

## Attendance Policy

<b>Date last reviewed</b>	October 2025
<b>Committee Responsible</b>	SBS
<b>Designated member of staff</b>	DWE
<b>Date of next review:</b>	October 2026

### STATEMENT OF INTENT

In order to promote and support our students' learning and enable each one of them to achieve their full potential, we encourage the students to achieve excellence in all aspects of their work and behaviour. Our organisation of their learning promotes enjoyment, perseverance and self-discipline.

Each student is entitled to the high quality education offered at this school and consistent attendance is an essential part of this process. We expect that students' attendance and punctuality should be as close to 100% as possible. We hope that all parents will recognise the value of attendance and punctuality, not only to take full advantage of the opportunities offered at Grey Court but also as training for adult life.

As referenced in the August 2024 Statutory Guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance': *the law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full time education...it is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education*'. As a school, we have a duty to ensure that this is the case, and to uphold that statutory guidance.

### Key Objectives

- Ensure that the school promotes and maintains high levels of attendance for all our students
- Provide clear procedures for recording and monitoring attendance
- Provide clear procedures for following up authorised and unauthorised absence
- Provide clear procedures for following up repeated lateness
- Support students returning to school after a period of absence
- Satisfy legal requirements for reporting absence

### Promoting High Levels of Attendance

The school promotes and maintains high levels of attendance by communicating its expectations clearly to all members of the school community through:

- An attendance officer, phase leaders and school based Family Support Worker

- Emails home and the weekly bulletin
- Teachers discussing the importance of good attendance with the students
- The promotion of regular attendance and punctuality in assemblies
- Having a system of appropriate rewards for groups and individuals who have consistently high levels of attendance and improved attendance
- The deployment of a dedicated Attendance Officer
- Running 'In Touch absence alert'
- 'In Touch late alert' notification

## **PROCEDURES FOR RECORDING AND MONITORING ATTENDANCE**

### **Completing the Register**

Each form tutor is responsible for completing the register for their class. It is a legal requirement to complete the register at the beginning of each school session morning and afternoon. At the start of each school year, staff are reminded of the procedures for completing the register.

The school day starts at 8.25am. Registers are completed by 8.45am on SIMS or Edulink One. If a hard copy has had to be used this must be returned to the Attendance Office immediately. If a student arrives at school after 8.25am, they will be marked as late, either by SLT on 'Late Gate Duty' or at the attendance office. They must hand their phone in, as per the behaviour policy, and will receive a PM detention if the lateness is not authorised.

### **Monitoring Attendance**

Phase leaders, Student Support Officers and our school based Family Support Worker monitor the attendance of students supported by the Attendance Officer. When a student is absent and no notification is received from the parents, a truancy alert is sent out that morning. If parents and carers fail to make contact after two days, the attendance officer will attempt to make direct contact by phone or email with the parents to ascertain the reason for absence. If contact is still not established then the matter should be referred to the Pastoral Safeguarding Officer (PSO) and the Phase Leader, as well as the Family Support Worker who will try to establish contact with the parents. Failing this, appropriate action will be discussed with the school based Family Support Worker and the appropriate Pastoral Team members, whereby a decision will be made regarding what action is needed regarding the absence and which staff will be involved. Phase Leaders, the Family Support worker, the Attendance Officer and Pastoral Safeguarding Officers will monitor overall patterns of attendance and will report to both the SLT members who oversee these year groups and the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Attendance.

## **PROCEDURES FOR AUTHORISED & UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

Schools are required by the Education (Student Registration) Regulations 1995 to distinguish in the attendance register between authorised and unauthorised absences for all students of compulsory school age.

### **Authorised**

Reasons for authorising absences (the following is not an exhaustive list):

- sickness or some unavoidable cause
- the student was absent with leave granted by the school
- because of attendance at another registered school (e.g. dual registration), college or work placement

### **Leave of Absence**

Students may be granted leave of absence by the school for the following reasons (the following is not an exhaustive list):

- following the death of a close member of the child's family
- attendance at an offsite unit or educational establishment
- when attending medical or dental appointments (upon receipt of an appointment letter) - whole days will not be authorised for appointments, depending on the time of the appointment
- the student is taking part in approved work experience
- the student is excluded
- the student is on study leave

The school endorses the national advice given to be sparing in granting leave of absence. Parents are requested to avoid making medical appointments during school hours whenever possible. We do not allow leave for family holidays in term time. If there is a written application to the Headteacher to go away for exceptional circumstances the Headteacher would consider this. Request for absence in term time is normally declined and may be followed up with a fixed penalty notice, in line with Government expectations.

### Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is defined as unjustified absence from school for any period as a result of a premeditated or spontaneous act by the student or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence. The school regards absence as unauthorised until such time as an acceptable reason is provided and the school is able to authorise the absence. Absence is not authorised for students whose current attendance is less than 90%. Examples of unauthorised absences include:

- shopping or trips out
- sickness of family members
- looking after younger children
- apathy of parents or inability to control the child
- indulgence of a child's wish to stay at home
- lateness after the register has closed
- special occasions such as birthdays
- taking a half day off before or after a medical appointment or interview
- absence from a work experience placement without an authorised reason
- staying at home to complete coursework assignments
- going on holiday
- Low level/ generalised mental health concerns e.g. anxiety
- SEN needs

On receipt of the parent's explanation of the reason for their child's absence, the attendance and pastoral team will determine whether it is classified as authorised or unauthorised according to the above criteria. Failure to explain the reason for an absence, or failure to provide the evidence asked for by the school will result in it being categorised as unauthorised.

A small number of students may have a high authorised absence rate due to frequent illness. This needs to be monitored carefully and where necessary a home visit by the school based Family Support Worker should be considered. Where a student continues to have a high level of unauthorised absence the parents will be invited into the school to discuss the matter with the Family Support Worker and the PSO. Where there is no improvement the matter will be referred to the Family Support Worker for further work with the child, family and other agencies. If no progress is made then legal action will be considered. The school reserves the right to fine parents for extended leave during term time, which is in line with the statutory guidance given to us in 'Working

## Attendance Letters

Student attendances are monitored weekly on SIMS by the Attendance Officer, Phase Leader, the PSO and Family Support Worker. The school has a target of 96% attendance. When a student's attendance drops below 94% after the first half term Letter 1 will be sent to the parents, this highlights the concern.

The student's attendance will be monitored; if there is no improvement or as attendance drops below 90%, a Letter 2 will be sent, inviting the parents to attend a meeting with the Family Support Worker and the PSO to discuss these concerns. This letter informs parents that the school will no longer authorise further absences without evidence, unless they are due to a suspension imposed by the school or for religious observance. In addition, unavoidable medical appointments may be authorised, with medical evidence received.

The student's attendance will continue to be monitored; if the level continues to drop or goes below 85% a Letter 3 will be sent. This letter invites parents to a final meeting at school to discuss their child's attendance with an Assistant Headteacher and the Family Support Worker. If attendance continues to drop following this meeting a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service for a Legal Attendance Meeting. The outcome of this meeting can result in legal proceedings, according to the August 2024 Statutory Guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' which could be a Court Warning or Fine.

The above referenced percentages and procedures are subject to the Pastoral team and or the Attendance team's discretion, and will be viewed on a case by case basis.

## PROCEDURES FOR FOLLOWING UP REPEATED LATENESS

Form Tutors and the Attendance Officer report any persistent lateness to the Phase Leader; parents will be called into school to discuss the problem. If necessary, this may be pursued by the Family Support Worker. Detentions will be set for lateness daily. This occurs in the daily PM detention afterschool run by the Pastoral Team. Phones will be returned to students after the detention has been sat.

## Supporting Students during an Extended Period of Absence and When They Return To School Following a Period of Absence

The school will support children in the following ways:

- when a child has extended absence liaising with parents and subjects teachers to arrange for appropriate work to be accessed at home via Google Classroom.
- the Form Tutor may prepare the other children in the class for the child's return
- the Form Tutor and/or PSO inform teaching staff
- the Form Tutor and/or PSO liaises with the child's parent to ensure there are no problems

## Children Absent from Education

We recognise that full attendance at school is important to the wellbeing of all our students and enables them to access the opportunities made available to them at school. Attendance is monitored closely and we work in partnership with Achieving for Children (AfC) when patterns of absence give rise to concern.

A child absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse and neglect, including sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation of children (county lines). We will ensure, where

possible, that we have more than one emergency contact number for each pupil. This will give the school additional options to make contact with a responsible adult when a child is absent from education is also identified as a welfare and/or safeguarding concern. Our attendance policy is reviewed regularly by the Governing Body. The school operates in accordance with statutory guidance 'Children Missing Education' (DfE 2016) [Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance](#). Page 5 states: Children missing education are children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. The school also operates in accordance with statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance 2024' and Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 (note the language has changed in this document from 'children missing education' to 'children absent from education').

