

TOTTINGTON
HIGH SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY

2023-2024

WORKING TOGETHER
AIMING HIGH
ACHIEVING SUCCESS



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Education
Trust

Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Aims & Priorities.....	3
3. Attendance.....	4
3.1 – Attendance Agreement.....	6
3.2 – School Procedures.....	7
3.3 – Lateness.....	8
3.4 – Rewards and Incentives.....	9
3.5 – Safeguarding	9
3.6 – Staff Responsibilities	10
3.7 – Parent/Carer Responsibilities.....	10
3.7.1 - Absence.....	10
3.7.2 – Illness and Medical Issues.....	11
3.8 – Monitoring Attendance.....	12
3.9 – Failure to Improve Attendance	13
3.9.1 - Penalty Notices	14
4. Holidays in term time.....	14
5. Additional Information	15
5.1 - Attendance at Off-Site Provision	15
5.2 - Other Providers deemed as ‘Other Educational Placements’.....	15
5.3 - Home Tuition/Hospital Teaching	15
5.4 - Work Experience Placements (W).....	15
5.5 – Truancy within School	16
5.6 – Use of attendance data monitoring and review	16
6. Attendance Targets.....	17
7. The registration system.....	17
8. Appendices	19
8.1 - Categorisation of Absence.....	19
8.2 - Absence Process.....	20

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1. Introduction

Tottington High School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all children and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all children feel safe, healthy, supported, and valued. For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DfE. Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets to reflect national, Trust and local targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals. This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

2. Aims & Priorities

1. To promote full attendance for all students.
2. To actively encourage attendance by promoting a positive school environment, where students can achieve and feel a sense of well-being.
3. To provide a safe, secure learning environment for students.
4. To reward excellent attendance and improved attendance.
5. To adhere to the statutory requirements in relation to the national criteria for attendance and the formal procedures concerning student registration.
6. To make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities in relation to school attendance and punctuality.
7. To make parents/carers and students aware of the importance of full school attendance to achieve academic success.
8. To communicate to all relevant parties (teachers, parents/carers) the legal position with respect to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised".

