



Attendance Policy and Procedure

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Introduction

This policy is written with due regard of the DfE guidance: [Working together to improve school attendance](#) and [School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) Regulations 2024](#).

Going to school regularly is important to your child's future. Children who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. The school consistently promotes the benefits of good attendance, sets high expectations for every pupil and communicates those expectations clearly and consistently to pupils and parents. The school's Senior Leadership Team systematically analyses its attendance data to identify patterns and target improvement. Where appropriate, the school, works effectively, with local agencies and partners to overcome barriers to attendance.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour, and it is important to set such good habits from the outset. Good attendance shows potential employers that your child is reliable. Research suggests that children who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime.

The school's Attendance Champion is Neill Lunnon (Head and DDSL).

The school's objectives to ensure high attendance

To maintain a whole-school culture which promotes the benefits of high attendance, the school sets out to:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.
- Accurately complete attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.
- Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support.

The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Once your son is registered at a school, you are legally responsible for making sure they attend regularly. If your son fails to do so, you risk enforcement action initiated by the Local Authority.

Registration

- The school gates are opened at 8.10am.
- After 8.30am, entry to the school is via Reception.
- Registers are open at 8.40am and close at 8.55am. Pupils who arrive at school after the register has been taken, but before it is closed, will be recorded as 'L' - late on the register.

- Pupils who arrive at school after registers close at 8.55am, without an unavoidable reason, will have their lateness recorded as 'U' - unauthorised late which then impacts on their overall attendance level.
- Pupils must sign in and out if they arrive or leave school outside of the normal times in the School Office.

It is a legal requirement that a register of attendance is taken during the morning and afternoon at school. Any unexplained absence must be coded as unauthorised until a reason is given by parents/carers. This must be no later than 5 days after the session. Only the Headteacher may authorise or unauthorise an absence. The register can only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken, and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, the register will show the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name of the person who made the amendment. Registers are kept for six years as a record.

Every session (AM/PM) is registered through the school internal system - ISAMS. Teachers are expected to ensure that the register is taken as promptly as possible.

Lateness

When pupils arrive late at school, they disrupt routines, affect other pupils' learning, miss the teacher's instructions to the lesson and may also feel embarrassed at having to enter the classroom late. They may also miss important intervention programmes and the opportunity to practice key learning skills. Where pupils show a persistent pattern of lateness, parents/carers will receive contact from the school advising them of the concern and offering support to resolve the issue. Should the lateness continue, parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at school to discuss their child's lateness.

If there is no improvement, despite the school's attempts to address unauthorised absences, a referral could be made to the Local Authority.

Reporting a pupil absence

Parents/carers must contact school on the first and every subsequent day of absence by 8.45am.

For any pupil not present at the close of registration, if the reason is still unknown, a member of staff will attempt to contact the Parent/carers once the registers have closed at 8.55am.

The member will ring every contact, starting with the priority contact, until a reason for absence is known. Messages will be left on voicemail requesting parents/carers contact school regarding their pupil's absence. Outcomes of any phone conversations will be logged on the pupil's electronic school record – ISAMS. Staff will complete the registers in accordance with the correct use of registration codes.

Any unexplained absence will be recorded as unauthorised absence if there is no response from a parent/carer to an enquiry regarding their pupil's absence from school.

For absences relating to a medical appointment, supporting information may be requested to authorise this absence. This can be an email which clearly identifies who the appointment is for, or an appointment card. A period of absence will only be authorised in relation to the length of the appointment.

Absence

Authorised Absence

If your son is ill or unable to attend school for any reason, you should contact the school by phone or email to notify them on the first, and each subsequent day of absence. Depending on the reasons for absence, the Head will decide whether the absence can be authorised or not. Where absence is sickness related, the school may require medical certification, particularly where the absence lasts a few days.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence from school is likely to be recorded as unauthorised absence when:

- there is no parental explanation.
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation for an absence.

Heads are no longer permitted to agree a Leave of Absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. This includes where parents decide to take their children out of school for a family holiday during term time. If parents intend to take their child out of school for a leave of absence (other than a family holiday) during term time, this must be requested in advance and the request agreed by the Head.

Repeated Absence

Schools must regularly inform the Local Authority of any pupils who are regularly absent from school, have irregular attendance, or where absence escalates, and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year).

Schools also have a safeguarding duty, under section 175 Education Act 2002, to investigate absences.

Support from School

The school is the first place to go to discuss any attendance problems. If your son shows reluctance to attend school, it may indicate an underlying issue. Discuss this with your son in the first instance then approach his teacher.

The school will agree a plan with you to improve your child's attendance. If you don't follow the plan and things don't improve, the school will take further action.

Children who are absent from or Missing Education

The DfE guidance 'Children Missing Education' (2024) defines a child missing in education as a child of compulsory school age who is not registered at a school and not receiving suitable education otherwise. Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE), expands the consideration to children who are absent from education. Children who are absent from or missing education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions are at significant risk of underachieving. This can also be a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

The guidance sets out the school's obligations to identify and report children who are missing in education. The school must report to its local authority all pupils of compulsory school age who are added to the admissions register and all pupils who are removed from the register, if they always leave the school other

than at standard transition points (i.e. except the end of the final year of education normally provided by the school). Where a pupil lives in a local authority which is different from the location of the school, the school's reporting responsibility is to the local authority in which the school is situated. In accordance with its safeguarding duties, as set out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education', the school recognises children missing in education as a potential safeguarding issue and follows its safeguarding procedures, as set out in its safeguarding policy. The school has a duty to make reasonable enquiries as to the whereabouts of a child who is missing, in conjunction with its local authority, and cannot remove a missing child from its admissions register until it has agreed with the local authority that all reasonable endeavours to locate the child have been exhausted.

Please also refer to the school's Whole School Missing Child Policy (including a Child Missing Education).

Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and, therefore, the school's attendance ambition for these pupils is the same as for any other pupil. Working with their parents to improve attendance, the school is mindful of the barriers these pupils face and puts additional support in place, where necessary, to help them access their full-time education. This may include:

- Having sensible conversations, providing support and making reasonable adjustments.
- Working with parents and families to develop specific routines and approaches to attendance.
- Ensuring strategies to remove any in-school barriers to attendance, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensuring good pastoral care is provided to support those with anxiety about attendance.
- Ensuring that data is regularly monitored by the school's Senior Leadership Team.

Tower House School is committed to safeguarding the welfare of children and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Approved and Signed by Chair of Governors

Name: Antony Phillips

Signature:  _____

Date: 23rd April 2025
