



# Five Acres High School

## **Attendance Policy**

Five Acres High School is part of the Greenshaw Learning Trust.  
The Greenshaw Learning Trust is a charitable company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales, company number 7633694, registered at Greenshaw Learning Trust, Grennell Road, Sutton, Surrey, SM1 3DY.

# Five Acres High School

## Attendance Policy and Procedures

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## **Section A:**

### **A1.1 Application**

This Attendance Policy and Procedures applies to the Greenshaw Learning Trust as a whole and to all the schools in the Trust.

It is subject to the Trust's Scheme of Delegation for Governance Functions. If there is any ambiguity or conflict then the Scheme of Delegation and any specific alteration or restriction to the Scheme approved by the GLT Board of Trustees takes precedence.

It is the responsibility of the Governing Body and Headteacher of each school within the Greenshaw Learning Trust to ensure that their school adheres to this policy and procedures.

In implementing this policy and procedures all staff must take account of any advice given to them by the GLT CEO, the GLT Head of Attendance and Educational Welfare and/or the Board of Trustees.

If there is any question or doubt about the interpretation or implementation of this Policy and Procedures, the GLT Head of Attendance should be consulted.

### **A1.2 Monitoring arrangements**

This Policy and Procedures will be reviewed annually by the GLT Head of Attendance and will be updated when required due to legislation changes or as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated.

### **A1.3 Approval and review**

- Maintenance of this Policy and Procedures (Sections A, B & C) is the responsibility of the GLT Head of Attendance.
- Maintenance of the Procedure in Section D is the responsibility of the Headteacher
- This Policy and Procedures (Sections A, B & C) were approved by the Board of Trustees on: 20 October 2023.
- The School Specific Procedures (Section D) were approved by the school Governing Body in December 2023.

### **A1.4 Legislation and guidance**

This Policy and Procedures meet the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures and the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

And the following guidance:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for school
- [For non-compulsory age students]: Education and Skills Funding Agency Guidance 2023

## **Section B:**

### **B1.1 Policy Statement**

The Board of Trustees of the Greenshaw Learning Trust is committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through building a culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Promoting good attendance.
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school.
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence.
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

### **B1.2 Policy Principles**

The Board of Trustees of the Greenshaw Learning Trust firmly believe that all pupils benefit from outstanding school attendance. To this end, we will do all we can to ensure that our pupils achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent excellent attendance are identified and acted upon promptly. In order for a pupil's attendance record to be deemed outstanding, we will expect every pupil to attend every day that the school is open to them, whilst working with parents/carers to develop appropriate individualised support approaches for pupils whose attendance is impacted by an additional or special educational need, disability or a diagnosed chronic/medial (including mental health) condition.

All GLT schools must ensure that they maintain systems and practices that will:

- Maintain a safe, secure environment where pupils feel valued and welcome, thereby positively encouraging attendance.
- Create an ethos in which excellent attendance is the norm.
- Raise pupil awareness of the importance of punctuality and uninterrupted attendance, and encourage in pupils motivation and a sense of responsibility.
- Support pupils and families who experience difficulties maintaining good school attendance.
- Celebrate excellent school attendance.
- Act in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and work collaboratively with local authorities to support parents in ensuring that their children are regularly attending school.

In addition, all GLT Schools expect pupils to :

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually.
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day.

And all GLT schools expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children and young people will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day.
- Contact the school on the morning of each day of the pupil's absence.

- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school.
- Be aware that any unexplained absence is treated as an unauthorised absence and may be considered a safeguarding concern, this may result in a home visit or a referral to Children's Services.

### **B1.3 Roles and Responsibilities**

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at their school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to the governing body
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Authorising any absence due to exceptional circumstances

The Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance (see Section D1) is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school and embedding a whole school approach to promoting/supporting excellent attendance
- Defining clear vision and priorities to improve attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to understand the challenges causing attendance issues and plan steps to address these
- Creating intervention / reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Liaising with external agencies where appropriate for specific support
- Working proactively with local authorities and supporting them in their statutory responsibilities

The school attendance officer (see Section D1) is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data including completed registers and accurate coding
- Informing the School DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) and safeguarding team of unexplained absence of any pupil on safeguarding register by 9.30am.
- Informing the DSL of any parent / carer who have not responded to contact from school on the first day of absence of any pupil
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to address persistent absence
- Advising the Headteacher or appropriate Senior Leader when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Responding to absence in accordance with the Attendance Procedures

All relevant teaching staff are responsible for:

- Recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information correctly

## Section C

### GLT Attendance Procedures

#### C1. Recording attendance

All schools will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

Schools will take an attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. The attendance register will record whether each pupil is:

- Present.
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity.
- Absent.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- Late.

