Greig City Academy

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

"Show by a good life that your works are done by gentleness born of wisdom."

James 3:13

This policy was approved by the Full Governing Body on February 7, 2024. It is reviewed annually.

It is published on our website www.greigcityacademy.co.uk and available in printed copy from the school's reception or by request to Viv Oxley, Exec. PA and HR Manager: voxley@greigcityacademy.co.uk.

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1. Introduction

The Academy aims to provide a stimulating and safe environment, in which students can flourish in their learning in an atmosphere that reflects values central to the Christian faith, including caring for one another and working together for the good of all. For this aim to be achieved, children should be at school, on time and ready to learn, every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. 90% attendance may sound high, but this is ½ day missed every week. Over a school year, this is 3.5 weeks – 90 lessons lost. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence seriously affects their learning. Any child's absence can disrupt teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. The Academy's expectation is that each individual student will aim to achieve at least 96% attendance.

We give a high priority to conveying to parents[1] and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. Parents have a vital role to play, and we recognise that there is a need to ensure strong home-school links and communication systems that can be used whenever there are concerns about attendance. If there are problems which affect a student's attendance, we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

This policy sets out the school's position on student attendance and details the roles and responsibilities of all those involved in the school community.

[1] Education law defines parents as: all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child. In this policy the term 'parent' includes parents and carers.

2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos including:

- working to ensure that the school is a welcoming environment, providing challenging opportunities for students
- promoting and supporting attendance and punctuality by defining expectations with students and their parents
- ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- acting early to address patterns of absence
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- recognising the external factors that may affect attendance and building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school
- rewarding students for high and improving attendance and punctuality, and celebrating their achievement and progress

3. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from 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 (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- It also refers to:
- Keeping Children Safe in Education

4. Roles and responsibilities

4.1 The Governing Body is responsible for:

- promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

4.2 The Principal is responsible for:

- implementation of this policy at the school
- monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- ensuring fixed-penalty notices are issued, where necessary

4.3 The designated senior leader for attendance is responsible for:

- leading attendance across the school
- offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- having an oversight of data analysis
- with the attendance/education welfare officer, devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data, and creating intervention/reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents
- delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Jermaine Coleman, Assistant Vice Principal, who can be contacted via E: jcoleman@greigcityacademy.co.uk or T:020 8609 0170

4.4 The attendance/education welfare officer is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- 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 principal
- with the senior leader responsible for attendance, devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance, and creating intervention/reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents
- building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- working with haringey council education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence, where necessary
- issuing fixed-penalty notices to parents, with delegated authority from the Principal

The attendance officer is Demet Kirnon, who can be contacted via dkirnon@greigcityacademy.co.uk or T: 020 8609 0164

4.5 Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance office via the Bromcom database

4.6 Student Information Centre staff will:

- take calls from parents/carers and students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record details on the school system – bromcom
- record student late arrivals

4.7 Parents are expected to:

- make sure their child attends every for registration and every timetabled session on time
- call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- provide the school with more than one emergency contact number for their child
- inform the school of any changes to their contact details, including mobile phone numbers to which absence alerts may be sent
- ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
- ask the school well in advance for any exceptional leave or circumstances requiring absence

4.7 Parents have:

- a right to know when their child's attendance and/or punctuality is a concern
- no parental right to take children on holiday in term time

4.9 Students are expected to:

- attend every timetabled session on time

5. Recording attendance and punctuality

5.1 Attendance register

We keep an attendance register, onto which all students are placed.

We take our attendance register at the start of each school day – during tutor time/assembly – and at the beginning of each lesson.

Students should arrive in school by 8.20am on each school day.

The register for the first session (tutor time or assembly) will be taken at 8.30am sharp. and will be kept open until 8.50am. The register for lessons will be taken within the first 10 minutes of the lesson.

Each student will be marked by teachers as: Present or Absent or Late

The attendance/education welfare officer will use the DfE attendance codes at Appendix 1 to record:

- whether the absence is authorised or not
- the nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- the nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

The school will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

5.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling or emailing the school attendance team.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness 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 may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

5.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents should notify by telephone or email or by asking their child to bring in a note. An appointment letter or card should be provided.

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

Parents must apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

5.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- before the register has closed, will be marked as late and will have a lunch-time detention with their tutor
- after the register has closed, will be marked as absent and will have an hour's detention

The attendance team will use the Bromcom tracking system to identify any ongoing punctuality issues and report, as relevant, to Heads of Year. See Section 7 for strategies to promote and support students in improving their punctuality.

