

# Grange Attendance Newsletter

## January 2024

### GRANGE ACTION 2023-24

**Reduce Absence so children achieve well and maintain healthy well being.**

#### Grange's Attendance in Numbers

I am so very pleased that pupil attendance at Grange has improved significantly compared to last year. As you will see, in the table below, general absences have fallen and rates of persistent absence (i.e. children missing more than 10% of the term) is also starting to fall.

There remains a huge concern, nationally, that school attendance is too low; children are missing too much school and their learning and wellbeing is suffering.

Please help your child to maintain regular attendance and please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any difficulty getting your child/children to school, for whatever reason. We are here to help.

	% Overall Absence	% Authorised (e.g. illness)	% Unauthorised (e.g. term holidays)	Persistent Absence
Grange Primary 23-24 (Autumn Term)	5.4	4.4	1.1	16.4%
Grange Primary 22-23	6.2	4.7	1.5	20.1%
National Average 22-23	6.3	4.8	1.5	17.7%

#### The Impact of Lateness

Children will be recorded as unauthorised absent if they arrive after the register closes in the morning so it is essential that they arrive for school on time. Gates open at 845am and children should be in class by 855am. Just being 5 minutes late each day in the year amounts to 3 days of lost learning!

Lateness can create a very unstable start to the learning day for children. Not only will they be missing essential learning but they are also missing out on the routines which get them settled at the start of the day. It can also be discomfoting to walk in to a full classroom and have everybody look at you.

Our Early Birds Breakfast Club is available to all children, free of charge. Many families find using the breakfast club helpful to avoid lateness and absences. Children are well fed and looked after by our school staff and our XtraTime sports coach provides invigorating activities on the playground or in the hall. Early Birds opens at 750am and children are taking to class for the start of the school day.

#### **When will absence be authorised? When is my child too unwell for school?**

Absence will only be automatically authorised when a child is too unwell (medically unfit) to attend school. However, too many children are missing school when they are not **too** unwell. These two sections of the most recent guidance relating to mild illness and attendance may help you make a decision about whether your child is too unwell for school:

**“It is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses. This would include general cold symptoms: a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat.**

**Worry and mild or moderate anxiety, whilst sometimes difficult emotions, can be a normal part of growing up for many children and young people. Being in school can often help alleviate the underlying issues. A prolonged period of absence is likely to heighten a child's anxiety about attending in the future, rather than reduce it.”** Professor Chris

**Whitty, Chief Medical Officer etal. Sept 2023**

# Grange Attendance 2023-24

## We are here to help.

Although parents are expected to ensure their child attends school every day the school is open and notify the school as soon as possible when their child is unexpectedly absent ([Summary Table of Responsibilities for school attendance, 2022](#)), we understand this can be challenging at times.

As I hope you have come to notice, our first step when there is a problem is to offer help to your child and your family. If you are finding it hard to maintain good attendance for your child, please always talk to us.

\* [Mrs Julie Gardiner \(Admin Officer\)](#) will usually be the person you talk to first when reporting your child's absence. Talk to her and she can advise who to talk to if you have a challenge.

\* [Your child's teacher](#) - Always your first port of call when there is a problem so you can work together to resolve the issue which is preventing your child from attending.

\* [Mrs Julie Robinson \(Family and Learning Mentor - FLM\)](#) will always provide support and advice. There are a number of ways in which Julie can help or signpost you to support services depending on your situation, there are really too many ways to list. Julie will also be the one who contacts you, either by phone call or letter/email, if we notice your child's attendance is dropping.

**We really want to help.**

## What if parents don't meet expectations or engage with support?

- Unauthorised absences are avoidable and not exceptional (as judged by the Headteacher). This includes term time absences such as: days out, holidays, regular illness without medical evidence or unjustified absences. These will likely result in a **Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)** being issued by the Local Authority. This is... £60 per child, per parent with parental responsibility (even if the parents are separated). Note - this money does not come to the school.
- If parents do not engage with the support being offered by the school or support services, and absences continue, parents will be required to attend a **Fast Track Meeting** with a 4 week plan to improve attendance.
- Further disengagement or no satisfactory improvements in attendance will result in a **Final Warning** letter and a referral to the Local Authority for **prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act**.

**As you can well imagine, all parties wish to avoid these circumstances but it does demonstrate how important it is to maintain good school attendance.**