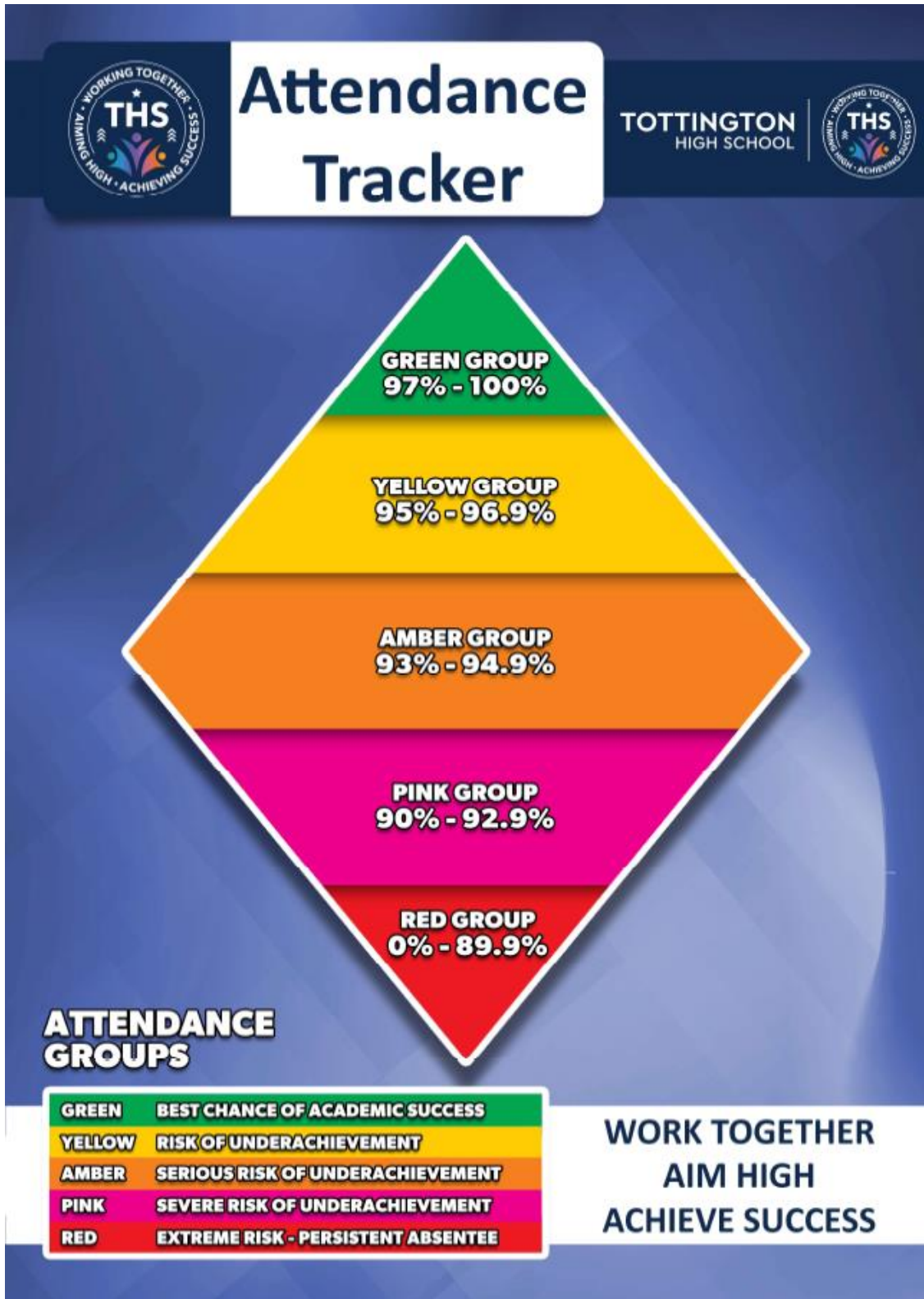
3. Attendance

We should always be aiming for 100% attendance but sometimes it's not always possible. Approx. 95-96% is average for student attendance across England. Good attendance says a lot about a young person to future employers - it can show that the person is 'reliable', an important characteristic to employers. Poor attendance says the opposite, and no matter how good grades may be, an employer does not want a worker who does not show up for work when they should.

More pertinently, poor attendance affects grades. Research has found that 90% attendance means that there may well be a drop of at least one full grade at GCSE per subject. The table below breaks down how exactly what attendance can equate to:

PERCENTAGE ATTENDANCE	DESCRIPTION	WHAT DOES IT MEAN?
100%	Excellent	Full attendance and something to be very proud of.
Above 97%	Very Good	Equates to between 1 to 6 days off each year, and missing between 5 and 30 lessons across the year but this shouldn't hinder progress.
95% - 96.9%	Good	Equates to between 6 to 10 days off each year and missing between 30 and 50 lessons across the year. This might hinder progress.
90% - 94.9%	Below Average and concerning.	Equates to between 10 to 19 days off each year. 90% is half a day off every week! Equates to missing between 50 and 95 lessons across the year and will probably hinder progress in most subjects. Parents will be invited into school to discuss attendance concerns
80% - 50%	Persistent Absentee – A serious cause for concern	Equates to between 19 to 38 days off each year. 80% is one full day off every week!!!! Equates to missing between 95 and 190 lessons across the year and it WILL hinder progress in all subjects! Parents will be asked to attend relevant meetings and further intervention and action may be put in place
Below 50%	Severely Absent – Urgent cause for concern	Missing more than half of the school year will most definitely hinder progress in ALL subjects.

At Tottington High School, we use an attendance diamond to monitor attendance levels.



3.1 – Attendance Agreement

Students will be expected to be in school every day and:

- Arrive in school and to class on time - (persistent latecomers will be placed in 'late detentions').
- Remain in class unless given permission to leave.
- Remain in school unless given permission to leave. Students leaving must sign out at reception only when given staff permission.
- Catch up missing work following absence.

Parents/Carers will be expected to:

- Make sure their child attends school every day, unless too ill to attend.
- Make medical and other appointments outside of school hours except in emergencies.
- Where medical assistance is necessary in school hours, parents should produce medical evidence of the appointment.
- Organise family holidays during school holiday periods. Holidays will not be authorised and likely to carry a fine of taken during term time.
- Support their child and school in aiming for full attendance at school.
- Contact the student office on the first day and each subsequent day if their child is absent from school to explain the absence. Truancy texts will be sent out to all parents whose child is absent that morning and not accounted for. (Further details below)
- For extended periods of absences or recurrent absences further written confirmation may be requested.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time.

