



Pupil Attendance Policy

Updated: May 2023, Reviewed January 2024

Status & Review Cycle: Statutory, Annual

Next Review Date: May 2025 (or when guidance is updated)

Principles and Aims

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve our effort on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Attendance is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances. The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 and key stage 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%).

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent)¹ and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study)². Whilst every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance expectations should be set for all pupils, our attendance policy should account for the specific needs of certain pupils and pupil cohorts. Our policy should be applied fairly and consistently but also consider the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

At Tatsfield Primary School, good attendance is considered a high priority. Parents are informed of school hours and expectations in our prospectuses, at their induction meetings and our attendance information which is sent to all parents.

Poor attendance and lateness adversely affect both pupils and staff.

This policy applies to pupils in the school.

Legal responsibilities

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends primary school regularly and punctually.
- The LA has a legal duty to ensure that parents carry out this responsibility

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/understanding-the-educational-background-of-young-offenderssummary-report>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/knife-and-offensive-weapon-sentencing-january-to-march-2018>

- The school has a legal duty to record absence of registered pupils in compliance with the regulations
- The governing body has a legal duty to ensure the school register is kept in accordance with regulations and must set attendance targets which are then forwarded to the LA.

This policy supports the attendance responsibilities for parents, schools, academy trusts and governing bodies, and local authorities which are outlined in the *Working together to improve school attendance guidance* Sept 22 and a *Summary table of responsibilities for School Attendance Guidance* Sept 22.

It is the parents' responsibility and their legal duty (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) to ensure that their child receives full-time education. We seek a partnership with parents to encourage good attendance and punctuality.

The school attendance policy reflects that pupils are expected to attend 100% of the time unless the absence is authorised by the Headteacher (or delegated person in the school). Holidays are usually not authorised during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Each request will be considered.

KEY CONTACTS:

- Headteacher – Mrs Rachel Jewitt
- Deputy Headteacher – Mrs Louise Knock
- SENCO – Mrs Ellie Pascal
- Learning Mentor – Mrs Jo Cargan
- School secretary – Mrs Debbie Ellis
- Inclusion Officer (Local Authority) – Sarah Garden
- School contact details: 01959 577356 / school@tatsfieldtl.co.uk

Incentives and Rewards to promote good attendance

Class attendance is celebrated in a termly assembly as well as in the regular school newsletters.

School Procedures

The School Day

8.30-8.40 staggered window for pupils to arrive

8:40 School Start time

3:10 KS1 and EYFS finishes

3.15 KS2 finishes

Registers

The register is a legal document and is confidential. It may be requested in a court of law as evidence in a prosecution for non-attendance.

The registers are completed twice daily at the start of morning school and immediately after lunch break. Official registers are produced every half term.

The register should be completed by the class teacher by **8.50** and checked by the office by **9:00am** each morning and within 10 minutes of the start of the afternoon session, by **1.20pm**. After this time, the child will be considered late/absent and will need to report to the main office.

Lateness

Children who arrive late must report to the office.

Children will be marked late if they arrive after **8.40am**.

Children from any key stage, who arrive after **9.20am**, without any justifiable reason will be recorded as an unauthorised late.

To minimise disruption at the beginning of the day, when children are late, parents must leave their children at the office; they must not accompany them to the classroom.

Persistent lateness will result in a letter from the Headteacher. If the situation doesn't improve, a meeting will be held with the Learning Mentor or Headteacher.

A class teacher who has any particular concerns about attendance or punctuality should refer the child to the Headteacher. Registers are monitored by the IO (Inclusion Officer) at least half-termly and daily by our school office staff.

Leaves of Absence from school

Categories of Absence

Absence is authorised when:

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause/medical needs. Depending on the reason, the pupil may be allocated Home Learning.
- The day is set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- The Headteacher has been notified of and given permission for a specific expected absence.
- Appointment card or letter has been provided to confirm the pupil has to attend for medical or dental appointments.
- When the Headteacher has decided there is an exceptional circumstance.
- Suspensions.

Unexpected Leave of Absence

Parents are instructed to inform the school of all absences by either personal contact to the main office, letter, email school@tatsfieldtl.co.uk or via telephone 01959 577356; daily for each day of absence. Notification of the nature of the illness and the expected length of absence is also expected. A record of absence messages are saved in the pupils' personal file.

Guidance for vomiting and diarrhoea means 48 hours need to be observed before returning to school. We will consider each case on an individual basis and advise parents/carers accordingly.

