

3rd September 2026

Dear Parents / Carers,

Subject: Early Collection of Pupils (Loose Site)

You may recall that I wrote to you in April 2026 regarding the high volume of early collection requests we were receiving and the substantial number of pupils – approximately 100 each day – leaving school before the end of the school day.

As we begin the new academic year, I am writing to remind all parents and carers of the arrangements regarding early collection. This letter is also being shared with new families joining us, so that everyone is clear about our expectations.

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'. These are circumstances which are rare, significant, unavoidable, and short in duration. 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 the 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.

Where a parent or carer is requesting regular or ongoing early collection due to a pupil's individual needs, the school will only consider this where a GP or social worker has provided a written recommendation advising that the pupil needs to be collected early. The letter must provide a clear rationale explaining why early collection is necessary. Any such recommendation will be considered on an individual basis and does not automatically mean that an early collection arrangement will be authorised.

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.

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