The Education Act 1996 section 7 defines the Duty of parents to secure education of children of compulsory school age.

(7) The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

The Education Act 1996 section 576 defines the meaning of "parent".



Tottington High School Behaviour Policy 2023-2024

(1) In this Act, unless the context of otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or youngperson, includes any person-

- (a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
- (b) who has care of him, except that in section 499(8) it only includes such a person if he is an individual.*

Definition of a parent

A parent means:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- Any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and
- Any person who has care of a child or young person i.e. lives with and looks after the child.

The local authority and Academy will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular student when using the legal measures, but generally, parents include all those with day-to-day responsibility for a child.

Parents and students can expect the following from school:

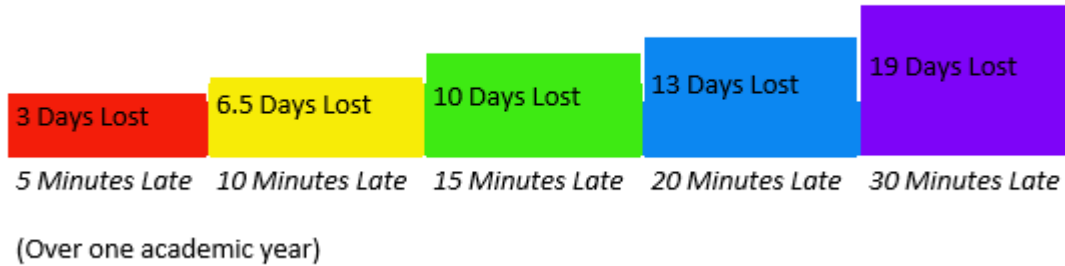
- Early contact from school when a student fails to attend without providing a reason.
- Regular and accurate recording of attendance
- Informing parents if a student's attendance falls below expected levels.
- To listen and understand to the barriers to school attendance and offer advice and support to improve attendance.
- To agree action plans to improve attendance.

3.2 – School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

3.3 – Lateness

It is important that students are punctual so that they do not miss out on the beginning of each school day. Students must attend on time every morning.



Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.30am. The registers will remain open for 60 minutes. Any student arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed.

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Students who are late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. Where lateness gives cause for concern the following procedures will be put in place to correct this:

1. Students who are late are met by a member of the school's attendance team and lateness is recorded.
2. Students who are late to school to school are issued with a Lates Detention at lunchtime on the same day, the duration of which is 15 minutes.
3. Persistent lateness will lead to students being put on a punctuality report with their form tutor or their Head of Year.
4. If lateness continues Parents will be called in to sign a punctuality agreement and/or attend an attendance panel.
5. If lateness continues a penalty warning letter will be issued by the school.
6. Penalty notice served.

3.4 - Rewards and Incentives

Students are rewarded for excellent attendance in a number of ways:

- Attendance is celebrated weekly in by form tutors and in weekly Hub assemblies.
- Each week the form with the best attendance will be recognised for their achievements.
- During Form Time, students with excellent attendance and students demonstrating consistent improvement in their attendance will be recognised.
- Individual recognition comes in many forms including postcards, phone calls home, assembly awards, and on Celebration of Excellence Evening.
- Half termly, termly and whole year achievements are also recognised.

3.5 - Safeguarding

A child missing or absent from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. The school follows procedures for dealing with children that go missing or are absent from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

All schools are required to make the Local Authority aware of every registered student who fails to attend school regularly and any children who have been absent from school, where the absence has been treated as unauthorised for a continuous period of not less than 10 school days education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 regulation 12).

Schools are permitted to remove compulsory-school-aged children from roll on the limited grounds set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

Removing a child from the school roll is a very important decision. Children who fall out of the education system are likely to have poor outcomes and may be exposed to increased risk of harm. Schools must follow correct procedures to ensure that they do not breach their legal and safeguarding duties.

In September 2016, the Department for Education updated the [statutory guidance](#) to reflect the 2016 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations.

All schools (including academies and independent schools) must notify their Local Authority when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the 2006 regulations (as amended).

Schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the CME officer, before deleting the pupil's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii).

This attendance policy is part of a broader suite of safeguarding policies including the school's Child Protection Policy and Procedures.

3.6 - Staff Responsibilities

School staff will carry out a range of tasks to support students and families with attendance issues. Heads of Year, Form tutors and School Attendance Officers will monitor, and record attendance and intervention will occur at various levels, including meetings with student and parents. Parents will be contacted by Form Tutors mostly in the first instance if there are concerns around attendance.

3.7 - Parent/Carer Responsibilities

3.7.1 - Absence

If a child is absent, parents/carers should call the school on the first day stating the reason for the absence. Parents should contact the school via the telephone lines or email the attendance team (attendance@ths.set.org) to report their child absent from school.

It is imperative a reason for illness is provided. "Unwell" or "Sick" are not acceptable reasons and will lead to the absence being recorded as unauthorised until further details are provided. The school must be notified daily by 8.30am every day.

If no contact is made by parents/carers explaining the absence on the first day the school will use 'Truancy Call' to send a text message to secure an explanation. This Truancy Call will be sent out by 10am each day. If absences are reported after 8.30am, they may not be picked up by the attendance team until after the absence text is sent out to parents. This is because after 8.30am, the attendance team will begin to check registers for absences where there has been no contact by parents and reason given. Until a reason is provided, these absences will be logged as unauthorised.

This system is automated with our registers and identifies students who are absent without an explanation automatically. If due to system upgrades, crashes or failure, contact cannot be made via the text system, as soon as the issue is identified, the school attendance team will ensure these students are contacted via the telephone as a matter of priority and urgency. They will be supported by Pastoral Year Managers to ensure phone call and parental contact is made swiftly. In order to facilitate this, the attendance officer will check the list of messages sent against the list of absences both before the message is sent and then once again after confirmation of the messages being sent is received.

If, after the child returns to school no explanation of absence is given by the parents/carers, the school will write again. The absence will be recorded as unauthorised after 4 weeks if no explanation can be obtained.

3.7.2 – Illness and Medical Issues

Not all illnesses require an absence from school. For minor childhood ailments such as coughs, colds, earaches we would not expect children to be absent. However, when a parent makes the assessment that their child is unfit for school, they should follow the above absence process. The following reasons for non-attendance will not be authorised, unless they are being investigated by your doctor (medical evidence will be required):

- Hay fever
- Headaches
- Tummy ache
- Toothache
- Banged / stubbed toes
- Blisters
- Periods
- Growing pain
- Pain after having Orthodontic treatment, i.e. having braces fitted
- Unwell
- Not slept well the night before
- Nose bleeds
- Brother or sister has been ill
- Parent or sibling has Covid

It is a school's decision whether to accept a reason for a child's absence and whether to authorise that absence.

In circumstances where there are concerns about a child's attendance or reason for absence, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested

The types of scenarios when medical evidence may be requested include:

- Child is absent due to common childhood ailments which are being investigated by a Doctor/GP
- Child is absent and there are frequent odd days absences due to reported illness
- Child is absent and the same reasons for absence are frequently repeated
- Child is absent and attendance is below expected levels and there is a concerning pattern of absence/reasons for absence.
- Where there is a medical problem and school may need evidence to seek additional support/provide support

If a child is absent due to an ongoing medical condition, it is imperative that parents/carers furnish school with full documents which outline medical evidence of the condition. This allows us to maintain correct records for any absences and where applicable apply for any special consideration that may be appropriate for external examinations.

Please note: ALL ABSENCES MUST BE ACCOUNTED FOR.

3.8 – Monitoring Attendance

Our school procedures follow the expectations set out by the Department for Education in the guidance Working Together to improve school attendance (September 2022).

Our procedures are based around the principles and stages of:

- Preventing poor attendance
- Early intervention and Early Help to address early patterns of poor attendance and agree ways to improve.
- Targeted interventions (including Early Help and Formal interventions) for those children who are persistently absent or severely absent.
- Understanding barriers to individuals' attendance and agree individual plans for children with specific needs.
- Formal Statutory Interventions where support has not been effective or engaged with.

Student's attendance will be monitored weekly by their Form Tutor using our Attendance Tracker and Attendance Diamond. The tracker is colour coded with the diamond in order for students and staff to set targets based on improving attendance where appropriate (i.e. less than 100%). During one Form Time session every week, students will be informed of their current attendance figure and will know where they are on the attendance diamond. Students will have the opportunity to discuss any concerns with their Form Tutor. The Form Tutor will then relay these concerns back to the attendance team and any necessary support will be put in place.