Medical/other Appointments

For medical or other appointments during the school day, notification is required **in advance**, where possible these should be arranged out of school hours.

Appointment cards or evidence should be shown to the school.

Absence Procedures from School

The office will contact the parent/carer of any child who is not in school for whom we have not received an absence message for by **9.20am**. A phone call will be made to the main contact and secondary contact if necessary. This is recorded as unauthorised.

As part of our safeguarding practice, we may conduct a home visit or seek advice from an external agency (eg Children's Services) if we have not received any communication regarding the absence

and/or we have endeavoured to make contact without success. If a home visit is made, they are then recorded under our safeguarding practices and the notes from the visit added to this record.

For persistent unauthorised absence a telephone call is made to the parent/carer on the first day of each non-attendance and recorded on the pupil file. Where patterns of persistent unauthorised absences are found, advice may be sought from an external agency (such as the LA Inclusion Officer or Children's Services).

Communication

School will treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance. In communicating with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like. Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the best placed person in the school works with and supports the family and wherever possible the person should be kept consistent.

If an explanation for absence is unsatisfactory, parents will be contacted to discuss any difficulties with the Headteacher.

Parents are informed of their child's attendance through the Arbor app, during termly consultations and in the end of year report in terms of percentage. Parents are able to login to their child's Arbor profile to check their daily percentage. Attendance is colour coded as to whether this is:

>97%	Outstanding	Dark green
96%	Good (expected)	Light green
90%-95%	Below average	Yellow
<90%	Cause for concern – target setting/referral	Red

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes problematic, school will draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, school will take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and early support.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, we will facilitate all partners to work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this will include a meeting with pupils and parents at risk of persistent or severe absence to understand barriers to being in school and agreeing actions or interventions to address them. This may also include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

If attendance does not improve and falls below 90%, parents are notified that any further absences for illness will be unauthorised without proof of medical evidence.

If a pupil's attendance is unsatisfactory, a letter is sent home to parents highlighting their child's attendance percentage and the impact to their education. If attendance continues to fall, then a meeting with the Headteacher and/or a meeting with Inclusion Officer will be arranged.

If a child's unauthorised attendance drops below 90%, the school may make a referral to the LA Inclusion Officer (see below).

Requests for Leave of Absence during term time

Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their children out of school during term time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted. Exceptional circumstances will be decided by the Headteacher.

Parents wishing to apply for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances must complete an application form and submit it to the Headteacher. The forms are available from the school office and school website. (See Appendix 1)

The role of the Inclusion Officer (IO)

The Education Welfare Service is part of the Local Education Authority which has responsibility for promoting, encouraging and enforcing regular school attendance. The IO visits the school to note absence patterns and lateness.

Monitoring/support

Children whose attendance is a concern will be referred to the IO. The Attendance Officer and IO work closely with these families developing relations and actions to improve their child's attendance. This is monitored and reviewed every half term.

Persistent Absence

For pupils who are persistently absent (at 90% or below), these attendances are tracked by the IO and the school's persistent absence reported to the Local Governing Board Committee and the Trustees on a termly basis. Formal meetings are scheduled to discuss the barriers families may be experiencing and to set targets for improvement.

Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officer will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

In addition, The Education (Pupil Registration England Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1st September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

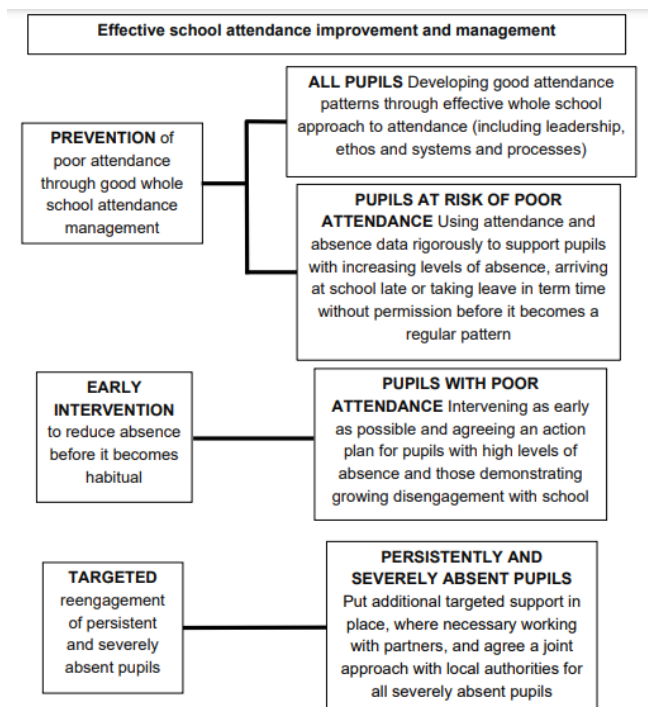
Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Headteacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

If a pupil is identified by police and Inclusion officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences a FPN may also be issued.

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and this requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount. The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must consider a

prosecution of the parent/carer in the magistrate's courts for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

This information is shared with parents termly, is on the school website and when requests are sent in to the school



Pupils with medical conditions or special educational needs and disabilities

We understand that 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 attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. That said, in working with parents to improve attendance, school will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face and we will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education.

This will/could include:

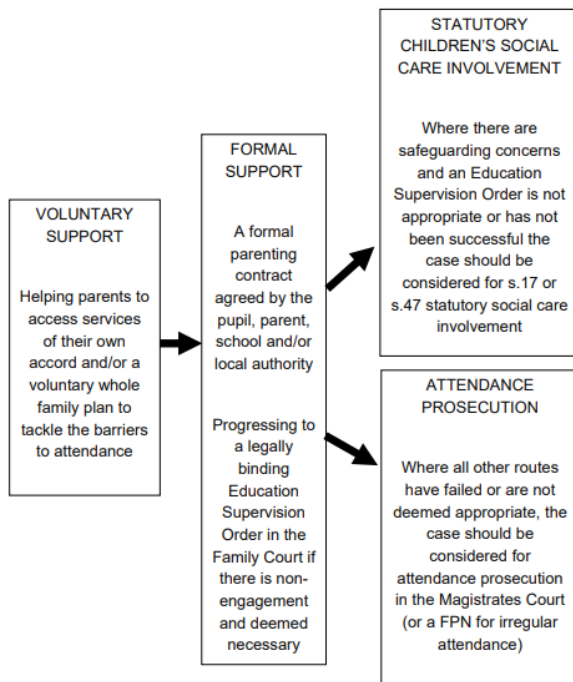
- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed. Considering whether additional support from external partners (including the local authority or health services) would be appropriate, making referrals in a timely manner and working together with those services to deliver any subsequent support.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, school should work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. Please see further details on our SEN offer
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.
- Ensure data is regularly monitored for these groups including at board and governing body meetings and in Targeting Support Meetings with the local authority so that additional support from other partners is accessed where necessary.

Pupils with long term illnesses or other health needs may need additional support to continue their education, such as alternative provision provided by the local authority. Local authorities

are

We
talk
how
help

must



responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. Please see further information on our Policy on Supporting Pupils With Medical Conditions at school.

will in all cases, be sensitive and avoid stigmatising pupils and parents and will to pupils and parents to understand they feel and what they think would improve their attendance to develop individual approaches that meet an individual pupil's specific needs.

Please note that a part-time timetable only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a

long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend fulltime, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore this will be treated as authorised absence.

Monitoring

The senior leadership team analyse the attendance data on a regular basis looking at both percentages and patterns/trends to absence. Interventions and support will be put in place at all levels. These interventions will be monitored and the intervention adjusted if and where necessary.

Reporting

The Headteacher reports attendance data termly to the Local Governing Board Committee and the Trustees. Attendance data is shared with stakeholders in school newsletters.

Sharing Information and working collaboratively with other schools/partners

We work with other local schools and partners to support parents.

If we are not aware of a reason why a child does not attend school for 10 days, they will be reported as a Child Missing Out On Education and a referral will be made to the local authority.

Appendix I

Tatsfield Primary School

Application for leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please read the following guidance carefully.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form if you want the Headteacher to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request.

Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice

Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60, per child per parent/carer, if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Headteacher will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision in writing.

For further information, please refer to our School Attendance Policy.

Name of child:	Class:
I am applying for leave of absence for my child for from:, To:.....	
Number of school days:	

The exceptional circumstances for which leave is requested (attach relevant supporting evidence if required):		
Has your child already had leave of absence in this school year? YES / NO		
If YES, please give dates and details:		
I also have children in Year		
Signed: (Parent/Carer)	Date:	
To be completed by the Headteacher		
Having considered your request carefully, my decision is that leave of absence is:		
Approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as authorised.
Not approved	<input type="checkbox"/>	The absence will be recorded as unauthorised.
Child's attendance to date	<input style="width: 100%;" type="text"/>	
Explanatory notes:		
Signed:	(Headteacher)	Date: