



# GREENSIDE

## Attendance Policy

### Document Control

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October 2022	Approved by TEFAT	Trustees
October 2022	Adopted and implemented by the school	Principal
October 2025	Review date subject to any required statutory updates	Ops Group

## Elliot Foundation Academies Trust Values

### 1. Put students first

- a. We trust and value your professionalism
- b. We share the responsibility for the learning and welfare of all of our students
- c. Our purpose is to improve the lives of students

### 2. Be safe

- a. Don't assume that someone else will do it
- b. Look after yourself, your colleagues and all students
- c. We are all responsible for each other's safety and well being
- d. Discuss any concerns with an appropriate member of staff

### 3. Be kind & respect all

- a. People are allowed to be different as are you
- b. Kindness creates the positive environment we all need to flourish
- c. This kindness should extend to ourselves as well as to others

### 4. Be open

- a. If you can see a better way, suggest it
- b. If someone else suggests a better way to you, consider it
- c. We exist to nurture innovators and support those who take informed risks in the interests of students

### 5. Forgive

- a. We all make mistakes
- b. Admit them, learn from them and move on

### 6. Make a difference

- a. Making the world a better place starts with you
- b. Model the behaviour that you would like to see from others

## Related Policies and Documents

TEFAT Attendance Policy

[TEFAT Safeguarding Policy](#) and [Greenside Safeguarding Appendix](#)

[TEFAT Supporting pupils with Medical Needs Policy](#)

[School attendance parental responsibility measures](#)

The Education Act 1996

The Education Act 2002

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

[DfE Working together to improve school attendance Sept 2022](#)

[DfE Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance Sept 2022](#)

### 1. Introduction

At Greenside we strive to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to aspire to excellence, to achieve their potential and make accelerated progress. For our students to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend on time and every day unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We believe in working together to support all our students to achieve excellent attendance.

Promoting good attendance at Greenside and reducing absence is vital to: ensure student's day-to-day welfare and safeguarding; ensure that every student has access to full-time education; ensure that students make good progress academically and personally; and to ensure that students leave us with the best possible opportunities for their future.

This policy aims to ensure that all students attend Greenside regularly; consequently they will be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available.

The policy outlines the **responsibilities for our school and parents/ carers** in ensuring that students' attendance at Greenside is the best it can be. It also describes the strategies used at Greenside alongside The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust and Hammersmith & Fulham to support and improve attendance.

### 2. The importance of our culture and the curriculum

**High standards of pastoral care, excellent teaching and learning** and an **exciting and broad curriculum** motivate students to want to attend school. They also build confidence and trust with parents/ carers who may feel nervous or anxious about leaving their daughter/ son at school.

At Greenside we recognise that school must be a place where students feel valued, safe, welcome, accepted and supported in order for them to want to attend. This culture is established and maintained through regular staff CPD, induction for new staff and students, high expectations regarding conduct, and systems such as behaviour recognition and rewards. This culture is supported by effective and regular communication between staff teams, as well as between teachers and parents/ carers. Student voice is used to measure our success in maintaining such an ethos.

The curricula offered by TEFAT schools help students to maximise their academic success as well as developing their sense of self and their responsibilities to the wider community. At Greenside we strive to broaden student's opportunities and experiences by introducing them to new and exciting ideas through the taught curriculum, theatrical productions, off site visits, sporting competitions, public performances and opportunities to work alongside community leaders.

Here, at Greenside, good attendance is one of our key priorities and our target is 98%. It is essential that students attend school each day in order to make the best possible progress with their learning.

Good punctuality is also essential and will help ensure that students are prepared for the day. If a student is late, it is very difficult for the teacher to integrate them into the session. Students must line up in the playground by 8.55am when the morning bell is rung for the start of the day. All students (Reception - Y6) are expected to come in through the playground unless another arrangement has been made to enter through the front door. Our Nursery class arrive and depart via Goodwon Road.

### 3. Attendance systems and procedures

#### 3.1. Attendance Registers

Accurate and timely registers enable Greenside to safeguard students as well as to recognise and act upon any concerning attendance patterns. Staff follow the school Register Protocol which is reviewed and shared at least annually. Registers are taken at the start of every morning and afternoon session. In the morning, registers are taken at 9.05am and closed at 9.30am. In the afternoon session registers are taken at 1.30pm. Students arriving after registers close are recorded as 'Late'.

#### 3.2. Recording and responding to absence

During student inductions, parents/ carers are asked to contact the Office on the first day of a student's absence to explain the reason. If no reason is given, or further information is required, a phone call is made to parents/ carers. Once sufficient information has been gained, an absence code is determined by the appropriate member of staff in line with DfE guidance in [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (September 2022). This decision is based on the information provided by parents/ carers when a student's absence is reported and will influence whether an absence is authorised or not.

