

ATTENDANCE POLICY

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Note: What to do as a parent / carer if your child is unable to attend school

Please refer to the attendance guidance document on the policies page of the relevant school website for details of how to report a student absence.

1. Policy statement

- 1.1 The Two Counties Trust is committed to ensuring that students and families understand the absolute importance of full attendance at school.
- 1.2 Absence has a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress; indeed, it is the greatest determinant of under-achievement at all phases. Poor attendance, persistent absence, severe absence or sporadic absences may also be an indicator of underlying issues that need resolving either inside or outside of school.
- 1.3 Absence from school may also mean that a young person is more vulnerable to safeguarding risks, such as sexual and criminal exploitation, including county lines activity. As such, the Trust invests time and money in working with families to make student attendance a top priority. As a Trust, we take our duty to safeguard children and our mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage seriously. Securing great attendance for all students is at the heart of our work. We work tirelessly to create a culture in our academies where students want to attend and we see great attendance as a benchmark of our culture.
- 1.4 This policy is underpinned by the following legislation and guidance:
 - The Education Act 2002
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (2018)
 - Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018)
 - Attendance guidance DfE (2018)
 - The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and latest amendment 2016
- 1.5 This policy relates to many other Trust policies and, in particular, the following:
 - Anti-Bullying
 - Child Protection and Safeguarding- KCSIE 2023
 - Equality act 2010
 - Positive Behaviour

2. Purpose

- To create a culture in which students are enabled to become mature and industrious, accepting responsibility for their own actions and preparing for future success linked to employability standards.
- To form an active partnership with families to support the learning of their children.
- To ensure regular contact with students in order to safeguard their well-being.
- To provide every opportunity for our students to secure outstanding outcomes and reach their full potential linked to our school values.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

- 3.1 Our school will:
 - Accept that good attendance is everyone's responsibility.
 - Formally recognise good and improving attendance and punctuality (above national average).
 - Challenge attendance that is less than good and set targets for students to improve and apply the graduated response to remove barriers.
 - Intervene when low attendance / punctuality becomes a problem and before becomes a habit, thus removing barriers and working with families.



- Follow up on any non-attendance with no contact on the first day of absence with a phone call and / or home visit.
- Deal sympathetically with any problem a student may have which is causing their attendance / punctuality to decline and always stay in regular contact with families to remove barriers.
- Act swiftly to reduce absence, in particular persistent absence and severe absence, with a specific focus on immediate support for vulnerable students.
- Ensure every child of statutory school age has access to full time education.
- Communicate a clear and transparent process around the management of attendance to families following the listed process: prevention and reward / recognition; support and challenge with punitive measures where appropriate; and legal action and / or external agencies when other measures have no impact as part of the graduated response.
- Not grant extended leave during term time and will automatically refer to the Local Authority to fine.
- Involve other external agencies if we believe there could be wider safeguarding issues surrounding the child.

3.2 Families will:

- Encourage their child to attend school daily, be punctual, and inform the school immediately if their child is absent.
- Inform the school in advance of any hospital or medical appointment unavoidably scheduled during school time via the Attendance Officer.
- Inform school of any problems which might affect their child's attendance.
- Cooperate with the school if their child's attendance / punctuality is unsatisfactory.
- Make requests for special leave of absence for their child during term time through liaison with the Attendance Officer.

3.3 Students will:

- Always attend school unless prevented by a specified illness or unavoidable circumstances.
- Always arrive to school and lessons on time.

4. Targets, Attendance and Punctuality

4.1 The target for all students is to achieve 100% attendance and 100% punctuality. The minimum expectation for all students is to have attendance above the national average.

Attendance during one school year	Equivalent days	Equivalent session	Equivalent Weeks
95%	9 Days	18 Sessions	2 Weeks
90%	19 Days	38 Sessions	4 Weeks
85%	29 Days	58 Sessions	6 Weeks
80%	38 Days	72 Sessions	8 Weeks
75%	48 Days	96 Sessions	10 Weeks
70%	57 Days	114 Sessions	11.5 Weeks
65%	67 Days	134 Sessions	13.5 Weeks

5. The impact of poor attendance on academic progress

5.1 If your child misses school on a regular basis, they are damaging their future life choices. Nationally, it has been proven that children with low attendance in primary school miss out on making the expected progress in vital literacy and numeracy skills and find it difficult to catch up. In secondary school, 19 days' absence correlates, on average, to a grade at GCSE in all subjects.



6. Procedures

- 6.1 TTCT schools have in place a coherent system of rigorously monitoring student attendance. Class teachers, subject tutors, form tutors, middle leaders, senior leaders, home link officers and the Education Welfare Officer all play key roles in this system and SIMS is used to manage this information.
- 6.2 If a telephone call from families with parental responsibility is not forthcoming, then the absence will be treated as unauthorised. If no contact has been made by the family, the school will visit home. Home visits are part of our safeguarding culture and to foster strong relationships between home and school.
- 6.3 Social Services will be contacted by a member of the Safeguarding team on the first day of an unexplained absence for any child with a Child Protection Plan.
- 6.4 If a student is absent for three consecutive days and contact has been made from home, further contact will be made with home to gauge when the student will be returning to the school and to arrange for missed work to be sent home, if appropriate.
- 6.5 At the end of the week, an unauthorised absence report is generated and a letter asking for an explanation is sent home. The list of students with unauthorised absences is also printed and passed to the middle leader with responsibility for the cohort.
- 6.6 If there is a suspected pattern developing in the absences of a particular student, or group of students, then a registration certificate can be printed from SIMS. This is a record of attendance for the whole year and it is sent home periodically in the student's annual report for parents' information. It is a confidential document and, therefore, should be kept carefully and only shown to the student and / or their parents / carers.