Attendance registers are legal documents which are shared with the DfE. Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- the original entry,
- the amended entry,
- the reason for the amendment,
- the date on which the amendment was made, and
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment

Schools will also record:

- [For pupils of compulsory school age] Whether the absence is authorised or not.
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity.
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Every entry on the attendance register will be kept for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

#### C2. Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible. Please see Section D for details.

Absence due to physical or mental illness will be marked as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

When no communication is received about a child's absence and we are unable to contact parents/carers, a home visit will be carried out within 24 hours in primary schools and 72 hours in

secondary schools of the absence occurring. Following the home visit, if we have further concerns or are not satisfied with the outcome, a referral may be made to Children's Services.

### **C3. Planned absence**

We encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Where a student's attendance is a concern, medical evidence will be required to support the absence.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

### **C4. Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late before the register has closed will be marked as late.

A pupil who arrives late after the register has closed will be marked as absent.

Lateness after registration has closed is recorded as an unauthorised absence (U) and parents/carers will be notified of this absence. Continued Lateness after the Close of Registration may result in a referral to the local authority requesting a penalty notice.

### **C5. Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call or message the pupil's parent/carer before 10:30am on the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's named contacts, the school may contact other emergency contacts or the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session.
- All normal absence monitoring procedures will continue during the unexplained absence, including calling/emailing/texting the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues. This may also involve contacting the school of any siblings, home visits and reference to Children's Services.

Continued concerns about a child's attendance may result in

- Implementation of a staged attendance intervention. Please see Section D for details.
- Home visits, from the third day of unexplained absence.
- A referral to the school's Safeguarding Team, an EHAT (Early Help Assessment Tool), the school nursing service, MASH Team (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) or the police for a welfare check.
- A referral to the local authority requesting the issue of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.



## **C6. Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels.

## **C7. Approval for term-time absence**

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

The Headteacher will consider each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted in writing to the Headteacher as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least six weeks before the absence. The Headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. If parents/carers do not inform the school any days missed may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Traveller pupils 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 received approval from the school in writing, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Absences that the school is unable to authorise include:

- Holidays during term time (unless in exceptional circumstances \*).
- Arrival after the registers close without prior notification.
- Shopping trips, even if this is for school uniforms.
- Birthday celebrations.
- Looking after a relative/pets.
- Tiredness due to extra-curricular activities.
- All unexplained absences.

*\*Exceptional circumstances will typically only cover:*

- *For Service children, where parental leave is dictated*
- *Holidays arranged and paid for by children's social care*
- *Holiday arranged by organisations such as Make a Wish Foundation*
- *Blue light staff (NHS clinical, police, paramedics, fire brigade) where holidays have been dictated and proof is provided*
- *A significant family event - ie; wedding or funeral of an immediate family member*

## **C8. Legal sanctions**

[For children of compulsory school age **only**.]

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carer must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account the number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year and can be issued for one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission or 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 or withdraw the notice.

## **C9. Strategies for promoting attendance**

All schools will use a range of strategies for rewarding and promoting good attendance.

## **C10. Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Provide attendance reports to the Board, its Committees and Governing Bodies..
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies and to facilitate discussions with pupils and families.

Pupil-level absence data will be 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.

## **C11. Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will use strategies to improve attendance, these may include:

- Using attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.

- Holding regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Providing access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

## **C12. Sixth Form**

The rigours of post-16 study mean that excellent attendance is perhaps even more important in Sixth Form than in any other years. The school's Sixth Form Team will therefore adopt the principles outlined above, unless otherwise stated.

While we expect Sixth Form students to take a greater degree of responsibility for their attendance than students in other years, we will still involve parents/carers where we feel it is appropriate.

Sixth Form students can be expected to remain onsite for the full school day. However, the Headteacher may choose to allow students to leave the school site at certain times (e.g. break, lunch, and in exceptional circumstances, study periods). Sixth Form students will be expected to sign in and out when arriving at / leaving school.

Sixth Form places will not be withdrawn on the grounds of low attendance. However, where a student's attendance is impacting upon academic performance, it might be appropriate for the school, in consultation with the student and their parents/carers, to consider whether changing a course and/or resitting a year might be appropriate. Such decisions will always be made with regard to the student's best interests.

## Section D - School Operational Attendance Procedures

### D1. School Key Contacts

Key Contact	Name	Email
Headteacher	Simon Phelps	sphelps@5acreshighschool.co.uk
Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance	Paul Ogden	pogden@5acreshighschool.co.uk
Attendance Officer	Kelly Styles	kstyles@5acreshighschool.co.uk
Education Welfare Officer	Kelly Aston	kaston@5acreshighschool.co.uk

### D2. Notifying the school of unplanned absences

Parents/carers should contact the school before 8am on the morning of each day of the pupil's absence via:

- the MyChildAtSchool app,
- emailing the school at [attendance@5acreshighschool.co.uk](mailto:attendance@5acreshighschool.co.uk)
- calling the school on 01594 832263 and selecting Option 1.

