



Greenwood School Attendance Policy

Date of Policy Issue/Review	Sept 2020	Sept 2021
Name of Responsible Manager	Stuart Curtis	
Signature of Responsible Manager		

1. Rationale

For a student to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We at Greenwood are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome. Parents and students play a part in making our school so successful. Every student has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

All permanently excluded students educated at Greenwood will be offered a bespoke educational programme that may include work experience or college placements. The composition of the programme will be subject to review and negotiation through regular meetings and conversation between parents and the school.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all our students. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our students to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines students develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

2. Linked Policies

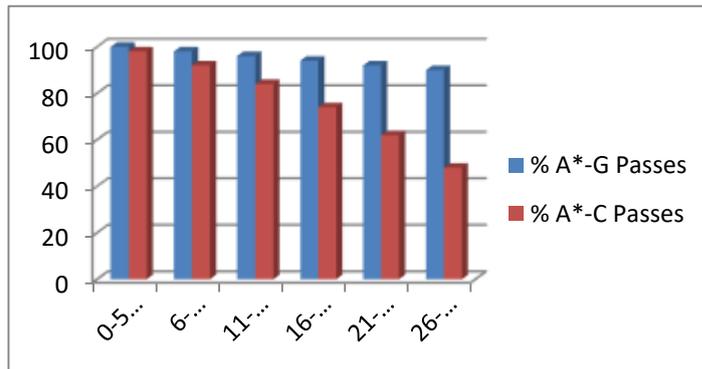
School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council. This attendance policy should be read in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child protection policy
- Safeguarding policy
- SEN policy
- Teaching and Learning policy
- Behaviour and Relationships policy.

3. Benefits of attendance

3.1 Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%.
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with.
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.



3.2 Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our regular newsletter/website.
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments.
- celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- reward good attendance in weekly assemblies.
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates and outings/events.
- set targets for the school and for classes for attendance and display these in the school.
- allocate time when parents/carers, students and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Responsibilities of the School Attendance lead

The Deputy Headteacher for Behaviour, Attendance and Safeguarding (DHT) will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. They will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. The DHT will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. The DHT will lead weekly Attendance briefing where individual student cases can be discussed and relevant actions approved.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

4.2 Responsibility of the Headteacher and Governing Body

- Deny authorisation for holidays.
- Requests with exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis.
- Approve changes to the attendance policy.

4.3 Responsibilities of Greenwood staff

- Make 100% attendance the expectation.
- Ensure that all students are registered accurately on SIMS, to include students attending alternative provisions and home tutored students.
- When a student is late follow school protocols.
- Promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities.
- Liaise with the attendance lead on matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.
- Support students with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school.

4.4 Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- Arrive in school on time in appearance acceptable to the school policy.
- Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- Take responsibility for registering at the reception desk if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

4.5 Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform the school on the first day of absence by 9.30am.
- discuss with the DHT, or other relevant staff member, any planned absences well in advance.
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.

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- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments. Where it is not possible, please provide the school with an appointment card/letter.
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.
- Ensure their child is in school by 9am each day. Any student who is not with their keyworker by this time is, by definition, late.

Her Majesty's Inspectors define unauthorised absence as:

'Absence from School for any period as a result of a pre-meditated or spontaneous act by the student or parent or both. This includes parentally condoned absence.'

Examples of parental condoned absences include absences when:

- A parent is ill,
- A parent is using the student as a child minder,
- A student is supporting other members of the family,
- A parent wants company,
- A parent 'gives in' to a student who wants to stay at home,
- It is a student's birthday,
- A parent does not care whether the student attends school,
- A parent has taken the student shopping,
- A parent cannot control the student,
- Family holidays/celebrations.

The School will determine whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised on a case by case basis. All unauthorised absence will appear on the student's record, reported to the education authority and included in Government data. Schools may be asked to provide a child's attendance to Children's Services Department if requested.

5. Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, **9am**, and again for the afternoon session at **12.50pm**.

Home tutored students will receive a B (educated offsite) registration mark for each session attended. This information will be supplied to the school by the home tutors every day.

Any students who are educated offsite and having either home visits, CBT or other interventions will have their attendance recorded by Admin staff after the staff involved with the student inform reception on the day of the level of engagement. The student's attendance will then reflect the level of engagement in line with their appropriate approved provision.

