GREENWOOD ACADEMIES TRUST

Pupil Attendance Policy

Document Owner:	Chief Education Officers
Reviewed:	26/11/2026

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1 Aims

The aim of this policy is to detail how we secure the highest rates of attendance for all our pupils and meet our obligations as laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance.

Each academy will have an attendance policy that aligns to this trust policy and will include how the academy will:

- Set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promote good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reduce absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Build strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend academy

2 Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory legislation and guidance, and in particular Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK.

All work on attendance will also take place in the context of our approaches to safeguarding, behaviour, alternative provision, admissions and elective home education.

3 Background

The law entitles every child of compulsory academy age to a full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. Where parents decide to have their child registered at academy, they have a legal duty to ensure their child attends that academy regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the academy is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the academy.

The most effective academies consistently promote the benefits of good attendance at academy, set high expectations for every pupil, communicate those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents, systematically analyse their data to identify patterns to target their improvement efforts, and work effectively with the local authority and other local partners to overcome barriers to attendance. They also recognise that the foundation to good attendance is a high quality education, delivered in a calm, safe and supportive environment in which all pupils want to attend and can learn and thrive.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, academies and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve consideration around the academic and pastoral curriculum, behaviour support and procedures for more vulnerable children, such as those with special educational needs or mental health and wellbeing needs. It is also important to note that declining attendance, or changes in attendance patterns, may indicate

a safeguarding concern. This explains why a range of colleagues must be involved in an academy's attendance work. Academies are expected to consider the effective use of resources, including grants such as the Pupil Premium to support children at risk of, or with, attendance concerns.

Attendance is a key priority for the Trustees and the Trust Board monitor attendance across the trust and the application of this policy. We expect all staff involved to have a sound knowledge of good practice in this area and the relevant national and local processes.

4 GAT expectations of academies

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all academies in GAT are expected to follow all DfE expectations as detailed in statutory guidance, and to:

- develop and maintain a whole academy culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance and ensures all staff understand that attendance is everyone's business
- have a published academy attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand that covers expectations in this policy and DfE statutory guidance
- accurately complete attendance registers in line with DfE guidance and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence quickly
- accurately complete admission registers
- regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data for patterns to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place. This will include a focus on key pupil groups such as those receiving Pupil Premium and those with SEND, as well as pupils with known additional challenges to attendance such as young carers
- be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities, and provide them with additional support or reasonable adjustments
- only provide remote education as a last resort, where reasonable adjustments have been considered first, and as part of a wider plan to support the pupil's return to school
- follow DfE guidance on the use of part time timetables
- build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them
- share information and work collaboratively with other relevant local partners, and particularly local authorities, when absence is, or is at risk of, becoming persistent or severe.
- where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate, follow the national framework for penalty notices and legal interventions
- Have a named senior leader responsible for attendance – attendance champion
- Make sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer

5 Role of the Trust Board

In line with DfE expectations, Trustees:

- recognise the importance of attendance and promote it across the trust's ethos and policies
- regularly review trust and academy level attendance data
- ensure leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties