



## **Attendance Policy 2019**

Promoting positive behaviour and excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

The school will promote positive behaviour and good attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials. Good attendance and behaviour by pupils will be recognised appropriately. All children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

All children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems that arise with attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Governors, through the curriculum committee, will be kept informed on the school's overall data on attendance and any issues arising from attendance data.

The school has continually developed and refined its procedures to track and report on attendance and rigorously follows up on all absences. However, parents have a strong duty and responsibility for their child's education and there is now an increasing national expectation that parents should ensure their pupil should attend school for 190 days a year unless there is a justifiable reason for absence.

### **Key Objectives:**

1. Our aim is for attendance to be at least 95.6% in each academic year (September to July).
2. The school target for the academic year 2019-20 is 96.4%.
3. All absences should be notified and authorised for justifiable reasons.
4. To provide advice and support to parents to promote the school's policy.
5. To encourage pupils to have a positive attitude to school and recognise the importance of attending school in good time, with the equipment they need for school, so that they are prepared and ready to learn.
6. We will continually improve pupil attendance by:
  - Promoting and rewarding regular attendance and good time keeping.
  - Every Day and on Time.

- Raising parental awareness about
  - ✓ The legal requirement for all pupils to attend school regularly
  - ✓ The crucial link between regular attendance and raising pupil achievement
  - ✓ The need to give informed reasons which justify and authorise pupil absences
  - ✓ Giving appropriate help and advice
- Enabling the school governors to fulfil legal requirements regarding admission, registration and required data.
- Consistently monitoring and reporting to governors on pupil attendance and where appropriate take agreed actions, including initiating fines.

### **Rewarding Good attendance / time keeping**

Pupils are encouraged to be on the playground for 8.40am in the morning ready for the bell at 8.45am. Arrivals after this time will be considered as a lateness and be marked accordingly.

There are regular opportunities to praise and reward pupils who are punctual and have regular good attendance as well as incentives to encourage those pupils and families who may need support, advice and encouragement. Pupils and families will have opportunities to receive:

- 100% certificates termly.
- Class weekly attendance award cakes.
- Prizes and Tower Ticks for good punctuality and attendance.
- End of year Cinema trip for 100% annual attendance.

### **School Procedures**

If a child is absent from school, then the parent or carer must inform the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence by phone or email. Verbal messages from siblings will not be accepted. A text will be sent to priority number 1 contact, if we have not received a reason for absence by 9.15 am on the first day of absence. It will be assumed that if he/she continues to be absent, that this will be for the same reason as given on day one.

Schools are required to take an attendance register twice a day, and this shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. If a child, of compulsory school age, is absent, every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. Only a school can authorise the absence, not parents. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing. We ensure we follow the Local

Authority's Code of Conduct in this matter and apply rigorously the basic principles of promoting high levels of attendance.

**Arriving late to school:** The school day begins at 8.45, and this is the time children are expected to be in class, ready to learn.

Any child arriving after 8.45 must report to the main reception. Children arriving after 9.10 will be marked as late. Children arriving after 9.30 will be marked as late after the register has closed (this is treated as an absence).

Children regularly arriving late to school are monitored. If a child arrives late on 5 or more occasions in one term, a letter is sent to their parent/carer advising them of this. If the late arrivals persist parents/carers are invited into school to meet with the Head Teacher and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss reasons around the continual late arrival to school, and solutions to improving this.

### **Requests for Absence from School**

**Authorised Absences:** are morning or afternoon away from school for a good reason, like illness or other unavoidable exceptional cause. Leave to attend medical appointments or absences due to pupil's illnesses are authorised on some occasions, with appropriate evidence of medical appointment.

It is not appropriate for the school to authorise absences for shopping, looking after other children, haircuts etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency (eg bereavements) or for medical appointments that must be in school time.

**Religious Observance:** Pupils granted special authorised leave on religious grounds to celebrate religious festivals which fall during a school day, such as Eid. The number and timing of such absences are usually agreed by local religious leaders. The local authority recognises the need for these celebrations and will authorise one day of absence only for each religious observance.