### **Children who run away or go missing from home or care**

Grey Court school recognises that children who run away or go missing - and are thus absent from their normal residence - are potentially vulnerable to abuse, exploitation, offending and placing themselves in situations where they may suffer physical harm. 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022' references the 'Statutory Guidance on Children who Run Away or go Missing from Home or Care' (DfE 2014) which requires that every child or young person who runs away or goes missing must be offered a return home interview (RHI) within 72 hours of their return.

When necessary and in conjunction with AfC or other relevant local authority, Grey Court School will facilitate return home interviews, both in terms of releasing the young person from their normal timetable to participate in an interview and in providing an appropriate and safe space on the school or college site for the interview to take place.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PUBLICATION OF ATTENDANCE INFORMATION**

### **Reporting to Parents**

On every written report parents receive details of their child's attendance and punctuality. This information includes the possible attendance, the number of authorised absences (and therefore by deduction the actual attendance), the number of unauthorised absences and the number of lates.

Parents and carers will also receive information regarding their child's attendance termly.

### **Reporting to Governors**

Each half term the school produces attendance and late statistics. These are shared with governors at the termly meetings.

## **ATTENDANCE LEGAL INTERVENTION**

In accordance with the statutory guidance, August 2024 Statutory Guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance': *the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.*

Fixed Penalty Notices and prosecutions are always used as a last resort. The school will consider every other avenue of support, prior to taking legal action. The school has a thorough strategic procedure it will use, including Attendance Contracts and review meetings, as well as working with the local authority to see what other interventions can be used. If no support is deemed necessary, or support would not be the appropriate course of action, e.g. a holiday in term time, a penalty notice could be issued, subject to other conditions.

According to the statutory guidance, August 2024 Statutory Guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', local authorities have the power to prosecute, if a child of compulsory age fails to attend school regularly.

## Penalty Notices

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. According to the statutory guidance, August 2024 Statutory Guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance': *Strategies for promoting attendance are to ensure fairness and consistency across the country. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).*

When the school becomes aware that the threshold has been met, the school must consider if this is the appropriate course of action. Please note that *if in an individual case the local authority believes a penalty notice would be appropriate, they retain the discretion to issue one before the threshold is met.*

The school will act in accordance with the statutory guidance, August 2024 Statutory Guidance, 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance', in addition to consultation with the local authority. More information about the legal process, and collaborative working with families to support attendance can be found in the government guidance here: [School Attendance Guidance](#).

If Grey Court school consider fining parents for unauthorised absence, the procedure is as follows:

If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £80 per child, per parent within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. All monies go to the local authority, not to Grey Court School.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may consider:

- 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 pupil 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.

## Pupils with Additional Health Needs

This section of the policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR)
- Data Protection Act 2018
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2023) 'Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs'
- DfE (2015) 'Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions'
- DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'

### Definitions

**"Children with health needs"** are children of compulsory school age who are unable to attend school as a result of their medical needs. These medical needs include:

- Physical health issues.
- Physical injuries.
- Mental health problems, including anxiety issues (recognised and diagnosed by a medical professional).
- Emotional difficulties or school refusal (recognised and diagnosed by a medical professional).
- Progressive conditions.
- Terminal illnesses.
- Chronic illnesses.

Children who are unable to attend mainstream education for health reasons may attend or participate in any of the following:

- **Hospital school** – a school within a hospital setting where education is provided to give continuity whilst the child is receiving treatment.
- **Medical tuition** – many LAs have home tuition services that act as a communication channel between schools and pupils on occasions where students are too ill to attend school and are receiving specialist medical treatment. This needs to be applied for, meet threshold and be approved.

For the purpose of this policy, **"school-based support"** in relation to supporting students with additional health needs may include:

- Day-to-day support offered at school where the student is able to attend as normal.
- Support given to students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative.
- As part of their reintegration into normal school attendance following a period of absence or part-time attendance due to health needs.

### Roles and responsibilities

The governing body will be responsible for:

- Reviewing this policy on an annual basis.
- Ensuring there is a schedule of regular updates on the arrangements made for students who cannot attend the school due to their medical needs.
- Ensuring the roles and responsibilities of those involved in any school-based arrangements to support the needs of students are clear and understood by all.

- Ensuring robust systems are in place for dealing with health emergencies and critical incidents where a student with health needs is able to, or partially able to, attend school and/or extra-curricular activities.

