

# Grange Attendance 2023

## **Benefits and Expectations**

As you will be aware, at Grange, we regularly emphasise the importance and benefits of regular school attendance. The simple fact is, children learn more and have better mental health and wellbeing if they attend school with the absolute minimum absences.

### **OMAT Statement of Expectation (as on our school website):**

At Orwell Multi Academy Trust, we expect all children to be in school every day, unless they are too ill to attend. Term time holiday will not be authorised and will result in a fine. Unauthorised absence will result in legal intervention.

Every school in the Trust has staff who can support you with your child's attendance, so we ask that you work with us to ensure that your child is in school, on time, every day.

## **Grange's Attendance in Numbers**

There is huge concern that school attendance is too low, especially since the pandemic, across the Country. Children are missing too much school and their learning and wellbeing is suffering.

Although Grange's overall average attendance is similar to the national average each year, the numbers of children with Persistent Absence - PA (90% attendance or poorer which is equal to 4 weeks a year!) is too high.

PA is caused by an excessive number of absences for a variety or combination of reasons and is often an accumulation of periods of absence that could be easily reduced or avoided. For example:

	% Overall Absence	% Authorised (e.g. illness)	% Unauthorised (e.g. term holidays)	Persistent Absence
Grange Primary	6.2	4.7	1.5	20.1%
National Average	6.3	4.8	1.5	17.7%

a number of periods of illness taken unnecessarily or a family holiday + some childhood illness.

## **GRANGE ACTION 2023-24**

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

### **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 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 et al. Sept 2023

[Letter to school leaders on mild illness and school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/letter-to-school-leaders-on-mild-illness-and-school-attendance)

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## 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.**