

Grateley House School

Attendance Policy 2025-26

Policy Reviewed By	Terry Kelly, Head of Education
Date of Review	January 2026
Date reviewed/approved by SLT	January 2026
Date of Next Review	January 2027

Introduction

We expect all students on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage students 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 school a happy and rewarding experience for all students.

The proprietors are responsible for making sure the school keeps admission and attendance registers in accordance with the regulatory requirements. For all 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.

The school calendar and dates when the school is open can be accessed from the home page of our website. Alternatively, our term dates and calendar of events can be obtained from the school office.

Emergency closures for such things as extreme weather will also be published on the home page of our website and communicated via email.

Policy Aims

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 from 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/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Admissions & Attendance Registers - Our Responsibilities

We are required to maintain two registers:

- An admission Register;
- An attendance Register.

The Admission Register

This gives particular information about students who are currently registered as attending Grateley House School. 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 be a parent/carers of the student (and an indication of the parent/carers with whom the student normally resides)
- At least one telephone number at which the parent/carers 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.

Attendance Register

We are required to ensure that the attendance register for all students on the register is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Each student 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/carers 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).

School Attendance Procedures

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 scheduled medical or dental appointments, days of religious observance, visits to future schools, suspension and family bereavement.

All requests for absence must be made in writing to the principal, giving the school sufficient time to consider the Request, i.e., at least 48 hours, and will be treated on an individual basis at the principal's discretion.

Absence/Unplanned Absence

If a student is absent:

- Parents/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence, by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible.
- Parents/carers must notify the school by contacting the main reception via telephone or email at ria.morris@cambiangroup.com
- Parents/carers are also encouraged to include their child's tutor in any email correspondence.
- The school will record the absence in the register. Where the child's tutor has been informed of the absence directly by the parents, the tutor will inform the school office.
- If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of an Individual, the class teacher/tutor should take immediate action by notifying the school office. A member of the office staff will then be in contact immediately with the parent/carer, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- 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, the school may ask parents/carers to provide medical evidence such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

Medical or dental appointments

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged outside school hours. Routine medical and dental appointments scheduled during the school day will be recorded as unauthorised absence unless they are urgent or unavoidable. However, this does not apply where attendance arrangements are agreed as part of an EHCP, medical plan or reasonable adjustment.

Parents/carers are expected to notify the school of any planned medical or dental appointment at least 48 hours in advance, wherever reasonably possible, and should provide evidence of such appointments, e.g., hospital letter, prescription, doctors note or other appropriate form of evidence. Where advance notice is not possible, e.g., urgent or emergency appointments, parents/carers should inform the school as soon as practicable on the day. This timeframe may be varied where agreed as part of an EHCP, medical plan or other reasonable adjustment.

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

School starts at 09:00 and the register closes at 09:30. Students arriving after 09:00 will be recorded as late. Students who arrive via local authority commissioned transport will not be marked late where arrival is affected by transport arrangements beyond the students control. Similarly, those students with an agreed plan that

includes a later arrival to school as a reasonable adjustment will not be marked late so long as they arrive within their agreed start window.

The register for the second session will be taken at 13:45 and will be kept open until 14.00. A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent.

We will aim to support parents/carers to develop a plan if there are persistent punctuality issues. This will involve the tutor teams initially with guidance from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) and Senior Leadership Team. Each plan will be bespoke to the individual.

Following up absence

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. We closely monitor each case of unauthorised absence. If absence or lateness is persistent, the DSL will make the relevant telephone calls to assess and this could lead to potential home visits. Each case is treated on its own merit. 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/carers

At Grateley House School, attendance data is communicated with parents/carers via reports, at least once per academic year, in addition to annual review meetings and any other meeting such as safeguarding meeting etc. However, parents/carers can request attendance data at any time by contacting the school office or their child's tutor. Tutors contact parents/carers on a weekly basis via Student Progress Logs where any concerns of punctuality and attendance will be highlighted.

Requests for leave of absence

We believe that students 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/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend a specific event.

Long-term Absence

When students have an illness that means they will be away from 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

The school will contact the parent/carer of any students who has an unauthorised absence. If a student has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Granting Approval for Long-Term Absence

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/carer 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/carer 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/carer belongs.

Authorised Absence

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

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

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/carers. 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

The principal may agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents/carers formally request this on medical grounds on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week. These arrangements will not be suggested by the school. The principal will consider any such requests from parents/carers 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 as authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C2).

Legal Sanctions

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it is an offence for a parent/carer to fail to ensure their child attends school regularly without a valid reason. Local authorities 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 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.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

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. 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 Vice Principal and the Designated Safeguarding Lead. We work closely with parents/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.

Attendance Monitoring

At Grateley House School, the principal, Vice Principal, Designated Safeguarding Lead and administrators monitor student absence on a daily basis.

Parents/carers are expected to call the school before 9:30am on the morning of every day their child is going to be absent (see unplanned absence section). If a parent/carer does not contact the school, a member of the school staff will contact the parents/carers to ascertain the reasons why their child is absent and remind them of their duty to inform the school.

On the third day of absence the school will attempt to conduct a wellbeing 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.

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.

If after contacting parents a student's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving the Safeguarding team at the school.

The DfE defines persistent absentee absence as 10% or more of possible school sessions missed in an academic year. This is the equivalent to 19 or more half day sessions out of 190 school days.

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 data in both hard and electronic copy enabling reporting to be undertaken. Specific students or key groups are able to be tracked and plans can then be put in place to support them and then evaluated after a set period of time.

Roles of Responsibilities

The Regional Leads, in their capacity as school governors

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

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)

In their capacity of monitoring attendance, the Vice Principal, 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;
- 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

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

Parents/Carers

Parents/carers 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/carers fulfil this responsibility by registering their children at a school. Parent/carers whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Standard Forms, Relevant Documents, Letters & References

Equality and Diversity Policy

Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (SENDA)

Admissions Policy

Inclusion Policy

School Attendance Guidance - for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities

Definitions

Authorised absence

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

Unauthorised absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a student is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent/carer. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a student is away from school without

good reason, even with the support of a parent/carer. The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of five years.

Legislation

Complies with Part 3, paragraph 17 of The Education (Independent School Standards Compliance Record) (England) (Amendment) Regulations. 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

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

Applies to

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

Availability

This policy is made available to parents/carers, staff and students from the school office.

Monitoring and Review

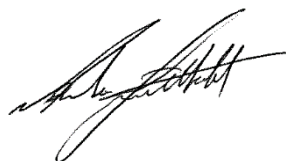
The Proprietor will undertake a formal review of this policy for the purpose of monitoring and of the efficiency with which the related duties have been discharged, by no later than three years from the date of approval shown above, or earlier if significant changes to the systems and arrangements take place, or if legislation, regulatory requirements or best practice guidelines so require.

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

Signed:



Eva Pereira



Andrew Sutherland

Principal

Jan 2026

Operations Director - Education Services, CareTech Group

Jan 2026

Appendix 1 – 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 ABSENCES	
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)