



## ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy approved & adopted by	Headteacher & Governing Committee
Date	September 2023
Review cycle	Annual
Reviewed	September 2024

### Introduction

Tor View School is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all members of our school community to inspire, learn, enjoy and achieve. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend school regularly and your child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. We have high expectations for attendance.

Our school community includes a number of children who are not able to attend school full time or who have prolonged absence due to ill health related to their medical condition. For this reason, our attendance policy needs to reflect these circumstances and acknowledge our responsibility in implementing measures to support the attendance of these children and our duty to provide more creative learning opportunities in other settings e.g. hospice, hospital, home.

Our identified School Attendance Officer is Emma Walsh (Deputy Headteacher).

### Governors:

- Adopt the whole school policy and review regularly;
- Monitor the consistent implementation of the attendance policy;
- Agree statutory targets for the school;
- Be supportive of the high staffing levels required to:
  - i) support the return to school of a child who has been absent for a significant length of time due to medical reasons;
  - ii) ensure that appropriate learning opportunities can be delivered and reviewed for children who are too poorly to attend school.

### Why regular attendance is so important:

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence disrupts teaching routines so may also affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in a prosecution.

### **Why it is important to provide regular activities for children who are too poorly to attend school:**

Although a child may not be well enough to attend school, they may actually be well enough to access educational activities within their home/hospice/hospital. In this case, procedures outlined in the document "Children who are too poorly to attend school" will be followed. Such activities are important because they:

- maintain the link between home and school which in turn will aid the child's return to school;
- provide normality for the child and their family;
- provide educational stimulation for the child at home/hospice/hospital;
- enable the child to maintain their level of attainment and continue to make progress even though they cannot attend school;
- enable the family/carers to be involved in their child's education and to deliver activities when the child is well enough;
- enable us to review the child's educational provision regularly and respond to any changes in their learning need.

### **Understanding types of absence:**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. The Authority will use a Penalty Notice if a pupil/student is absent 10 sessions in a term, or 14 sessions over 2 consecutive terms. There are 2 sessions per day, am and pm. Any legal proceedings where pupils are absent over the allocated days includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy before or during the school day;
- Absences which have never properly been explained;
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (school transport late arrival is not included);
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed;
- Holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Headteacher.

For those children who are struggling to attend school full time due to their complex medical needs, school and the parents/carers may discuss flexible hours. When a parent seeks a reduction in hours or days, the school and health professionals will look at the individual child and their needs and work with the parents to provide appropriate education for their child in line with the document "Children who are too poorly to attend school". The child's needs will be the priority, rather than achieving full time attendance figures. Absence from school in these circumstances will be authorised. We will work with families and the schools Local Authority Consultant to ensure there is an improvement in attendance for any Child Missing Out On Education (CMOOE).

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If your 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 can give the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. All teacher recordings of unauthorised absence will be discussed with the Head of Department.

### **Absence procedures:**

If your child is absent you **must**:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence;
- Pass on a message via the Passenger Assistant on transport;
- Or, you can call into school and report to reception.

### First Day of absence procedure if we do not hear from the Parent/Carer

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone the parents/carer to follow up;
- Contact emergency contacts;
- If we do not have a reason as to why a pupil is absent and all contacts, including emergency contacts have been telephoned, we will pass this information on to the Police Community Support Officer or contact 101 by 1pm. This is following our First Day Response Pathway. (See Appendix 1)

### Follow up action

- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Consultant and/or Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher if absences persist via letters and telephone calls;
- If appropriate, we will refer the matter to the Attendance Consultant linked with school if attendance moves below 90% as per Local Authority protocol. Attendance 90% or below is classed as Persistent Absence and strategies will be put in place to ensure attendance improves.

If your child has a prolonged absence due to medical reasons, we will:

- Keep in regular contact with the family;
- Follow procedures outlined in the document “Children who are too poorly to attend school”;
- Provide educational activities at home/hospice/hospital if appropriate.

### **Telephone Numbers**

There are times when we need to contact parents about lots of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. So help us all to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number-if we do not then something important may be missed. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year. To safeguard pupils, we require 3 emergency contact numbers in total, including parents/carers.