7. Medical and dental appointments

- 7.1 Medical and dental appointments should be made outside school hours.
- 7.2 Any urgent medical and dental appointments must be authorised by sharing medical evidence with the Attendance Officer.
- 7.3 If the absence is authorised, family members with parental responsibility must ensure they collect the student from visitors' reception as no student will be allowed out of the school unaccompanied. Families must also ensure that the student is aware of the appointment and is ready and waiting at the authorised time. It is not the responsibility of the school to inform students of appointments. In emergency situations, we will ensure the student is aware of the appointment. In any other circumstances, the student has to make their own way to reception at the authorised time.

8. Leave of Absence During Term Time

- 8.1 Leave of absence during term time is no longer permitted. Any extended absence from the school will be counted as unauthorised and can lead to a fixed penalty notice from the Local Authority. In order to avoid personal opinion and to ensure complete fairness for all, we refer all planned leave of absence during term time to the Local Authority.

9. Students Who Are Late

- 9.1 Late to school is defined as students not being in registration when the register is taken.
- 9.2 Students are expected to arrive on time for school. Registers will be closed 30 minutes after the first session of the day begins (or the length of the form time or first lesson in which registration takes place). Students arriving after the register has closed will be recorded as absent using code U, or another absence code that it is more appropriate.
- 9.3 The Attendance Officer will send a text message to family members with parental responsibility informing them when their child is late.
- 9.4 High levels of attendance are recognised in celebration assemblies and through certificates, letters and with positive behaviour points.

10. Persistent Absence (PA) and Severe Absence (SA)

- 10.1 Those students with attendance below 90% are classed as persistently absent.
- 10.2 Those students with attendance below 50% are classed as severely absent.



- 10.3 Any student who is Persistent Absent will be monitored and put on an action plan. The Attendance Officer will meet with students, and their families whose attendance cause concern. Where necessary, home visits are made. In situations of persistent truanting, a parent / carer may be fined.
- 10.4 Those students who fall into the Severely Absent category will receive the support set out above and the school will endeavour to engage external agencies to support improved attendance.

11. Religious leave of absence

- 11.1 For a day set aside exclusively for religious observance, students will be granted one day for each occasion of religious observance with a maximum of 3 days over one academic year.
- 11.2 These absences, if granted, will be recorded as authorised using the 'R' code on SIMS. These are the codes as stipulated by the Department for Education and whilst absence is authorised, it does count against the child's attendance. This is the national policy.

12. Registers

- 12.1 The Register is a legal document which must be completed fully and on time at AM and PM registration and then for every lesson throughout the day. Should a student not be in registration, they should be marked absent; however, if form tutors are aware of any appointments elsewhere, in or out of school, these should be recorded using the relevant code.
- 12.2 TTCT schools follow the Department for Education guidance on the use of attendance codes and do not deviate from this.
- 12.3 Staff must take a register in every lesson. If a member of staff suspects that a student is missing from the lesson, then they should notify the Attendance Officer immediately. The absence register is emailed out to all key staff.

13. Strategies for Promoting High Attendance

- 13.1 Promoting high attendance is recognised to be everyone's shared responsibility.

The school leadership teams will:

- Form positive relationships with students and families.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance.
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006, and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named member of the School Leadership Team to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resources.
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the DfE as required.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site, are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence and is then interpreted to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.

Teachers will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and families
- Form positive relationships with students and families.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006, and other attendance related legislation and DfE guidance 2023.
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support students and their families.



14. Attendance Monitoring

- 14.1 The Attendance Officer monitors child absence on a daily basis.
- 14.2 Families are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see above).
- 14.3 If a student's absence goes below 90%, the student will be formally monitored with parental involvement.

15. Legal sanctions

- 15.1 Our schools work hard to engage with all our families to ensure that, where attendance of a student is a concern, appropriate support is identified and implemented in line with the graduated approach, where appropriate and where possible. We expect that all families will engage positively with support and that attendance will improve as a result. However, as a last resort, the Local Authority will fine families for the unauthorised absence of their child from school (where the child is of compulsory school age).
- 13.2 If issued with a penalty notice each parent can be fined £60 which rises to £120 each if not paid within 21 days. The payment must be made directly to the Local Authority. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the Local Authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.
- 13.3 The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher but can only be authorised under "exceptional circumstances" in line with guidance from the Local Authority, following their code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:
- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year.
 - One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission.
 - Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

16. General Data Protection Regulation

- 16.1 All data within this policy will be processed in line with the requirements and protections set out in the General Data Protection Regulation.



Appendix 1 - Attendance Codes

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (AM)	Child is present at morning registration
\	Present (PM)	Child is present at afternoon registration
L	Late Arrival	Child arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Child is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual Registered	Child is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Child has an interview with a prospective employer / educational establishment
p	Sporting Activity	Child is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Child is on an educational visit / trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work Experience	Child is on a work experience placement
Authorised Absence		
C	Authorised Leave of Absence	Child has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Child has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised Holiday	Child has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a child will be absent due to illness
M	Medical / dental appointment	Child is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Child is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 child is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Absence	Child from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised Absence		
G	Unauthorised Holiday	Child is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Child is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised Absence	The school is not satisfied with reason for child's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Child arrived at the school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in the school	Child of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local / national emergency, or child is in custody
Z	Child not on admission register	Register set up, but child has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half term / bank holiday / INSET day

