Stoke Damerel Community College
Attendance Policy

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Attendance Policy and Procedures

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: 20th October 2023.
- The School Specific Procedures (Section D) were approved by the school Governing Body on 20th October 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 regularly.
- 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.

In the majority of instances 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. However, there may be occasions where the pupil's parent/carer will have been informed, in writing, that medical evidence is required to support any 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 agreed this with the school, 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 ow 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	Anita Frier	afrier@sdcc-smhc.net
Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance	Samantha Rogers	srogers@sdcc-smhc.net
Attendance Officer	Pippa Brennand	pbrennand@sdcc-smhc.net
Sixth Form Attendance Lead	Alice Hurrell	ahurrell@sdcc-smhc.net

D2. Notifying the school of unplanned absences

Parents/carers should contact the school before 9am on the morning of each day of the pupil's absence by calling 01752 284221 or emailing attendance@sdcc.net

D3. Staged attendance interventions

Pupil attendance is continually monitored by the Attendance Officer. When a pupil does not attend school, the school will respond in accordance with their Attendance and Punctuality procedures, this may include:

● First Day Absence calls, text messages or emails to all named contacts with parental responsibility.
● In the event of no response being received for the absence the school will attempt to communicate with other named contacts.

● Written communication for unexplained absences.

● Implementation of a staged attendance intervention.

● Home visits.

Continued concerns about a child's attendance may result in 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.

● Failure to comply with the expectations set by the Attendance Officer may result in a referral to the local authority requesting the issue of a Penalty Notice, an application for an Education Supervision Order or court prosecution.

D4. Strategies for promoting attendance

[SDCC-SMHC Attendance SOP](#)

- '100% In it to win it' competition
- Daily positive messages given at line-up each morning
- Post cards emailed each term to parents/carers of students who have 95%+ attendance for that term
- IAP for selected students
- Phased return with support from the Attendance Welfare Practitioner

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

When the whereabouts of a child is unclear or unknown, school will make reasonable enquiries via known contact details and through agencies involved with the family. Visits may be undertaken to friends/neighbours and linked primary schools. School will liaise with Plymouth and other local authorities where appropriate to establish the whereabouts of a child missing education and follow local information sharing arrangements in making enquiries to agencies including housing, health, police and children's social care. Child Missing Education (or at risk of) are reported to the local authority. Students below 50% attendance are recognised as CME and the school will respond in accordance with our safeguarding duty.