



**Attendance and Punctuality Policy  
(adapted for COVID-19)**

Issued: September 2020  
Approved: LAC (Electronic)

## **Aims**

Greenway Academy values: 'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'. School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

Greenway Academy expects the highest attendance and punctuality from all pupils, at all times. We support pupils and their families to ensure that excellent attendance is achieved. This is especially true, with families working and living through a global pandemic (COVID-19).

At Greenway Academy, we are continuously working towards our goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. The school minimum target for all pupils is 97%.

## **Overall Aims:**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the Academy attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of academy attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, pupils and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of pupils and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

## **Rights and responsibilities for attendance/punctuality**

There are legal obligations on:

- The parent(s) to secure education for their children, whether at school or otherwise, to send them to school regularly once they are on the register
- The Academy to register attendance and notify the Local Authority of absence from school
- The Local Authority to provide education and to enforce attendance

## **Headteacher (HT):**

- To be responsible for the overall management and implementation of the policy.
- To deal with parental requests for extended leave in line with national policies and procedures.
- To consider the use of Penalty Notices, in line with West Sussex Local Authority policies and procedures.

### **Head of School (HoS):**

- To lead on/take responsibility for attendance/punctuality, on a day-to-day basis, including liaising with/responding to parental enquiries.
- To oversee the analysis of/analyse half termly/yearly data and respond to findings with special emphasis on Pupil Premium/Free School Meal Children (as a key vulnerable group).
- To meet with the School Office Manager to monitor the systems and structures, ensuring they are having an impact on pupil attendance and punctuality.
- To liaise with external agencies such as the Education Welfare Officer and make referrals where necessary.
- To ensure that rewards and incentives for attendance and punctuality are being used.
- Work with the teachers, to plan for the reintegration of pupils after long-term absence.
- To revise and amend the policy, as required.

### **School Office (SO):**

- To carry out and record the outcome of first day calls, when a child doesn't arrive at school when no reason has been received.
- To check the school answer phone and take messages from parents/carers about pupil absence.
- To promptly inform the HoS, if there are any concerns relating to attendance/punctuality
- To produce half termly/yearly data for HT/HoS/Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to analyse.
- To record reasons for absence and updating class registers.
- To implement the daily checking of registers after the morning and afternoon registration sessions.
- To maintain SIMS attendance records in line with this policy.
- To liaise with and report to with outside agencies such as the Education Welfare Service.
- To maintain clear communication with the SLT regarding attendance and punctuality.
- To oversee the admission and induction of new pupils.
- To ensure staff are following the registration systems and structures in this policy.
- Inform parents of school procedures, when parents have failed to inform the school.

### **Staff:**

- To ensure quality first teaching every day; with lessons that are well planned and resourced so that they challenge, inspire and meet their learners' needs.
- To keep accurate and up-to-date daily records of pupil attendance through the register system.
- Take a formal register of all pupils twice a day. This is done on the academy's data information system at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions.
- To regularly remind children and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- To follow up on pupil absence by ensuring reasons for absence are sought.
- Provide a welcoming and safe environment, which encourages attendance and promotes the best performance from children.
- Establish good and effective communication links with parents/carers and work collaboratively in meeting the child's needs.
- If required, to work collaboratively with other agencies to assist them in fulfilling their

statutory duties, regarding for example, child protection.

- Work with pupils and their families where attendance is a concern, identifying barriers to good attendance and working to overcome these.
- To promptly inform the HoS, of pupils who persist with poor attendance.
- To feed back to parents about pupil attendance and punctuality regularly and at Pupil Learning Conferences.

## **Parents:**

COVID-19 – children should be kept at home if they show the agreed symptoms:-

- high temperature
- persistent new cough
- loss of sense of smell or taste

Children should be tested, according to the current government procedures. Anyone testing positive must follow national self-isolation rules. Children testing negative must return to school.

Normal childhood illness -children should only be kept at home if they have a serious illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school first thing. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, stomach aches etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If they don't get any better, school will contact parents, to collect them. If pupils have a dental, clinic or hospital appointment, parents should let the school know. Pupils should be brought back to school after appointments.

Pupils should miss as little time as possible. Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends the Academy, arriving on time every day in line with the Parent Handbook guidelines (see website for latest version).
- Pupils arriving after 9.05am when the register closes will be marked as arriving late with an 'L' code (arrival before register closes). Pupils arriving after 9.10am will be marked as arriving after the register has closed with a 'U' coding and this will result in an unauthorised absence being accrued. Unauthorised absence is considered an offence under the Education Act and may result in a referral to the Local Authority which could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or Court action being instigated.
- The school advises parents, should there be a need, that the above timings may be altered on an individual pupil basis if issues around punctuality persist.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons (See Parent Handbook).
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school time, wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child. (The school's CPOMS system may be used by the school, if relevant, to record exceptional issues).
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life, which may impact on learning.

The Local Authority, through the Educational Welfare Service, is expected to:

- Support the Academy in improving attendance, through whole school initiatives and individual pupil interventions.