**The headteacher will be responsible for:**

- Working with the governing body to ensure compliance with the relevant statutory duties when supporting students with additional health needs.
- Working collaboratively with the LA, parents, and other professionals, as necessary, to develop any school-based arrangements to meet the needs of students.
- Ensuring any school-based arrangements put in place to meet students' health needs are fully understood by all those involved and acted upon.
- Appointing named members of staff who are responsible for students with additional health needs and liaises with parents, students, the LA, key workers, and others involved in the student's care.
- Ensuring any school-based support put in place focuses on and meets the needs of individual students.
- Arranging appropriate training for staff with responsibility for supporting students with additional health needs who are attending school or attend school part-time, where appropriate and necessary.
- Providing teachers who support students with additional health needs with suitable information relating to a student's health condition and the possible effect the condition and/or medication taken has on the student.

**Key members of the pastoral team will be responsible for:**

- The management of any students registered at the school who are unable to fully attend school because of their health needs.
- Actively monitoring students' progress and reintegration into school.
- Supplying any LA-arranged education providers with information about students' capabilities, progress, and outcomes.
- Liaising with the headteacher, LA-arranged education providers, and parents to help determine students' programmes of study whilst they are absent from school, where necessary.
- Providing a link between students and their parents, the school, and LA where necessary.

**Staff will be responsible for:**

- Understanding confidentiality in respect of students' health needs.
- Designing school-based activities, including lessons, in a way that allows students with additional health needs to participate fully and ensuring students are not excluded from activities that they wish to take part in without a clear evidence-based reason, as far as possible.
- Understanding their role in any school-based support for students with additional health needs and ensuring they attend the required training.
- Ensuring they are aware of the needs of their students through the appropriate and lawful sharing of individual students' health needs.
- Keeping parents informed of how their child's health needs are affecting them whilst in school-based education.

**Parents will be expected to:**

- Ensure, where school-based provision is in place, the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school where possible.
- Work in partnership with the school, LA and any LA-arranged provision to ensure the best possible outcomes for their child.
- Notify the school, or the relevant education provider, of the reason for any of their child's absences without delay.
- Provide the school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs.

- Attend meetings to discuss how any school-based support, including reintegration, for their child should be planned.

### **Managing absence**

Parents will be required to contact the school on the first day their child is unable to attend due to illness.

Absences due to illness will be authorised unless the school has genuine cause for concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school will provide support to students who are absent from school because of illness for a period of less than 15 school days, whether consecutive or cumulative, by liaising with the student directly. In some cases, the school may liaise with parents. The school will give due consideration to which aspects of the curriculum are prioritised in consultation with the student, and relevant members of staff. This will be done informally, by classroom teachers. It is the responsibility of the student and parent to seek out this support.

For periods of absence that are expected to last for 15 or more school days, either in one absence or over the course of a school year, the named members of staff with responsibility for students with additional health needs will notify relevant agencies, who may take responsibility for the student and their education. Or, they will liaise with relevant staff to facilitate access to education, where possible and appropriate.

Where absences are anticipated or known in advance, the school will liaise with the LA, or other appropriate agencies to enable education provision to be provided from the start of the student's absence, if appropriate. Alternatively, the school will liaise with parents and relevant staff members to plan appropriate education provision.

For planned hospital admissions, the appointed named member of staff will liaise with the LA (if appropriate and applicable) and the hospital education provider as early as possible to discuss the likely admission date and expected length. Plans will be made, where possible, for the educational programme to be followed while the student is in hospital.

The LA, where applicable, will set up a personal education plan (PEP) for the student which will allow the school, the LA and the provider of the student's education to work together.

The school will monitor student attendance and mark registers to ensure it is clear whether a student is, or should be, receiving education other than at school.

Staff will be alert to the fact that missing education can put students at risk of harm and may be an indicator of a safeguarding issue. Concerns will be handled in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and Children Missing from Education Policy. Staff will also be particularly alert to the potential need for early help for students with additional health needs.

The school will provide to the LA, at agreed intervals, the full name and address of any students who are not attending school regularly, including if this is due to any additional health needs.

### **Support for students**

Where a student has a complex or long-term health issue, the school will discuss the student's needs and how these may be best met with the LA (if applicable), relevant medical professionals, parents and, where appropriate, the student.

Students with continuing health needs will have an IHP which is subject to regular review and assessment. Where a student's needs amount to ongoing SEND, an EHC plan may be more appropriate to meet their

long-term needs. Where a student has an EHC plan and an IHP, both plans will be reviewed alongside each other, or the EHC will take over.

Medical evidence will be used where available to best understand a student's needs and identify the most suitable provision. Where specific medical evidence is not readily available, the school will consider liaising with other medical practitioners and other sources of evidence to ensure appropriate provision can be arranged as soon as possible. The school will make reasonable adjustments to support students' access to education.