### **Circumstances:**

Very occasionally there may be very special family events-circumstances which the Headteacher/ Governors may authorise.

### **Annual holiday/Extended Leave**

see Appendix 1

**Unauthorised Absences:** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which 'no leave of absence' has been given. Any absence from school without permission will be recorded as unauthorised.

This includes

- Parents keeping a child off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark
- **Colour Coded Letters:** Colour coded letters are sent to parents at the end of each term. The letter informs parents of their child's current attendance:

Green	-	95-100%	Grey	-	85-91%
Yellow	-	92-94%	Red - Less than 85%		

- We are also sending a letter to all parents of children who have attendance of less than 90% highlighting the fact that their child's attendance is poor and offering advice and discussion sessions. This will differ as the year moves on to include comments on improving attendance, falling attendance and persistent absence. This began in September 2018.

Parents, whose children are experiencing these difficulties are encouraged to contact school at an early stage so we can work together at resolving the issues, this is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school or the parent may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the County Council. He/she will also try to resolve the situation with voluntary support, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these officers can issue Penalty Notices or use court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office, or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

When an individual pupil's attendance level falls below 85% in any term, without good reason, a referral to the Education Welfare Officer will be made by the school. Following investigation, any unresolved issues could result in the parent receiving a Penalty Notice or ultimately a prosecution under the Education Act 1996 s444.

**Leave of Absence:** The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 specifies that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore the school will take a zero tolerance stance to authorising leave of absence in term time, apart from in exceptional circumstance, from

September 2013. Only the Head Teacher can authorise a leave of absence, and each request will be considered on its own merit. All holidays will be viewed as unauthorized.

Leave of absence taken, but not authorised will be marked as an unauthorised leave of absence (G code). The school will also mark a child as taking an unauthorised absence (O code), in circumstances where the school feel that an explanation for an extended absence has been taken, but when proof of illness has not been supplied by the parent carer. Unauthorised holidays may be referred to the Local Support Term and may incur a fixed penalty fine.

### **Penalty Notice**

See Penalty Notice Protocol appendix 2

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/Code-of-Conduct-From-1.1.2018.pdf>

### **Parental Responsibility:**

Only parents with parental responsibility should request permission to collect a child from school during the school day. Only the following adults have legal parental responsibility.

- If parents are married, separated or divorced, both parents have parental responsibility on an equal basis.
- If parents are unmarried:
  - (1) If the mother's name only appears on the birth certificate **ONLY THE MOTHER** has parental responsibility unless the father has obtained it by formal written agreement or through a court order.
  - (2) If the father has registered the birth with mother and his names appears on the birth certificate, **BOTH** parents have parental responsibility on an equal basis.
- Other people (step-parents, grandparents etc.) Do Not have parental responsibility unless they have a court order (e.g. adoption, residence order) or have taken over parental responsibility as legal guardian.

There is a specific form for delegation of Parental Responsibility in Appendix 3.

### **People responsible for attendance in school:**

Andrew Ridout - Head Teacher

### **Summary:**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents/carers have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

School staff are committed to working with parents/carers as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Written: 26<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Reviewed: September 2019 (with support from L.A. Attendance Advisor)

Date of next review: November 2020

## Appendix 1

### Extended Leave: Issues & Practices

#### **Ethical Statement:**

The experience of visiting and living in another country/climate/culture can be a wonderful and rewarding experience with many life changing benefits. However readjusting to differing lifestyles and expectations can be difficult and challenging for some children and adults. There is clear evidence that the frequency of visits during term time has led to discontinuity in learning and underachievement in end of Key Stage Assessments and the purpose and length of such visits must be considered carefully.

#### **Some Reasons for extended visits:**

1. To visit extended family, particularly grandparents who may not be able to travel to Britain.
2. Illness or death in the family.
3. Domestic or property problems.
4. Weddings and other celebrations.
5. Hajj/ Umrah
6. Holiday
7. Visits often take place during the British winter which are the milder months in other countries.
8. The length of a visit varies from 2 weeks and in some circumstances several years depending upon the reason for the visit i.e. holidays tend to be shorter, family problem visits tend to be longer.