This is a formal legal system, which involves fining parents for their child's poor attendance over

a specified period of time. The action is taken with any identified pupils. All families are formally written to by the school, outlining the process. Formal meetings are held after a specified period of time, for pupils with continued poor attendance. Targets are set and attendance is monitored for a further specified period of time. EWS court section issues fines to families, whose pupils fail to improve their attendance.

## **Strategies for promoting/rewarding excellent attendance:**

### **Aims:**

- To ensure good attendance and punctuality (above 97%) is regularly promoted and supported and remains high profile across school.
- To achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality (above 97%) through rewarding good attendance and punctuality.

### **Weekly Celebration Assemblies**

Celebration Assemblies are held virtually every week on Friday. Classes who meet the school's expectations are rewarded with a Class Attendance Certificate. Classes achieving 100% attendance will receive a Gold Class Attendance Certificate. The certificates will be displayed in their classroom. Absence for self-isolation purposes during Covid, will not be deducted from a pupil's overall attendance.

### **Termly Newsletter**

The Academy newsletter is used to highlight the importance of good attendance and punctuality. It regularly includes sections reminding parents of our attendance target and what that means in terms of number of days absent. It also includes information about any initiatives, which the Academy is using, to promote attendance and punctuality.

### **Annual Awards**

All pupils achieving 100% attendance for each half year (Sept-Feb, Feb-July) will earn the School's Good Attendance Badge in the Attendance Assembly

### **School Attendance Board**

The board includes attendance information and information about the classes with the highest attendance and punctuality. Details of how parents can support the school by improving their child's attendance and punctuality, is also included.

### **The School Learning Environment**

A welcoming, organised learning environment, which supports and celebrates its learners is a key factor in ensuring children enjoy school and attend regularly. All staff ensure that their learning environments are of a high quality. Regular, rigorous environmental audits are carried out by the SLT, to ensure this.

### **Staff Promoting Good Attendance**

It is important that teachers are regularly promoting good attendance with their classes. Good class attendance is attributed to good teaching and this is celebrated.

### **Annual Attendance Rewards**

At the end of the school year, there is a special reward for children who have achieved attendance at 100%. The HoS organise and lead on the end of term attendance incentives.

### **Attendance Certificate**

Children with 97%+ attendance, receive a special attendance certificate, signed by the Headteacher to take home and keep. Certificates are presented annually to reward those who achieve excellent attendance.

Pupils achieving 100% attendance and 6 lates or less for the whole school year, are eligible for the end of year reward. Children who are self-isolating due to COVID-19 will not be penalised.

### **Sharing attendance data**

Pupils are informed on a weekly basis of attendance/punctuality achievements. The class achieving the highest attendance/punctuality, and the number of pupils achieving 97% -100% attendance are shared in weekly assemblies. This helps develop healthy competition between year groups to improve attendance and engages class teacher in conversation with their classes about attendance.

### **Pupil Parent Reviews**

This provides an opportunity for class teachers to praise and recognise excellent attendance or share attendance concerns and discuss barriers to good attendance. Where necessary a target for improving attendance is set. This target will be monitored in the half-termly reviews. If there is no improvement in attendance/punctuality, the HSSW will discuss barriers with parents. The Head will consider a referral for external support from the Attendance Advisory Service (WSSCC).

### **Monitoring and Recording Attendance & Punctuality**

#### **Class Registers**

Class registers are recorded every morning and afternoon. The system ensures that no children are missed and that pupil information can be shared quickly and securely. Registers are the only way of recording pupil attendance and must be completed accurately. This is the responsibility of whichever member of staff has been directed to take the register for that session.

Registers can be re-submitted in the case of a mistake or a pupil arriving after submission, but registers must be accurate and submitted at key times (see below).

#### **Morning Register**

Class registers are taken from 8.45am up to 9.05am. Pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked as arriving late with an 'L' code (arrival before register closes).

Pupils arriving after 9.10am will be marked as arriving after the register has closed with a 'U' coding and this will result in an unauthorised absence being accrued.

Unauthorised absence is considered an offence under the Education Act and may result in a referral to the Local Authority which could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice and/or Court action being instigated.

#### **Afternoon Register**

Registers are completed by teaching staff straight after lunch before afternoon lessons commence.

#### **IMPORTANT:**

Child Protection and safeguarding concerns must be acted on immediately, in line with the Academy's Safeguarding systems.

### Monitoring First Day Absence

If a child is absent from school and the Academy has not received a phone call or other message from the parent/carer, a first day absence call will be made. The follows this system:

- Phone parents' contact number(s).
- Repeat this during the first morning of absence, if no response.
- Welfare visits can be instigated

The parent/carer is asked to provide a reason as to why the child is not in school. The absence reason is recorded next to the child's name. The SO must establish a reason for every absence. No absence should be left on the system as an 'N' (no reason given) code. If the SO has not been able to contact parents after 2 days then the absence is recorded as 'O' (unauthorised).

