

# Attendance Information for Parents & Carers



GREEN RIDGE  
PRIMARY ACADEMY

*Updated January 2019*

**At Green Ridge Primary Academy, we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best.**

Although we aim for 100% attendance, each year we set a target for attendance & this is used to compare us to other schools nationally.

Our current target is 97% attendance. Attending school every day will help give your child the best possible start in life.

Going to school every day means:

- learning new skills
- making friends
- having lots of fun
- building lasting relationships
- taking part in exciting activities

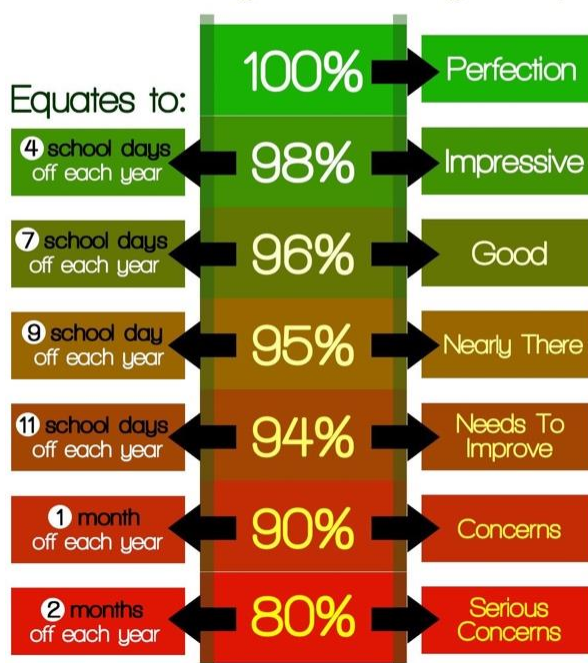
You can help us to help your child by encouraging regular school attendance.

## Did you know?

- ❖ 90% attendance is equivalent to missing 100 hour long lessons.
- ❖ If you take your child on a 2 week holiday in term time, attendance for the year immediately drops to 95%.
- ❖ A 2 week holiday in school time means your child has approximately 50 hours of missed work to catch up on!
- ❖ 90% attendance means 1/2 a day's absence each week; 4 weeks over the year & half a year's absence over 5 years!!
- ❖ 90% attendance is equivalent to a full month off school in a year!
- ❖ Missing just 10 minutes of school a day is the same as missing two weeks over the year.
- ❖ You can be fined up to £2,500 or given a 3 month prison sentence if your child misses too much school.

## Attendance Ladder

How close are you to reaching the top?



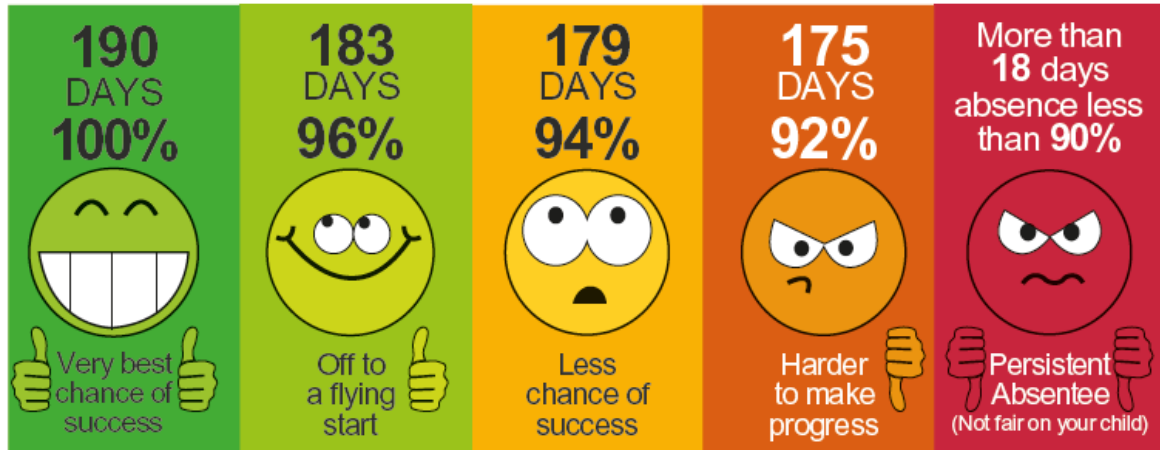
## The Facts

Under education law, parents are responsible for ensuring that their registered children of compulsory school age (five to 16-years-old) attend school regularly. If your child does not go to school the Children, Young People & Families Directorate can and will take legal action against you. This could lead to:

- School Attendance Panels
- Fines including Fixed Penalty Notices
- Parenting Orders
- Prosecution

## How can I help my child attend school regularly?

- ✓ Talk to your child about school
- ✓ Take a positive interest in your child's work including home learning activities
- ✓ Keep in touch with school staff
- ✓ Contact school on each day of absence (before 9:00am) if your child is unable to attend for whatever reason.
- ✓ Make sure everything is ready for them in the morning so there is no worry about missing uniform, home learning and being late.
- ✓ Make sure no holidays are booked during school time
- ✓ Aim for 10 hours sleep a night for your child. This will make the following day at school easier for them to cope with.
- ✓ Make sure your child eats breakfast, it helps them stay alert at school.
- ✓ Help your child develop routines.
- ✓ Get their school bag ready the night before.
- ✓ Develop a night time routine that involves checking their homework, reading & bed.
- ✓ Try & make sure that any medical/dental appointments are made for after school.
- ✓ Never take holidays in term time.
- ✓ If you know your child will be absent from school, write a note before the day of absence.