Any other students accessing alternative provisions will be checked on by Admin staff who will call the provision within an hour of the stipulated start, to see if the student has arrived and engaged.

6. Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions and to lessons. The start of school/lessons is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher getting vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at **9.00am** and all **students are expected to be in school at this time**. Morning registration is at **9.00am** and it closes at **9.15am**.
- All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a

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prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary.

- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence.
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays.

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other students. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel and may be subject to legal action** (see Section 6 of the County Council Code of conduct for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend the school and discuss the problem and support offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school will refer the parents/carers to the Hampshire County Council Attendance Panel. They may be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* (See Section 10 of this policy for further detail).

7. What to do if my child is absent?

7.1 First day absence

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

If your child is absent you must:

- contact us by telephone as soon as possible on the first day of absence, ideally before 9.30am.

If your child is absent we could:

- telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance. We may invite you into school for an Attendance Review meeting to discuss the situation with our Deputy Headteacher if absences persist.
- refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

7.2 Third day absence

If your child is still absent on the third day, we will either:

- Send a letter asking you to contact the school that day.
- Send an appropriate member of staff to make home visit.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Deputy Headteacher.
- Contact associated professionals where applicable i.e, YOT or Social Worker

Please note: If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable

enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquiries to known friends, wider family and home visits by appropriate staff.

7.3 Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child.

Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. It is very important that we can always contact parents/carers in the event of an emergency. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers, named contacts and emails throughout the year.

7.4 Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will support parents/carers and students into improving their absence. This could include a variety of strategies designed to improve students attendance according to individual needs.

7.5 A welcome back

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all students are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the student is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other students.

8. Request for leave of absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. There are no rules on this as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family.

There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised. Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form (available from reception/form tutor in advance and before making any travel arrangements).

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will be unauthorised and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct*, parents/carers will be referred to the Attendance Legal Panel. The Panel may then decide to issue with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code (see section 6 for detail).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.

9. Understanding types of absence

Students are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- authorised absence: is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- unauthorised absence: is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes: parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily, such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings.
- truancy before or during the school day.
- absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

10. Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

10.1 Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

1. The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance.
2. The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for students of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution.

Where a child has unauthorised absence the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties

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The *Code of conduct* states that schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the student has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a Penalty Notice is issued for either:

1. 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
2. one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence, or
- a holiday that has been taken without permission.

Greenwood School will take all cases of poor attendance to the Attendance Legal Panels for discussion and then agreed action by the County Council.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued to **one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings, both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order. For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-forparents/possible-penalties

11. School Absence

11.1 My child is trying to avoid coming to school. What should I do?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Contact Greenwood Schools reception and they will have the appropriate member of staff talk to you and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

11.2 What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

11.3 Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is a broad umbrella term used to describe a group of children and young people who have severe difficulty in attending school due to emotional factors, often resulting in prolonged absences from school. There is no single cause for EBSA and there are likely to be various contributing factors for why a young person may be finding it difficult to attend school. Kearney and Silverman's (1990) review of the literature indicates that there tends to be four main reasons for school avoidance:

- 1 To avoid uncomfortable feelings brought on by attending school, such as feelings of anxiety or low mood.
- 2 To avoid situations that might be stressful, such as academic demands, social pressures and/or aspects of the school environment.
- 3 To reduce separation anxiety or to gain attention from significant others, such as parents or other family members.
- 4 To pursue tangible reinforcers outside of school.

In cases of EBSA Greenwood School will refer to the Hampshire County Council Documents which the above information is taken from and can be found Appendices.

11.4 Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when leaving at the end of Year 11, parents are asked to:

1. Give the school comprehensive and up to date information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

11.5 Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

11.6 Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the Headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the Headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

11.7 Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for work purposes only and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away, the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

11.8 Study Leave

We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. Study leave will be granted on a case by case basis if appropriate for the individual student during this period. Study leave can only be approved by the Headteacher of Greenwood School.

11.9 Teenage Pregnancy

Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and, wherever possible, her return to full-time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks' authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorised. Where a student is a father of a new born child any absence should be requested through the normal application process and then approved or denied by the Headteacher.

12. Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies.

13. Useful documents

APPENDIX A: EBSA Guidance

APPENDIX B: EBSA Student support

APPENDIX C: EBSA Parental support

Date of Policy: September 2020

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Signed

Management Committee Chair.....

Head teacher.....