### School Attendance Letters

Every half-term, the Academy reviews attendance and punctuality. Letters are sent to parents where there are concerns about attendance and punctuality, offering support to parents to remove barriers. Improved attendance and punctuality is celebrated with parents by letter as well. Attendance letters and support plans are recorded on CPOMS.

### Summary of procedures to promote good attendance/punctuality

The following tables show specific procedures to maintain and encourage excellent attendance at Greenway Academy.

Daily procedures	By whom	Outcomes / action
Parents ensure pupils arrive at school on time	Parents/carers	
Parents inform the school by 8.45 am, if their child is absent that day	Parents/carers	Office/Support staff update registration codes
Pupils arriving late to school are registered in class if in school by 9.10am. Anyone arriving later, must phone the Office to arrange an agreed drop off time	SO	Absence mark on SIMS amended to a late mark by SO (School Office).
Teachers record attendance using the school's system. This is done at 8.45am and 1.30pm. Complete attendance/punctuality record for HoS – as required.	Teachers/Supply staff Teacher/TA	Staff use a paper register, if required. Teacher takes responsibility for promptly informing HoS of concerns.
1st day absence phone calls are made to inform parents of their child's unexplained absence for that day HoS informed of attendance/punctuality issues – parents contacted, if required	SO  HoS	SO updates attendance codes

<b>Weekly procedures</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Outcomes / action</b>
Attendance/punctuality statistics produced and shared in Celebration Assembly, displayed on the School Attendance Boards	LEO (Learning Environment Officer)	Parents are able to see which class(es) have been successful with their attendance and punctuality.
Absence codes for individual pupils are updated using SIMS to show reason for absence	SO	Information provided here is used to provide targeted interventions as appropriate

<b>Half termly and termly procedures</b>	<b>By whom</b>	<b>Outcomes / action</b>
Analyse attendance/punctuality data to monitor trends and progress	School Office Manager (SOM)/HoS/HSSW	Agreed action for each family Data report for LAC
Assemblies to promote attendance/punctuality and share term's data and progress	HoS	Children can verbalise why they should be in school every day
Discussions as required in response to specific attendance/punctuality concerns of a particular cohort of pupils	HT/HoS	Safeguarding concerns flagged to relevant agencies Support by school to remove attendance barriers for the family
Individual attendance/punctuality discussed with pupils and families, at pupil parent reviews.	Class teachers	Mentoring and advice on attendance/punctuality issues provided to all families
Analyse attendance/punctuality data and information to identify cases of concern and develop appropriate interventions	HoS	Targeted intervention for individual concerns
Meeting to discuss individual cases, monitor progress and refer new concerns. Support and meeting provided for pupils and families.	HT/HoS	Safeguarding concerns flagged to relevant agencies Support by school to remove attendance barriers for the family
Review success and impact of attendance/punctuality strategies for the term	HT/SOM/HoS	Amend and refine interventions as appropriate



## Extended Holidays

In line the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time is not authorised under any circumstances. The school recognises that taking children out of school may constitute a safeguarding risk and will make necessary enquiries, in order to be satisfied that the child is not at risk. The school may contact outside agencies in order to ensure that a visit is legitimate and safe for the child/children.

Headteachers may now only grant leave in term time where the circumstances are exceptional, for example:

- death of parent/carer or sibling of the pupil
- life threatening or critical illness of parent or sibling of the pupil
- parent/carer recuperation and convalescence from critical illness or surgery (medical evidence required) .

Family emergencies need careful consideration. It is not always in the best interest of the child, nor appropriate for them to miss school for family emergencies that are being dealt with by adult family members. Being at school, friendships and support from staff can provide children with stability and care during difficult times. The routine of school can provide a safe and familiar background during times of uncertainty.

If you have exceptional circumstances, which have lead you to request leave in term time for your child/ren, please make the request in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will then make a decision, on whether or not the leave can be lawfully authorised and will do so only if there is a genuine, exceptional and urgent reason for a child to be absent during term time.

## Penalty Notices

If a child is taken out of school without the Headteacher's authorisation, it will be recorded as unauthorised absence. This may lead to the issuing of a penalty notice and legal action being taken.

Section 23(1) Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2007:

Penalty notices may be issued to the parent of pupils who have unauthorised absence from school. The amount of the penalty is £120.

- If this is paid within 21 days the amount reduces to £60.
- If not paid within 28 days the Local Authority will prosecute under section 444(1) unless it comes to our attention that the penalty notice had been issued in error.

## Section 444(1) Education Act 1996:

"If you are the parent of a child of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, you are guilty of an offence."

The court can fine each parent up to £1,000 per child, order payment of the prosecution costs and/or make a Parenting Order.

Please note that:

- penalties and prosecutions are in respect of each parent for each child.
- Parents includes any person who is not a parent of the child but who has parental responsibility for the child (and applies whether or not that person lives with the child) or who has care of him/her. These prosecutions are criminal proceedings and could result in you having a criminal record.

West Sussex County Council has an advice line: 03302 228200