### **In school Strategies to Improve Attendance/Punctuality**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. School may consider using the following strategies to help support parents in improving their child’s attendance and or/punctuality. This includes:

- Celebrating full attendance with pupils through certificates and awards;

- Meetings in school between parents/carers, pupils, class staff, health professionals and Deputy Headteacher/Headteacher;
- Recognising the needs of individual pupils when planning a return to school following significant periods of absence;
- Parenting contracts;
- Medical evidence of illness such as photograph of appointment card, prescription slip;
- Use of the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) and/or referral to outside agencies (including the Local Authority Attendance Officer);
- Letters to inform parent/carers of level of attendance and share the wider support available and how to access this;
- Penalty Notices.

### **Therapy Dog**

We have a therapy dog called Ruby at Tor View School. We hope that Ruby will develop pupil attendance through engagement and interaction. Please refer to our School Therapy Dog Policy.

### **The Local Authority Attendance Consultant:**

If difficulties cannot be resolved using in-school strategies, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Consultant from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, and unauthorised absences persist, these Consultants can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

### **Lateness:**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher finding out what is happening that day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

### **How do we manage lateness:**

The school day starts at 9am and we will expect children to be arriving at this time.

Registers are marked by 9.30am, and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9:30am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

However, if a pupil is late for school because of an issue with home-school transport they will not be marked late.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Deputy Headteacher and/or a member of the senior management team to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

### **Holidays in Term Time:**

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children away in school time.

Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. There is **no** automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday.

All applications for leave must be made in advance in writing and, at the discretion of the school, any time off school will only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'. In making a decision, the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Only in exceptional circumstances deemed by the Headteacher, 'leave' of over 4 days be authorised. Exceptional is something that happens very rarely and is unusual; not typical.

It is important that you understand the circumstances when leave in term time will **not** be agreed by us:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below 90% or will fall to or below that level as a result of taking holiday leave.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

### **Children Missing in Education**

If we have not had any confirmation with a reason for pupil absence, from any of the emergency contacts listed on the school's system which has been provided by the parents, the Senior Leadership Team will take the decision and refer pupils to the Children Missing in Education Team.

A child missing in education is defined as a child of compulsory school age who is not on a school roll and not receiving an education via other means for example, via Elective Home Education or an alternative provider such as a college.

This includes but is not limited to situations where:

- A child / young person has been removed from roll after being permanently excluded and no alternative provision is in place
- A child / young person has not been attending school and a home visit reveals that the family may have moved away
- A child / young person has moved in to the area but no arrangements have been made to access a new school
- A child / young person has moved out of the area (this includes moving outside of the UK) or is about to move out of the area but no arrangements have been made to access a new school
- A child / young person who has been offered a school place, but parents have refused the place offered by the authority is not aware of alternative arrangements for the child / young person's education
- A child may still be at risk of missing education or missing out on education even if they are on a school roll and such cases should be reported to the Local Authority via [CMOOE@lancashire.gov.uk](mailto:CMOOE@lancashire.gov.uk)

### **Religious Absence:**

The school will authorise one day 'leave' per religious festival e.g. Eid, but no more than 3 days in any one academic year. Parents must request this leave in advance. If pupils of differing faiths do not attend school during traditional festivals e.g. celebrating Christmas or Easter, it will be at the Headteacher's discretion for use of which attendance code is used.

### **Roles and responsibilities for attendance matters in our school:**

#### **Parents/Carers:**

- Ensure children attend school regularly and punctually;
- Contact school on 1<sup>st</sup> day of absence;
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance in writing;
- Attendance at meetings in school;
- Participation in the home-school agreement and Common Assessment Framework, and co-operate in support and interventions offered by school or other agencies;
- Ensure children go to bed on time;
- Ensure their child has their breakfast before coming to school. Magic Breakfast is available should parents/carers feel that their child would benefit.

#### **Pupils:**

- Acknowledge behaviour needed out of school e.g. early bedtime;
- Attend school/registration punctually;
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an effect on their school attendance.
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by the school or other agencies.

#### **Headteacher/School Attendance Lead:**

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school;
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- Ensure adequate protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities;
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance;
- Ensure there are designated staff to oversee educational provision for children who are too poorly to attend school (Class teacher and Deputy Headteacher).

#### **Designated Staff:**

- First Day Response: Contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided; follow First Day Response flow chart;
- Input and update the attendance registers;
- Regularly identify and monitor school attendance and punctuality levels;
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance following flowcharts 1 and 2 (see appendix) and using parenting contracts where appropriate.
- Ensure, if appropriate, children who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons have opportunities to access educational activities in line with the document "Children who are too poorly to attend school".
- Discuss attendance at Annual Reviews and share as part of Summer Term Annual Reporting

#### **All staff:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment;

- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils' concerns;
- To be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance;
- To see pupil attendance as the responsibility of **all** school staff;
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures.
- Discuss attendance at Parent/Carer's Evenings.
- Be pro-active in providing learning opportunities for children who are too poorly to attend school.