There are 190 days in the school year, which leaves 175 days to spend on family time, shopping, appointments and other things.

### Reducing Illness Days

If your child is saying they do not feel well and you are unsure about whether it warrants a day off, please send them to school. If they are truly ill, we will ring you.

Use common sense when deciding whether or not your child is too ill to attend school. Ask yourself the following questions:

- Is my child well enough to do the activities of the school day?
- Does my child have a condition that could be passed on to other children or school staff?
- Would I take a day off work if I had this condition?

Children can attend school with minor ailments (toothache, headache, stomach ache, cold, sore throat), over the counter medicines can be given before school. School will contact you if they become too ill to remain in school. Children should be off school for 48 hours if they have diarrhoea or vomiting.

If you are unsure how long your child should be absent with an illness speak to your child's school, your doctor or your pharmacist for advice.

## Medical Appointments

Where possible please avoid medical appointments in School time. If this is unavoidable please remember that:

- Medical Appointments cards need to be shown to the School Office for an authorised medical appointment to be recorded on the register.
- If same day emergency medical appointments occur ask your GP surgery for a card/slip stating that your child attended. This will need to be returned to school at the first opportunity. If your child is too ill to return to school following the appointment please telephone us as soon as possible.

If your child has to have a medical or dental appointment in school time please do your best to have it after 2PM and then your child can have their registration mark for the afternoon before you pick them up. If it needs to be a morning appointment please try and bring them to school first to get their mark and then return then to school afterwards.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified **by the school** as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

**Authorised** absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness (where a child is too ill to attend school) medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

*The Department for Education guidance states "if the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intentions. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards etc. rather than a doctor's note.*

**Unauthorised** absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

## Your legal responsibility

If your child does not attend school regularly (over 90%) the Local Authority can take action against you. This can be through a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or a summons to appear at Magistrates' Court.

## What is a Fixed Penalty Notice?

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 introduced legislation that made provision for a Local Authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices. These notices require a fine to be paid by parents of pupils who have un-authorised absence from school. Recent changes in the law have meant an increase in the use of Fixed Penalty Notices from September 2013 with a key focus on improving attendance at school.

## On what circumstances will Fixed Penalty Notices be issued?

A Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued in two situations:

1. if a holiday is taken during term time without the Headteacher's permission; or
2. if a pupil has unauthorised absence from school and their parent/carer fails to co-operate with school staff and the Education Welfare Service to improve the situation.

## What are the penalties?

If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued the penalty is £60 per parent when the payment is made within 21 days. After 21 days it will increase to £120 per parent. Failure to pay within 28 days will result in a summons to appear before the Magistrates Court on the grounds that you have failed to secure your child's attendance at school.

## Holidays during Term-Time

Green Ridge are committed to ensuring that all children receive the best education possible. It is important that every child attends school for as many days of the school year as possible. It is the responsibility of parents to ensure that their child does not take unnecessary time off school. Taking holidays during term time destroys the continuity of your child's education and may reduce their chance of success. Parents are expected to take their children on holiday when school is closed.

In law you **must** ask for permission for your children to miss school. Leave during term time **will only be agreed where the Head teacher feels there are exceptional circumstances**. Also, it is possible that leave **will not be agreed** when attendance already includes **unauthorised absence** and/or attendance is already causing concern.

The Headteacher can, in **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES ONLY**, authorise a leave of absence for a child during the academic year. This is not an entitlement and requests can be, and are often, refused. Each request will be considered individually based on your child's attendance, the exceptional circumstance, and the impact on your child's attainment. You **MUST** inform school if you are planning to take your child on holiday during term time. Please ask the office for a Leave of Absence form. The Academy should be notified at least 4 weeks prior to the holiday being taken, although we appreciate that there may be times when this is not possible. The request will be considered by the Academy, and a letter will be sent to the parent detailing the Headteacher's decision. We may ask for clarification of holiday bookings to support our decision-making under the Exceptional Circumstances criteria.

Parents who take a child of compulsory school age on holiday without permission from the school may be issued with a **penalty notice**.

Please be aware that if we suspect that a child is on holiday (and school have not had prior notification), a home visit may be carried out and a fine may be issued. Similarly, if you report your child as ill, and the academy has evidence to suggest that you are on holiday, further action will be taken.

Any absence, including holidays, will affect your child's attendance level. Over a school year, children whose attendance is below school target will have missed a significant amount of learning

## To help your child do well in school, you should:

- Arrange family holidays to coincide with school holidays
- Never take your child out of school when there are important examinations or tests
- Be aware of the potential impact on your child's education
- Avoid taking your child out of school when they are just starting. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.