Continued failure to contact the school to report a child's absence may result in a referral to the school's Safeguarding Team, MASH Team (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) or the police for a welfare check.

### D3. Staged attendance interventions

There are 5 stages of dealing with absenteeism at Five Acres High School

#### Stage 1

At the start of the academic year and after an appropriate time frame a letter will be sent to all parents/carers of students whose attendance is below 93%. This is then monitored for 4 weeks. If the attendance improves and is no longer a concern, there is no further action. If the attendance remains a concern, this may result in escalation to Stage 2.

#### Stage 2

If there is no marked improvement parents will receive Letter 2 and be invited in for a meeting with a delegated member of staff (who has an oversight of attendance) where an attendance improvement plan will be agreed to address any issues preventing a child from attending school. This is then monitored for 4 weeks. If the attendance improves and is no longer a concern, there is no further action. If the attendance remains a concern, this may result in escalation to Stage 3.

#### Stage 3

If there is no improvement within a four-week period a Medical Evidence letter will be sent to parents/carers. This means that if the child has further absences this will be recorded as unauthorised unless medical evidence is received. Medical evidence that is supported is a medical appointment letter/card, a picture of any medication that is issued or a letter from a medical professional to support the absence. This will be monitored for a further four weeks. If the attendance improves and is no longer a concern, there is no further action. If the attendance remains a concern, this may result in escalation to Stage 4.

#### Stage 4

If no improvement is seen within a further 4 weeks, a notified home visit is arranged and the parent/carer is invited by letter to attend a formal 'Attendance Action Plan Meeting'\* with two

appropriate members of staff, one from attendance and one from pastoral. A review date is set and is then monitored for a minimum of 2 weeks. If the attendance improves and is no longer a concern, there is no further action. If the attendance remains a concern, this may result in escalation to Stage 5.

#### **Stage 5**

At this point a further Attendance Improvement Meeting\* (AIM) will take place with a member of the attendance team and a senior leader. If no improvement is seen, the case is referred to the GCC Education Performance and Inclusion Team to begin legal proceedings.

Failure to comply with the expectations set by the AIM may result in further action, such as the issuance of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.

\*Meetings proceed even if the parent/carer chooses not to attend

#### **D4. Strategies for promoting attendance**

As well as communication between the school and parents/carers regarding pupils' attendance, Five Acres High School runs a number of initiatives to promote attendance. These include:

- In It To Win It daily draw - free cookie and a queue jump
- Whole school inter-tutor competition for attendance
- Weekly 100% virtual attendance certificate
- Termly certificates for 100% attendance
- Termly prize draw for 100% attendance
- Termly prize draw for most improved attendance

#### **D5. Procedure for Reporting a Children Missing in Education (CME) and Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Children Missing Education (CME) refers to those children who are missing (family whereabouts unknown), and are usually children who are registered on a school roll. This might be a child who is not at their last known address and either

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 10 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

The school attendance team has a duty of care to report to the Local Authority once a child has been absent from Five Acres High School for a period of 4 weeks or 20 school days.

#### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

Contact is made with a student's parent/carer directly after receiving a written parental request to EHE to the headteacher.

A meeting is booked with parents/carers to discuss the EHE. During the meeting the following are discussed using the working document: pros and cons of EHE, Free School Meal entitlement, EHCP/SEND, local support groups, carers advice, independent working and possible isolation. The following links are offered to the family:

Referral to GCC for support on the following link <https://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/home-education>.

<https://www.glosfamiliesdirectory.org.uk/kb5/gloucs/glosfamilies/service.page?id=X3pELscu7iA>

Careers advice offered for continued support from Mrs Dobson - direct email address provided [adobson@5acreshighschool.co.uk](mailto:adobson@5acreshighschool.co.uk)

Greenshaw Learning Trust link - <https://www.greenshawlearningtrust.co.uk/>

Recommendation for supportive online groups: <https://brighterfuturesforchildren.org/for-parents-carers/schools/elective-home-education/>

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/440875509359442/about/>.

If the family wish to proceed with Elective Home Education following the meeting the Attendance Officer contacts Gloucestershire County Council (GCC) via the following link <https://forms.gloucestershire.gov.uk/DeregistrationElectiveHomeEducation>.

Once the completed document has been received by GCC and acknowledgement confirmed the student will be removed from the legal school registration and be under the umbrella of Gloucestershire County Council Elective Home Education team to follow up with the family.

A member of the attendance team will make contact with the families to offer ongoing support and resources if required at a pre-arranged date.