**School targets, projects and special initiatives:**

The school has targets to improve attendance and your child has an important part to play in meeting these targets.

We strive to achieve at least 95% level of attendance for our school. We recognise that for some of our very poorly children, that 90% will be an aspiration. However, our target is to achieve better than this because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling and we believe our pupils can be amongst the best in a special school.

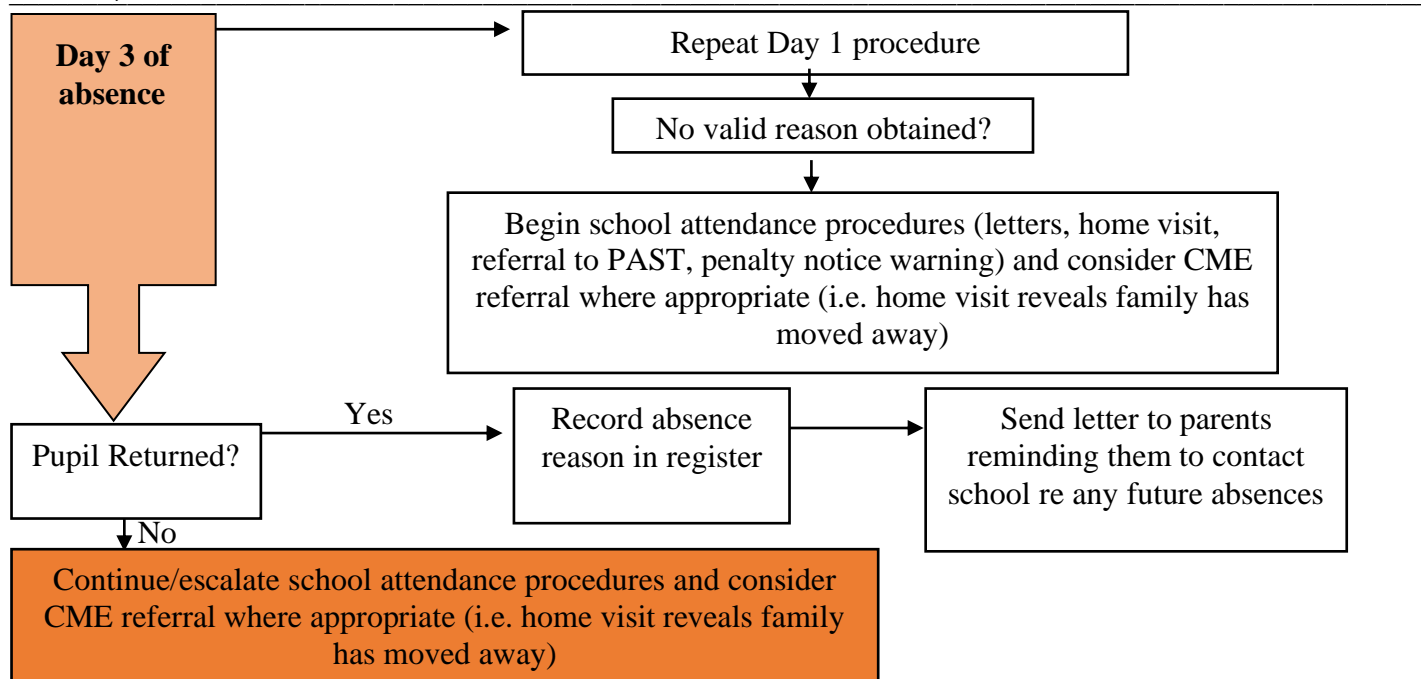
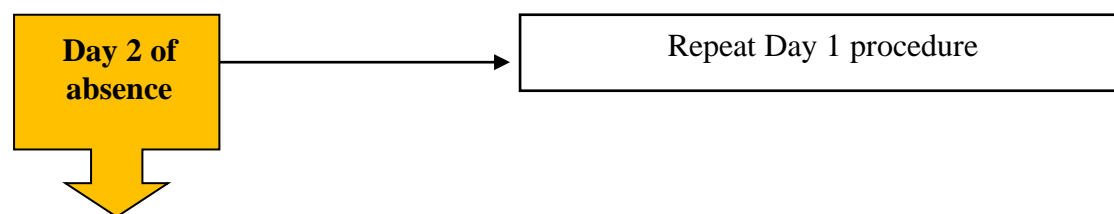
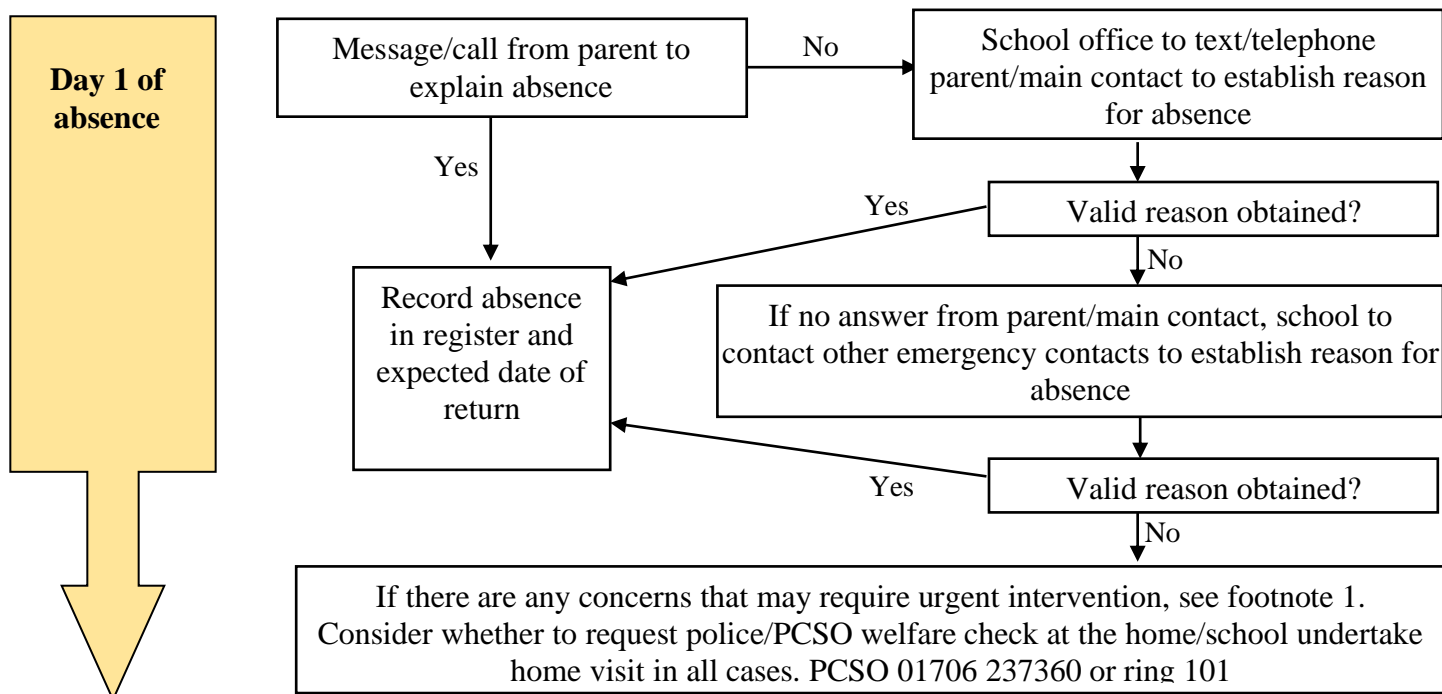
Through the school year, we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made. We work very closely with families whose child has complex medical needs to ensure that learning continues, as appropriate, even if their child is too poorly to attend school.

**Summary:**

Our school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils, as this is the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. For those children with extremely complex medical needs, we pride ourselves in being pro-active in supporting their attendance and education.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the document "Children who are too poorly to attend school" and also the 'Therapy Dog Policy'. These are available from the school office.

## TOR VIEW SCHOOL PATHWAY FOR ABSENCE (First day response)



<sup>1</sup>In some instances, more urgent notification to the local authority may be appropriate if contact with parents/carers is problematic e.g.

- Children Looked After – schools should notify the CLAS Service Manager
- Children subject to a Child Protection plan – schools should notify the named social worker
- Children in situations of known domestic violence – schools should consider whether safeguarding/child protection procedures should be followed.