

# Great Hearts Invictus Lower School

## Attendance Policy and Information



A full classical-liberal arts education requires 100% commitment from families and students to be what it aspires to be. Time spent in the classrooms under the guidance of teachers is essential for learning daily. The Great Hearts classroom is not a place of busy work or simply whiling away the hours for students. It is where irreplaceable instruction occurs, where mistakes are corrected, where good habits are ingrained and strengthened, where minds and souls are intensively formed by the intellectual and moral guidance of teachers. Missed in-person learning cannot simply be made up through independent completion of assignments, readings, or review of classmates' notes.

At Great Hearts Academies, the expectation is for your child to attend school at a minimum of 97% of the school year. This translates to no more than five missed days per school year. It's understandable that some challenges to your scholar's school attendance are unavoidable, such as an illness or a family emergency, however, it is important to understand the impact absences have on your child's success. We need your partnership as the parent/guardian to ensure your child attends school daily and on time. The information in this document will answer many of your attendance questions. Please reach out to Ms. Williams if you need further clarification.

### Excused? Unexcused?

#### Can make-up work be assigned?

Whether an absence is excused or unexcused and when make-up work and tests can be offered can be very confusing.

Simply speaking, make-up work and tests should be available for all excused absences. If the absence is unexcused, teachers are sometimes able to offer make-up work at their discretion. Here are some examples of excused and unexcused absences:

#### State Excused Absences (with appropriate documentation)

- Illness with a doctor's note
- Covid illness/quarantine
- Funerals

#### School Excused Absences (only 9 allowed per year)

- Illness without doctor's note
- Family Emergency

#### Unexcused Absences

- Overslept
- Car trouble
- Vacation or out-of-town visitors
- Sick family member
- No communication regarding the absence
- All arrivals after 9:55am without a medical note

If you are unsure about whether an absence is excused or unexcused, reach out to Ms. Williams for clarification.

### Attendance Notification Procedures

School begins at 7:45am. **ALL** students need to be in their seats by 7:45am. If they are entering the building anytime after 7:45am they will be counted tardy. The **Official Attendance Taking Time is 9:55AM**. If your student is not going to be present for the Official Attendance Taking Time the school **MUST** be notified of each absence. **In addition to emailing your scholar's homeroom teacher, send an email to the following:**

#### Attendance Email

[GHINVattendance@greatheartstxschools.org](mailto:GHINVattendance@greatheartstxschools.org)

"It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments  
the scroll, I am the master of my  
fate, I am the captain of my soul."

— William Ernest Henley, Invictus

# When Do Absences Become a Problem?



## **Chronic Absenteeism**

16 or more absences

## **Warning Signs**

5—15 absences

## **Satisfactory**

4 or fewer absences

The goal at Great Hearts is for our scholars to strive for 97% attendance for the year – this works out to no more than 4 absences.

Once a student reaches 16 absences, they have missed more than 10% of their school year and fall into the category of chronic absenteeism. The State of Texas requires a minimum of 90% attendance for a student to not be considered for retention based on attendance.

Great Hearts Invictus wants to work with each family to address attendance challenges. Please be open to discussing with us the challenges your family faces when it comes to regular attendance so that we may work together for the success of your scholar.

## How Does...

Attendance is one of the most discussed topics in K-12. Reason being is the importance it has on your student not just long term but during their current school year. Where the challenge has grown with attendance is with COVID-19. Our policies around COVID-19 were created to support our students their families in accordance with CDC guidelines. Some common questions we see are:

- Should I notify the school if my child has tested positive for COVID-19?
  - Yes. Parents should send an email to [covid@greatheartstx.org](mailto:covid@greatheartstx.org) and contact the attendance line to report if their child tests positive. Additionally, all absences, including absences related to COVID-19, should be reported prior to each school day.
- How many days can my student be out if they test positive? Does it count against them?
  - Great Hearts Academies follows CDC guidelines of quarantining for 5 days (*unless otherwise specified*), these days will NOT count against your student with the proper documentation.

Attending school regularly helps children feel better about school and about themselves. If children start building a habit of good attendance now, it will eventually become a skill that will help them succeed in high school, college and beyond.

# Have a Game Plan

Things are going to happen—children get sick, family emergencies come up. Make sure to factor these unforeseeable things into your attendance plan for your scholars. Here are some tips to help make regular, on time attendance a priority:

- Schedule doctors appointments to take place after 10:00am to make sure your scholar is counted as present
- If your scholar has an appointment at or before the start of school be sure to bring a doctors note upon the scholars return
- Set a regular bedtime and morning routine
- Lay out clothes and pack backpacks the night before
- Develop back-up plans to get scholars to school if something comes up (sick parent, car trouble, etc.)
- Plan family vacations to coincide with school holidays and don't take extra days
- If your child seems anxious about going to school, talk to teachers for advice on how to encourage your child
- If your child needs to stay home, follow the attendance notification procedures to inform the school
- Openly talk to your children about the important role regular attendance takes in their educational success