden illness
- Transport problems
- Emergency dental/doctor's appointments

If a pupil is present but needs to leave school during the day, for an authorised reason, it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to inform the school office at least 1 day in advance of the reason for the pupil needing to leave as well as the time at which the pupil will need to leave. This process relieves the Green Room School of their duty of care towards the child for that particular day. If this process is not followed, the Green Room School will still consider that pupil under its duty of care, and thus the pupil will be considered to be absconding.

Unauthorised Absence

'Unauthorised absence' is where The Green Room School has not given approval in advance or has not accepted an explanation offered afterwards.

The Green Room School will treat the following absences as unauthorised:

- Holidays
- Part-time work
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Routine check-ups at dentist/doctor
- Exclusion from a lesson or school
- Persistent lateness
- Visiting relatives within term time
- Unofficial study leave to prepare for public examinations
- Sitting public examinations for which the school has not prepared the pupil, or which the school has not supported

Every half-day (equivalent to one session) absence from school has to be classified as either 'Authorised' or 'Unauthorised'. This is why the cause of any absence is always required from a parent/carer.

By not authorising an absence, The Green Room School is stating that either a reason has not been provided, or the reason provided is not acceptable.

Persistent Absence

A pupil is deemed to be a persistent absentee when they miss 80% or more of their potential attendance across a half term of school. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to a pupil's potential for development. All absence is monitored and parents/carers will be notified if their son or daughter is identified as being at risk of becoming a persistent absentee.

Rewards

The Green Room School rewards 100% attendance on a weekly, termly and annual basis. As with all our behaviour policies, a positive approach to good attendance is more vital than sanctioning poor attendance.

Sanctions

If attendance does become a problem, we will pursue the following steps. Please read the process below. You may also find the attached flowchart useful.

STEP 1: If it becomes clear absence is an issue The Green Room School's Senior Management team will conduct an informal meeting with the identified pupil. The purpose of which will be to determine the reasons for absence and to agree a tailored bespoke plan to support the pupil returning to school. This plan will include an agreed timescale for significant improvement.

STEP 2: If attendance does not improve significantly within the timescale agreed with the pupil in Step 1, The Green Room School will request and conduct a meeting with the Parents/Carers of the identified pupil. The purpose of which will be to improve communication between the school and home regarding absence. Reasons for absence and measures for improving it will also be discussed, and a tailored bespoke plan of support for the pupil will be agreed between all parties. This plan will include an agreed timescale for significant improvement.

STEP 3: If attendance does not improve significantly a Pupil Contract will be formalised with the pupil. This contract will include an agreed timescale for significant improvement.

STEP 4: If attendance still does not improve significantly a Parenting Contract will be formalised with the relevant parent/carer. A parenting contract is a formal written signed agreement between parents and either the local authority or the governing body of a school and should contain:

- A statement by the parents that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract.
- A statement by the local authority or governing body agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.

The parent contract will include an agreed timescale for significant improvement.

STEP 5: In the result of attendance not improving after all the above measures have been exhausted, the Senior Management team at The Green Room School will discuss the following two options:

- A managed move from The Green Room School to another educational facility.
- The issue of a Local Authority supported Penalty Notice, which is followed by a fine (please refer to The Law section with regard to Penalty Notices and Fines)

The Law

The law requires all schools, including Independent Schools like The Green Room to have an admission register (which details which pupils are on the school roll) and attendance register (which details pupils' daily attendance at the school). All pupils (regardless of their age) must be placed on both registers.

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 it is agreed that the pupil will attend the school. For most pupils the expected first day of attendance is the first day of the school year, however, with the nature of admissions at The Green Room School, this may not always be the case.

Preservation of the Admission Register and Attendance Register

Every entry in the admission register and attendance register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils at Risk of Missing Education

All schools must inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- Have been taken out of the school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education.
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered.
- Have a medical condition certified by the school that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school.
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period.
- Have been permanently excluded.

The local authority should be notified in advance of the deletion, when the school becomes aware that the deletion will be made.

All schools must agree to inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

The Education (Penalty Notices) Regulations 2007 set out the details of how the penalty notice scheme must operate.

Section 444, Subsections 1-8 of The Education Act [1996] states that:

[1] If a child fails to attend school regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence.

[1A] If a parent knows that the child is failing to attend regularly, and fails without reasonable justification to cause them to do so, they are guilty of an offence.

[3] The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school by reason of their absence from the school -

(a) with leave.

(b) at any time when they were prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.

(c) on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parents belong.

[4][5] The child shall not be taken to have failed to attend regularly at the school if the parent proves -

(a) that the school is not within walking distance (4.828032km or 3 miles) of the child's home.

(b) that no suitable arrangements have been made by the local education authority for their transport to and from school.

[8] A person guilty of an offence under Subsection [1] is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding level 3 [£1,000] on the standard scale.

[8A] A person guilty of an offence under Subsection [1A] is liable on conviction -

(a) to a fine not exceeding level 4 [£2,500] on the standard scale, or

(b) to imprisonment for a term not exceeding three months

(c) or both.

Parents can be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Local Authority for their child's non-attendance. The penalty is £60 and this rises to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Each Local Authority should publish a 'Code of Conduct' for Fixed Penalty Notices.

<http://www.stmarys-maidenhead.org.uk/uploads/Home/Parent%20Information/Advice%20to%20Parents%20&%20Carers%20re%20penalty%20notice%20from%20EWS.pdf>

The School's headteacher decides if they wish to fine unauthorised absences from school by issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. The headteacher then requests by a referral to the Local Authority to issue a fixed Penalty Notice on his or her behalf.

There is no right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice. If this is not paid, the Local Authority can proceed to prosecution or withdraw the notice. The Local Authority can also prosecute parents for non-attendance without issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice. Only the Local Authority can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs. Local authorities must conduct its investigations in line with the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE).

If a registered pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly, the parent could be guilty of an offence under section 444 Education Act 1996. In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school "regularly" means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not "sufficiently frequent attendance". This means that a child must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so and failure to

do this may lead to the commission of an offence.

There are 2 offences:

1. Section 444(1) Education Act 1996 – If the child is absent without authorisation then the parent is guilty of an offence. This is a strict liability offence i.e. all that needs to be shown is a lack of regular attendance. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.
2. Section 444(1A) Education Act 1996 – an aggravated offence. If the child is absent without authorisation and the parent knew about the child's absence and failed to act then the parent is guilty of an offence. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £2,500 and a prison sentence of up to 3 months.

There are some limited defences to these offences:

- The head teacher authorised the absence.
- The child could not attend because of sickness or 'unavoidable cause' in an emergency. Case law has held that stress arising from bullying, behavioural or mental health difficulties or a 'chaotic lifestyle' should not be considered an 'unavoidable cause'.
- The child was absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance.
- The school is outside of the statutory walking distance of the child's home and the Local Authority has a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child under and has failed to discharge that duty
- The child is not registered at the school and the parents are providing a suitable alternative education.
- The parents' trade or business requires them to travel from place to place.

Parents can also be prosecuted by Local Authorities under section 103 Education and Inspections Act 2006, where a pupil of compulsory school age who remains on the Admissions Register is found in a public place during school hours, after being excluded from school. Sanctions can include a fine of up to £1,000.

childlawadvice.org.uk

Relevant Legislation (as at 25/1/19)

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 Act 2002
The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
The Education and Inspections Act 2006

This policy is approved by the Head of The Green Room School

Date_____

Head of School_____

The Green Room School Sanctions within Attendance Policy

