



## **Virtual Learning Attendance Policy**

### **Student Engagement**

To ensure that scholars of Greater Heights Academy receive a meaningful learning experience, we use a scholar-centered approach to instruction. This approach increases scholar engagement through active learning, which is measured by scholar attendance and participation in instructional activities.

### **Attendance**

Michigan compulsory attendance law requires the parent/guardian of a child age six to eighteen to send the child to school during the entire school year, except under the limited circumstances specified in subsection (3) of MCL 380.1561. Scholars are required to follow the school calendar. Instructional time can be entered on any day (e.g., weekends, holidays, etc.), but school make-up time on weekends and holidays will not be counted toward school-day attendance.

### **Definition of Attendance**

Attendance is defined as time during which scholars are engaged in regularly scheduled instruction, learning activities, or learning assessments within the curriculum for study of the core and elective subjects. Attendance also includes directed study, independent study, technology-assisted learning, presentations by persons other than teachers, school-to-work programs, and statewide performance assessments.

Scholars are expected to log into and participate in the online platform each scheduled school day. The system will measure live virtual class (whole group, small group, or one-on-one) logins, lesson activity, documentation of activity, and assigned offline work.

### **Instructional Time**

Scholars must attend all required virtual class sessions for instruction as directed and/or scheduled by their teachers. Michigan currently requires all public schools to offer a minimum of 180 days and 1,098 hours of scholar instruction, which can occur at any time during the day and on any day of the school week, for first through twelfth grades (including alternative education), as specified in Section 101 of the State School Aid Act.

### **Absences**

Greater Heights Academy understands there may be circumstances which warrant a scholar's absence from school. Absences must be reported by the parent/guardian. The parent/guardian will be expected to submit an excuse via email to the scholar's homeroom teacher and the Office Secretary, Chris Bilkos, explaining the absence. If email is inaccessible, the parent/guardian must call the school office at (810) 768-3860.

## **Excused Absences**

Excused absences are defined as absences that Greater Heights Academy regards as a legitimate reason for being out of school. These include:

- Scholar illness or injury (If an absence due to illness or injury extends past three days, a doctor's note is required in order for the absence to be excused)
- Medical appointments are excused with confirmation of the appointment date and time from the provider; when possible, medical appointments should be scheduled before or after school hours
- Pre-approved college visitations
- Pre-approved counseling sessions or administrative appointments
- Death in the immediate family – up to three (3) days may be excused (obituary may be required)
- Court appearances required by legal authorities, unless absence is exempt as specified below (verification may be required)
- Maternity – Childbirth (amount of time dictated by a doctor's note)
- Military Connected Families (e.g. absences related to deployment and return, which should be arranged in advance with the School Leader)
- Absences not to exceed two (2) consecutive days for religious observances (including, but not limited to, Ash Wednesday, All Soul's Day, Good Friday, Hanukkah) may be excused with appropriate documentation
- Reported and unresolved technical difficulties with on-line platform
- No internet access or power outage (It is an expectation for attendance that all scholars must have reliable internet access in the home. Scholars who are unable to log into the on-line platform or have a power outage must have an alternative plan to go to a public library/public location with internet access to access the on-line platform and complete their school work. If the scholar does not have a back-up plan and cannot go to the library/public location, the parent/guardian must notify the scholar's teacher to validate the reason for the absence. Extended periods without internet access will count as unexcused absences.)
- Pre-approved Educational Leave (Scholars may be excused for educational trips not sponsored by the school. It is the parent/guardian's responsibility to obtain approval for the leave and to contact the teacher(s) to determine what lessons or academic obligations must be met as a result of this proposed absence.)

## **Unexcused Absences**

When scholars are absent for reasons other than those stated above, absences are recorded as unexcused absences. For an unexpected absence to be registered as excused, a legal guardian must provide, within three (3) days of the scholar's return to school, an email explaining the absence. The email must include the scholar's name, the date of the absence, the reason for the absence, and any necessary documentation, as requested by the school. If an email is not received within three (3) days of the absence, such absence remains unexcused. Unexcused absences may result in loss of credit.

## **Excused Absence Approval Process**

In order for an absence to be excused, a parent/guardian must submit a written explanation to the teacher and Office Secretary, Chris Bilkos. It should include the scholar's name, the date of the absence, and the reason for the absence. The parent/guardian has three (3) calendar days from the date of the absence to submit the explanation for the absence through email to the homeroom teacher and secretary. Regardless of the absence reason, scholars are expected to make up work due to an absence.

**Testing Attendance Policy**

As a Michigan public school, Greater Heights Academy must follow MI laws and the rules and regulations established by the Michigan Department of Education (MDE). According to MDE, all public-school scholars are required to participate in state testing. Scholars may be required to travel to Greater Heights Academy on predetermined dates as required for testing. These tests may be given over a multi-day period depending on a scholar's grade level. If assistance is needed with transportation for testing, please contact your child's teacher or administration prior to the testing window. Specific testing dates will be sent via email prior to the testing window. The school cannot guarantee that the scholar's assigned teacher will be the test proctor.

**Tracking of Scholar Attendance**

Verification of scholar attendance for virtual learning will not only be tracked by scholars logging into the online system with their UIC # and password, but also by completion of assignments and regular communication with teachers. Students are expected to be present and actively engaged in all virtual lessons presented each day at the time of initial presentation, including small group sessions. Missing virtual lessons, failing to submit assignments or participate in live lessons, or lack of participation in assigned group sessions may result in unexcused absences. Scholars are expected to participate in their learning program between the hours of 8:00 am and 3:30 pm on school days, regardless of whether they are learning in-person or virtually.