#### 3.3. Home visits

Home visits are routinely carried out by our Leadership Group if no contact can be made by phone, further information is needed or to see how a student is. Home visits are not pre-arranged and can be made at any time, at the discretion of the school. Staff will always carry their Greenside ID and will expect to see the student in question, if only briefly, in order to ascertain how they are.

#### 3.4. Monitoring and improving irregular attendance

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments, interviews or tests which unavoidably, fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised Absence** is when the Office has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a student's absence from school after a parent/ carer's request. This would be because the school does not consider the absence to be reasonable.

Georgina Webber (Deputy Head) monitors cases where attendance is below 97% fortnightly. For students whose absence has increased, actions are taken which aim to prevent students becoming or remaining a 'Persistent Absentee' (<90%). A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects and we need parents/ carers' fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

These actions include:

- We will contact families by phone by 9.30am if a student is absent and we have not been provided with a reason.
- Initial letter sent to families informing them of their daughter/ son's falling attendance. These letters are sent to all families as a standard procedure.
- Letter invites the family in for a meeting. These are handed directly to the family
- Initial meeting of support with class teacher and/ or Georgina Webber to discuss how improvements can be made
- Ongoing monitoring
- Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting to discuss further support and actions and shared with all agencies. This may include external agency involvement (School Nurse, Education Welfare Practitioner, Medical, Early Help practitioners)
- Referrals will be made to the Education Welfare team when unauthorised absence falls below 80%.
- Formal letters of action and next steps
- Failure to improve attendance over time may result in a referral, which could result in fine and legal action

Students who have been suspended or who are absent for long periods because of ill-health receive appropriate support to return to Greenside, build confidence and bridge gaps in their learning. These plans are drawn up in collaboration with parents/ carers and the student (providing they are able to understand the process).

### **3.5. Attendance and safeguarding**

Concerns about any extended or persistent absence are referred to the appropriate team or staff member. It is recognised that poor attendance may be a sign or symptom of a wider safeguarding issue that requires support (this includes but is not limited to domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, FGM, CCE, CSE or financial strain). Where there are concerns about a student's welfare, action will be taken in line with the Trust's Safeguarding Policy.

### **3.6. Students Missing from Education (CMfE) Referrals**

Academies have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of their students, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences. If a student is absent and contact cannot be made with parents/ carers directly (by phone or home visit), and their whereabouts cannot be confirmed by any of the additional named contacts held by school, then the Local Authority's CMfE team is notified immediately and police are asked to carry out a safe and well check at the home address. The CMfE team is also notified if a student is known to have moved out of the area so is no longer attending, or if a parent/ carer enquiring about a school place states that their daughter/ son is not currently attending a school.

### **3.7. Recognising and rewarding good attendance**

To help students and their parents/ carers understand the importance of regular attendance and monitor their own and their class's attendance, it is discussed and celebrated in the following ways:

At the end of every week:

- The class with the top attendance to be celebrated in Monday's Board Meeting.
- This is rewarded with a prize of some interesting fruit or vegetables.

- Classes with 100% attendance will receive an additional bonus reward such as a class cheese board or a special pudding
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At the end of every term/school year:

- All students with 100% attendance receive a certificate.
- We also celebrate families who have worked really hard to improve attendance.

#### 4. Term-time leave of absence requests

A leave of absence request form **MUST** be completed in all circumstances, as far in advance as possible, and a minimum of 5 school days before the requested absence starts. Forms must be requested from and returned to the school office. One form must be completed per student and incomplete forms will not be considered. There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

The Head of School/ Executive Head will **only** authorise leave during term time in **exceptional circumstances, when absence during term time is absolutely unavoidable**. This decision is entirely at the Head of School/ Executive Head's discretion, based on the information provided by parents/ carers in writing, at the time the request is made.

Where a period of absence is authorised in exceptional circumstances, the number of days will be determined by the Head of School/ Executive Head. For this reason, it is strongly recommended that permission for leave is obtained *before* travel or accommodation are booked.

This is in line with DfE guidance which states that:

215. Parents/ carers should plan their holidays around school breaks and avoid seeking permission from schools to take their children out of school during term time unless it is absolutely unavoidable.

216. An application for leave of absence should (and from certain schools must) not be granted unless it is made in advance by a parent/ carer the student normally lives with and the school is satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstance of the case which justify the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a student can be absent from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion.

[Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE, September 2022)

After submitting a request for term time leave to be authorised, parents/ carers will be informed of the Head of School/ /Executive Head's decision in writing within five school days.

We follow the guidance of the Trust and LA when we are managing periods of unauthorised leave.

#### 5. Formal and legal interventions

Greenside will always seek to resolve any attendance concerns by working to support the family with improving a student's attendance. Where this is not successful, or when those with parental responsibility for the student do not engage with this support, then the academy will work with the Local Authority's School Attendance Support Service to address poor attendance.

The first step would be to set up a formal parenting contract between parents/ carers and the school.

## 5.1. Parenting contracts

- A formal written agreement between a parent/ carer and either Greenside or the Local Authority to address irregular attendance at school.
- Are not legally binding but allow a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.
- Are not a punitive tool, they are intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution.
- Parents/ carers cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in their absence.
- Aim for the parent/ carer(s), and the student where they are old enough, the school and the Local Authority to work in partnership.
- Parenting contracts contain:
  - Details of the requirements the parent/ carer (s) is expected to comply with.
  - A statement from the school and/or Local Authority agreeing to provide support to the parent(s)/ carer to meet the requirements and setting out details of the support.
  - A statement by the parent/ carer that they agree to comply with the requirements for the period of time specified by the contract.
  - The period it will be in place for (most are for between 3 and 12 months but can be longer if needed).

If a parenting contract is not effective at improving a student's attendance, or is deemed not appropriate, the Local Authority has the option to progress as far as needed through the following, hierarchical legal interventions;

- **Education Supervision Orders (ESO)** - non compliance can lead to prosecution and a fine of up to £1000
- **Attendance prosecutions** - if found guilty, depending on the circumstances parents/ carers can be sentenced to a community order, a parenting order, a fine of up to £2500 or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- **Parenting orders** - breaches can lead to a fine of up to £1000

Where safeguarding concerns exist, Greenside's designated safeguarding lead and student's social care services may decide that either a s.17 (Children in Need) or s.47 (Child Protection) plan is a more appropriate form of support.

## 5.2. Fixed Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of parents/ carers for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. Penalty notices are used when parenting contracts are not appropriate, such as when a parent(s) takes a student out of school for term time leave that has not been authorised.

- fines of £60 (if paid within 21 days)/£120 (if paid after 21 days but before 28 days) imposed on parents/ carers
- can only be issued by a Head of School/ Executive Head or someone authorised by them (a deputy or assistant head), a Local Authority officer or the police
- can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences
- can be used where the student's absence has not been authorised by the school
- there is no right of appeal by parents/ carers against a fixed penalty notice
- Hammersmith & Fulham's Fixed Penalty Notice Code of Conduct can be found [here](#).

For full details of the school attendance parental responsibility measures available to schools and Local Authorities see [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) (DfE, January 2015) or Section 6 of [Working together to improve school attendance](#) (DfE September 2022)

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### 6.1. Parents/ carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their daughter/ son attends school regularly and on time.
- Informing the academy on the first day of non-attendance by telephoning the school office before 9am to explain the reason for the absence.
- Ensuring that medical appointments are booked outside school time wherever possible.
- Speak to a member of the Leadership Group or the SENDCo to seek support for any issues that may be preventing their daughter/ son from wanting to attend school.
- Understanding and accepting that absences for family holidays or visits and special occasions will not normally be permitted. Approval will only be granted in truly exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Head of School/ Executive Head.
- Working alongside the school to address and improve any patterns of poor attendance.
- Complying with the DfE statutory guidance on [School attendance parental responsibility measures](#) (January 2015).

### 6.2. Students, when developmentally ready to take some responsibility for their learning, are expected to:

- Attend school every day.
- Arrive on time, ready to learn.
- Tell a trusted adult if there is a problem that might lead to absence.

### 6.3. All staff are responsible for promoting good attendance. Those with specific responsibilities include:

- The member of Leadership Group appointed as **Attendance Lead** is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance taken by the school.
- The Admin Team checks absence after each register period, carries out first day calling. The Attendance Lead and SENDCo also monitor attendance data for individuals and groups and decide on and implement actions in response to patterns shown in data. This might include home visits and support plans.
- **Class teachers and TAs** discuss attendance daily, refer concerns to the Attendance Lead and award prizes for individual and whole class attendance.
- The **Head of School/ Executive Head** decides whether term time leave applications are approved or not (see 'Term time leave of absence requests', above).
- The **Attendance Lead and SENDCos** work with students who face attendance barriers and families who need support.

Greenside is supported to improving student attendance by the following partners:

- **The Elliot Foundation Academies Trust** Regional Director, DSL for the Trust and Legal, SEND and Governance Director
- Hammersmith & Fulham ACE Team