

### Attendance policy

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11.11.2020	0.1	Scheduled Review	Internal Lead Review – Update name & logo. Update responsible names. J Bowman	DfE
03.12.2020	0.2	Scheduled Review	Board Lead Review - No changes. H Bowman	
11.12.2020	1.0	Scheduled Review	Ratification by Board	
13.10.21	1.1	Scheduled Review	Major updates following legislation changes. C Gethin.	
19.11.21	2.0	Scheduled Review	Ratified by Board	
09.12.21	2.1	New legislation	Updated items from attendance monitoring and clarifications of wording. C Gethin	
10.12.21	3.0		Ratified by Board	

## 1. Aims

TSSMAT schools want to ensure that our children are able to take the fullest possible advantages of all that we have to offer. We want every child to attend school every day that they can. This policy outlines the expectations and procedures of attendance at TSSMAT.

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold, and it complies with our trust's funding agreement and articles of association.

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### The CEO

- The CEO monitors attendance across the schools and ensures robust questions are asked of attendance trends and support for specific families to effect rapid change.

### Governors/Directors

- At Anson, the Local Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.
- At Richard Crosse, The Howard and St Mary's, The Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Supporting children and families whose attendance gives cause for concern. This will involve assisting in resolving any situation which may be having an adverse effect on a children's attendance. This may include case work with children, and their parents where thought appropriate, to improve the child's attendance. Casework is completed up to the threshold where statutory action is deemed necessary.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors / CEO / Trust Board
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

- Working with professionals, the CEO and if bought into, the education welfare officers, to tackle persistent absence
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Keep abreast of daily attendance through RM Intelligence.

### **Class teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis in a timely manner, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **Office staff**

Office staff are expected to:

- take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- Update the Headteacher daily with an overview of children’s absence patterns which cause concern.
- Produce a monthly report which outlines all children who are between 93% and 90% (persistent absence) and below.
- Send appropriate letters to families who are persistently late or absent.
- Complete report to CEO half termly.

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **4.2 Procedures**

Pupils must arrive in school on each school day by:	8:30am
The register for the first session will be taken at:	8:30 am
The register for the first session will close at:	8:45 am
A child will be marked as ‘L’ (late) if they arrive between these times.	8:45am - 9:00am
Children arriving after this time will be marked as ‘U’ (Unauthorised absence)	9:00am
The register for the second session will be taken by:	1:15pm

### **Unplanned absence**

The pupil’s parent/carer must notify the school office by phone, email or website absence notification system on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school office in person, by phone or email, at least one day in advance of the appointment where possible. In the event of an on the day appointment, parents should let the school office know as soon as practically possible. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise. Please complete a Term Time Request form which can be found on the school website.

### **Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

The school monitors late arrival of children. In the morning those arriving through the school gate later than 08:45 will be marked as arriving late via a 'L' in the register.

Persistent lateness will be monitored and Headteachers will work with families. If persistent lateness continues, the Headteacher will become involved and actions will be taken to overcome any barriers to improve punctuality. Ultimately, continued unauthorised lateness could result in records being provided to the Local Authority which may result in Statutory Action being taken.

Children arriving after the close of register (09:00) will have a 'U' (unauthorised absence) recorded on the register, unless there is an acceptable reason verified by a parent / carer. Where a student does arrive late, **it is ESSENTIAL that this is recorded in the register.**

### **Following up absence**

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, initially by phone
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

### **4.3 Reporting to parents**

We will send attendance data to parents termly (see Section 5.2 regarding letters to parents regarding persistent absence).

## **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

**Authorised absences** are sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and has not been requested.

- parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- truancy during the school day

**Unauthorised leave of absence:** for any absence from school which has been requested but not granted. (see 5.1)

Schools will never authorise the withdrawal of pupils by their parents as a result of a parental concern or complaint. Such absences can be damaging to children's education, are unnecessary, do not allow staff to deal with the issue efficiently, and, as a consequence, will be unauthorised.

TSSMAT Schools have a safeguarding duty to investigate unexplained absences, 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' statutory guidance. The school will share relevant data to the Local Authority and other relevant professionals as required

This policy fully complies with Government regulations. Statutory guidelines state "Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances". Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances should be made in advance of the event and in writing with specific details included such as dates, and should be addressed to the Headteachers or by completion of the schools dedicated Term Time Request form. If a leave of absence is granted, then it will be for a fixed period of time. Should the absence not be granted, but still taken, then it will be classed as unauthorised leave of absence. An application for a Penalty Notice to be issued from the Local Authority will be made for any unauthorised leave of absence of 10 sessions (5 days) or more in the current or previous half term.

### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

Headteachers will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Headteacher's discretion.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart. The trust will authorise 2 days of religious observance across the year.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the Headteacher may grant term-time leave are:

- The death or terminal illness of a close relative.
- Weddings of close friend or relative
- Out of school programs such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.

All cases will be considered on individual requests.

### **5.2 Reducing persistent absence**

- Attendance data and trends are analysed on a monthly basis by Headteachers and actions taken where necessary.
- Our schools have good relationships with parents and will discuss any concerns and offer support.
- Parents will receive a letter when a child reaches **93%** as a reminder that their child's attendance is starting to cause a concern. This offers support and the opportunity to discuss any issues.
  - Parents will receive a letter when a child reaches **90%** which is classed as Persistently absent. This letter continues to offer support and opportunity to discuss issues but also, support will be sought to intervene, supportive but formal meetings will be held in order to improve attendance. Additionally, medical evidence be requested/provided to authorise any further absence. This medical evidence can be in the form of an appointment card or prescription, for example. Parents will be supported to reengage children with school once the GP note period has concluded.

### **5.3 Legal sanctions**

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The 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 pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

### Strategies for promoting attendance

Attendance is high priority and parents are reminded of this in regular updates. Where attendance is flagging a cause for concern families are supported on an individual basis.

### Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer is the Headteacher and they monitor pupil absence formally on a monthly basis.

The CEO will monitor pupil's attendance half termly with Headteachers as outlined in section 3.

If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting their parent/carer (see 5.2 we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Board of Directors and/or local governing body.

Our Trust collects and stores attendance data using Integris and is used for monitoring and accountability purposes in order to track the attendance of individual pupils, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

### Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and every three years by the full Board of Directors.

### Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered

<b>J</b>	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
<b>P</b>	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
<b>V</b>	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	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 pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day