

28th April 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

Subject: Early Collection of Pupils (Loose Site)

I am writing to address a matter of increasing concern: the high volume of early collection requests we are receiving and the substantial number of pupils - approximately 100 each day - leaving school before the end of the school day. This pattern of regular early departures is significant in its scale and consequence, and it compels us to restate and reaffirm the expectations and policy that underpin regular attendance at Five Acre Wood School.

Five Acre Wood School is committed to ensuring the progress of all pupils. Central to that commitment is the principle that regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and to benefit fully from the educational opportunities we provide. We therefore actively promote and expect 100% attendance. Pupils are expected to be in school between the hours of 9:15am and 3:30pm each day.

In line with our attendance policy, the school is able to authorise absence only in defined “exceptional circumstances.” Examples of such circumstances, as set out in our policy, include: service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where evidence shows no foreseeable leave that coincides with school holidays; absence recommended by a health professional as part of a parent’s or child’s rehabilitation for medical or emotional reasons; the death or terminal illness of a person close to the family; attendance at a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family; and other strong personal reasons that meet the threshold of being rare, significant, unavoidable and short. The fundamental principles that define ‘exceptional’ are therefore rarity, significance, unavoidability, and brevity.

Whilst we are acutely sympathetic to the everyday pressures and logistical challenges families face - such as heavy traffic, roadworks, waiting needs experienced by our pupils, parental work commitments or the necessity of collecting siblings from other schools - unfortunately, these circumstances do not meet the threshold of ‘exceptional’ as articulated in our policy. Regular early departures have further implications: the Local Authority regards pupils who leave every day early as effectively being on a part-time timetable. Such arrangements are formal processes that must be discussed with the school in fortnightly face-to-face meetings and logged with the Local Authority. They are intended to be temporary measures invoked when the school is not meeting a child’s needs, with a clear expectation that the child’s time in school will increase over time.

Accordingly, and to safeguard the educational interests of our pupils, please be advised that from the start of Term 6 **all existing early-collection arrangements will cease**. From that point forward, any requests for absence or early collection will be considered only in accordance with the ‘exceptional circumstances’ criteria set out above. Requests that do not meet these criteria will be politely declined; alternatively, where appropriate, the formal part-time timetable process may be considered in consultation with the family and the Local Authority.

We ask for your understanding and cooperation in ensuring that pupils attend for the full school day so that they may benefit from the continuity of learning and care that Five Acre Wood School strives to provide.

Kind regards,

Tim Williams
Head Teacher, Five Acre Wood School