Students admitted to hospital will receive education as determined appropriate by the medical professionals and hospital tuition team at the hospital concerned. During a period of absence, the school will work with the provider of the student's education to establish and maintain regular communication and effective outcomes.

The use of digital resources will be considered to support learning and complement face-to-face education, where appropriate. Digital resources will only be used in accordance with the student's needs. Staff will follow procedures detailed by the designated member of staff responsible for the care of the student. Where appropriate, the school will provide the student's education provider with relevant information, curriculum materials and resources. The school will strive to achieve effective collaboration between relevant services to ensure continuity of provision and consistency of curriculum.

Provision for students will support their individual needs to overcome barriers to attainment and achievement, giving equal consideration to their pastoral needs to allow them to prosper in the education system. Consideration will be given to the student's personal, social, and emotional needs to allow them to feel fully included in the school community, maintain contacts with classmates and have access to the same opportunities.

To help ensure a student with additional health needs is able to attend school following an extended period of absence, the following adaptations will be considered:

- A personalised or part-time timetable, drafted in consultation with the Assistant Headteacher responsible for attendance, or another relevant pastoral staff member
- Access to additional support in school
- Online access to material, where possible
- Movement of lessons to more accessible rooms, where possible
- Places to rest at school
- Special exam arrangements, if threshold and criteria are met

The school will ensure that students are involved in decision-making as much as possible, in accordance with the student's age and maturity, to help ensure that the right provision is offered and encourage their commitment and engagement.

The provision offered to a student will be regularly reviewed by the school to ensure it continues to be appropriate for the student's needs and that suitable education is being provided. The review process will seek input from:

- The student
- Parents/carers
- Relevant agencies and medical practitioners, where possible
- The SEND team, where the pupil has an EHC plan

## **Reintegration**

When a student is considered well enough to return to school, the school will develop a tailored reintegration plan. As far as possible, the student will be able to access the curriculum and materials that they would have used in school.

If appropriate, the school nurse will be involved in the development of the student's reintegration plan and informed of the timeline of the plan by the appointed named member of staff, to ensure they can prepare to offer any appropriate support to the student.

The school will consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made to provide suitable access to the school and the curriculum for the student.

For longer absences, the reintegration plan will be developed near to the student's likely date of return, to avoid putting unnecessary pressure on an ill student or their parents/carers in the early stages of their absence.

The school is aware that some students will need gradual reintegration over a long period of time and will always consult with the student, their parents/carers and key staff about concerns, medical issues, and timing.

The reintegration plan will include:

- The date for planned reintegration, once known.
- Details of regular meetings to discuss reintegration.
- Details of the named member of staff who has responsibility for the student.
- Clearly stated responsibilities and the rights of all those involved.
- Details of social contacts, including the involvement of peers and mentors during the transition period, if applicable.
- A programme of small goals leading up to reintegration.
- Follow-up procedures.

The school will ensure a welcoming environment is developed and encourage students and staff to be positive and proactive during the reintegration period. Following reintegration, the school will support the LA in seeking feedback from the pupil regarding the effectiveness of the process, if applicable.

## **Information sharing**

It is essential that all information about students with additional health needs is kept up to date. Relevant staff will be provided with access to appropriate information, where relevant and necessary, to ensure the smooth transition and reintegration.

When a student is discharged from hospital or is returning from another education provision, the school will ensure the appropriate information is received to allow for a smooth return to the school. The named member of staff will liaise with the hospital or other tuition service as appropriate.

## **Record keeping**

Written records will be kept of all medicines administered to students. Proper record keeping will protect both staff and students and provide evidence that agreed procedures have been followed.

## **Training**

If necessary, healthcare professionals will be involved in identifying and agreeing with the school the type and level of training required. Training will be sufficient to ensure staff are confident in their ability to support

students with additional health needs, if required. Parents of students with additional health needs may provide specific advice, if appropriate.

### **Examinations and assessments**

Staff will follow procedures set out in the Exam Access Arrangements Policy to identify and apply for access arrangements or reasonable adjustments before an exam to ensure students with additional health needs are not put at a disadvantage, where applicable and possible. The named member of staff will liaise with the alternative provision provider over planning and examination course requirements where appropriate.

Relevant assessment information will be provided to the alternative provision provider if required.

Awarding bodies may make special arrangements for students with permanent or long-term disabilities and learning difficulties, or temporary disabilities and illnesses. Applications for such arrangements will be submitted by the school, where relevant, and where the school believes the threshold would be met, in line with exam access arrangement guidance.