#### **Some positive outcomes:**

- The visit will be of educational benefit i.e. widening a child's horizons
- A child will experience its family ethnic roots, a sense of belonging
- Children enjoy the special individual attention they may receive when on a visit
- They have contact with family they do not see on a regular basis e.g. grandparents
- Can strengthen links with family in Britain on return
- Develops mother tongue
- Children experience a sense of open space and freedom
- Children experience a widely contrasting locality
- Experience of attending a contrasting school will widen a child's understanding
- Children are able to share their experiences with other children

#### **Possible negative outcomes:**

- Taking a child out of school during term time always affects progress and achievement

- Increased turnover of class members can be disruptive to everyone and creates additional work for staff
- Children about to leave can at times be very unsettled and disruptive in class
- Children miss members of their family/ community and the usual routines and expectations
- Leaving friends behind at school and then returning to different friendship groups
- The uncertainty / anticipation of the visit can cause anxiety or over excitement
- The uncertainty of the length of stay can be disruptive and distressing for those left behind
- Differing expectations / readjustments of roles i.e. older girls may take on cooking and cleaning roles and boys may take on role of father if father is away
- Readjustment to life and routines when in different location
- Readjustment to life and routines when returning to Britain
- Readjustment to routines and expectations of school
- Possible loss of status at home, school or community
- Trauma if there has been a death or serious illness in the family
- Unsettled accommodation problems for participants both home and abroad
- Illness whilst abroad and/or on return to Britain because of dietary / sanitary change or weather

**Action to be taken when child is due to leave:**

- a. School staff support child, focus a child's attention on working hard before they go away.
- b. H.T. ensure information is clear about who will have parental responsibility for any remaining siblings if parents are absent.
- c. Teacher to arrange for child to take appropriate work to do.

**Action to be taken when child returns:**

- a. Teacher and appropriate staff must meet to make initial assessment of the child and their current needs. Once assessment is completed then appropriate plan and programme can be drawn up and initiated.
- b. Child can share experiences if appropriate because all children can learn from the variety of situations and school can build upon these to ensure visit is as productive as possible.

**Trips to airport:**

Only in exceptional circumstances would a child be permitted to accompany the family to the airport for any arrivals or departures.



## Appendix 2

Penalty Notice Protocol

<https://www.staffordshire.gov.uk/education/welfareservice/Attendance/Code-of-Conduct-From-1.1.2018.pdf>

**Appendix 3**

**Tower View Primary School Delegation of Parental Responsibility Form**

<b>Parent's Name</b>	<b>Home Address</b>	<b>Relationships to child/parent</b>
	<b>Telephone number</b>	

- I am a person with Parental Responsibility for the following child/ren, as defined by the Children's Act 1989
- Until further notice, I give my permission for

<b>Name</b>	<b>Address where the children will be living</b>	<b>Relationships to child/parent</b>
	<b>Telephone number</b>	

to carry out Parental Responsibilities on my behalf.

- I give them the authority to make all decisions relating to the education of the following child/ren.

<b>Child's Name</b>	<b>D. of B.</b>	<b>Class</b>	<b>Home Address</b>

<b>Dates for which the person will be carrying out Parental Responsibility on my behalf</b>	
<b>Date of leaving</b>	<b>Date of return</b>

Signature of Parent:

Date:

Witness:

## Appendix 4

### Absence Codes

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning
/	Present am	Present
\	Present pm	Present
B	Educated off Site	Approved Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstance	Authorised Absence
D	Dual Registration (pupil attends another establishment also)	Approved Activity
E	Excluded	Authorised Absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family Holiday (NOT AGREED OR EXCESS DAYS)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Annual Family holiday (Agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Activity
L	Late (before registration closed)	Present
M	Medical / Dental	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Activity
R	Religious Observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller Absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (after registration closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational Visit or Trip	Approved Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Activity
X	D.F.E. closed to pupils	Attendance not required
Y	Enforced Closure	Attendance not required
!	Not compulsory school age absence	Attendance not required
#	School closed to pupils & staff	Attendance not required
*	DFE Z pupil not on roll	Attendance not required
-	All should attend- no mark recorded	No mark