5.5 Following up unexplained absence

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

- call the parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the attendance/education welfare officer may – depending on circumstances – conduct a home visit on the following day or immediately if there is any potential safeguarding concern
- 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
- call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving professionals from other organisations e.g., social services, the Police

5.6 Children missing education

Children absent from education are registered on a school roll. Children categorised as 'missing education' are either not registered at a school or else not receiving suitable education in place of a school setting.

We have a responsibility to report to the local authority any child we may think is a 'child missing education' as there have been concerns about children going missing between schools or leaving the country. If we do not know where your child is and believe them to be missing, we will make a formal referral to the local authority to have this followed up. We may also make a safeguarding referral if we are have any concerns in respect of this. We will always try to contact you and other named contacts before doing this. The school will seek advice from the local authority if unsure about any individual cases.

5.7 Reporting to parents about attendance issues

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels every term. Parents are able to access the 'My Child at School' system to check their child's attendance at any time and are encouraged to contact the attendance team if they have any concerns.

6. Authorised and unauthorised absence

6.1 Approval for term-time absence

The attendance officer/EWO, authorised by the Principal, will grant a leave of absence to a student during term time only if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at discretion, including the length of time for which the student is authorised to be absent.

The school considers 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 as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence. The school may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. Consideration will be given to adjusting procedures where parents have difficulty with the written word, or where English is not the first language.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 5.2 and 5.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students 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 agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- Study leave. Study leave may be granted for Years 11/12/13 pupils approaching GCSE/A-level examinations. We will offer in-school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels

Examples of absence which may be recorded as **unauthorised i**nclude those due to:

- shopping
- haircuts
- missed bus
- slept late
- no uniform
- looking after siblings or unwell family members
- birthdays
- unapproved holidays
- translation for medical appointments for a family member

6.2 Legal sanctions

The local authority can fine parents who have been issued with a fixed penalty notice by the school for the persistent or severe unauthorised absence of their child. Follow Fixed Penalty Notices for more information.) If issued with a fixed penalty notice by the school, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Penalty notices at the Academy are issued by the attendance officer/EWO on behalf of the Principal.

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
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Other formal interventions, which may be considered by the school and local authority on a case-by-case basis, include parenting contracts, Education Supervision Orders and, where there are safeguarding concerns, statutory social care involvement.

7. Strategies for promoting and supporting attendance and punctuality

We strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, in which each member of our community feels wanted and secure, helping them to achieve their potential. We aim to build strong relationships with families, to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and punctuality and to work with families to remove them

In assemblies, tutor time and one-to-one discussions, we stress the benefits and rewards of excellent attendance and punctuality and aim to make students aware that regular absence affects learning, disrupts teaching routines and may affect the learning of others in the same class. We reward students with very good attendance/punctuality as well as those who have made big improvements. At the end of each half term, students' attendance and punctuality are celebrated in assemblies and rewarded with vouchers and, at the end of the year with Kindles and trips.

In communicating with parents, we discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like.

Where a pattern of absence or poor punctuality is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic, we will ensure that parents are informed of our concerns – by telephone/letter/email/in meetings. We will work with families to address any in-school barriers and, where barriers are out of the school's control, we will support families to access any support they may need.

We recognise that some students are more likely to require additional and targeted support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, looked after children, and children new to the country whose living circumstances may not be settled.

Support for families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and students.

Support will include, as a minimum, meetings with parents and students and may include:

- learning mentor support
- additional learning support
- behaviour support
- making reasonable adjustments where a child has a disability
- flexible start and finish times
- referrals to support agencies
- reintegration support packages such as time limited, part-time timetables

8.Attendance monitoring

8.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level
- identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Student-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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing body.

8.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families
- look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and develop strategies to address these patterns

8.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year and senior pastoral leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

8.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school over an academic year, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school over an academic year.

The school will:

- use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- intensify support as detailed in Section 7 above, with the involvement of external partners including local authority teams, where relevant

If persistent absence continues despite all efforts by the school and its partners, legal and other formal interventions, as detailed at 6.2 above, will be considered. In the case of severe absence (for example, school refusers), the same legal and formal interventions as detailed in 6.2 will be considered, with due consideration being given to the mental health and wellbeing of the student.

9. Monitoring this policy

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually, by the designated senior lead for attendance, Mr J. Coleman. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Governing Body

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following school policies:

- Safeguarding and child protection policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

We use the following codes from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
****	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day