Form Tutors and students will refer to the Attendance Diamond in order to monitor and improve attendance for all students. This tool will be displayed in form rooms and across the school in order to support students in understanding how attendance impacts on learning and progress.

A student is deemed as persistently absent (PA) if they miss 10% of their own individual sessions; meaning all students below 90% will be PA regardless of the time of year. Any pupil absent for 19 days or more within a year will be identified as PA. All students whose attendance has fallen to this level or are at risk of reaching this level will be closely monitored through the school's tracking procedure, and regular contact made with their parents/carers.

Members of the school's attendance team will conduct home visits when students are absent, and work with students and their families to help improve their attendance and put in strategies and avenues of support for both the family and the student.

3.9 - Failure to Improve Attendance

School will always try to support students and families to improve attendance. Various social care and health professionals can assist school if relevant in this. But when necessary, school will action legal steps relevant to Education Laws in place, to ensure children are at school accessing their education.

If a student's attendance fails to improve after any meeting, it may be necessary to complete case work with the family (if not already in place) including meetings, attendance contracts, home visits and reviews. If there is no success a referral will be made to the Local Authorities School Attendance Team (SAT) for further intervention.

There are a number of sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. In order to try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to you first to identify the reason for absence. Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further absence has occurred following written warning to improve Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Bury Council Code of Conduct.

Where the intervention process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents/guardians realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

Legal action to enforce school attendance:

Local councils and schools can use various legal powers if a child is missing school without a good reason. Parents/Cares can be given:

- a Parenting Order
- an Education Supervision Order
- a School Attendance Order
- a fine (sometimes known as a 'penalty notice')

3.9.1 - Penalty Notices

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behavior Act 2003 empowers designated LA officers, Headteachers and the Police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absences from school. The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2004 came in to force on 27th February 2004.

A Penalty Notice may be issued in the following circumstances:

- Overt Truancy
- Parentally-condoned absences
- A holiday in term time that does not meet the 'exceptional circumstances' criteria.
- Excessive delayed return from extended holidays without prior school agreement • Persistent late arrival at school (after the Register has closed at 9.25am)

See link for further details <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/legal-action-to-enforceschool-attendance>

4. Holidays in term time

Term time holidays and extended leave will not be authorised for any student. The school will only grant leave of absence in '**Exceptional circumstances**'. Taking a holiday during school term because it would be cheaper, better weather or tagging it on to the beginning or end of a school break is not in the DfE view considered to be a 'special circumstance.'

Parents/carers must write to the Headteacher requesting leave of absence and must outline the exceptional circumstance that has led to this request.

If the request is denied school will inform the parent/carer of the reason by letter. If the parents/carers choose to continue with the planned absence it will be taken as an **unauthorised absence and a penalty notice may be applied.**

5. Additional Information

5.1 - Attendance at Off-Site Provision

Students who access this type of provision are dual rolled by THS. They are recorded as attended under the register code D (dual roll). Parents/carers who have a child attending alternative provision should notify the placement of any absence but can also contact school if they so wish. The provider will notify school of an absence. If parents/carers have failed to notify anyone, the outside provider will contact parents/carers for reason for absence. The Outside provider accepts responsibility for the safeguarding of this student whilst at their placement.

If the absence becomes an issue a review meeting is called and the placement may cease if no valid reason for absence is given. All placements operate on a 6 week cycle with review meetings scheduled.

In the case where THS is the outside provider for other schools i.e. it accepts PPP students, it will fulfil the duties of the outside provider listed above.

5.2 - Other Providers deemed as 'Other Educational Placements'

This is recorded as a 'B' code - Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) - Approved Education Activity.

The external provider phones on the day to confirm the student is attending or not attending. The outside provider will also notify THS of the reason for absence. If the student is not attending and no reason for absence is given then THS will complete its usual absence procedures by contacting parents by call or text to ascertain the reason and record appropriately, notifying the relevant provider. If the absence becomes an issue a review meeting is called by the external provider.

5.3 - Home Tuition/Hospital Teaching

This is recorded as a 'B' code - Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) - Approved Education Activity. THS will call the offsite (or home) provision on a daily basis to confirm attendance and engagement.

5.4 - Work Experience Placements (W)

Using our bespoke work experience programme, student attendance is monitored by school. Attendance is checked by THS with the provider daily and recorded by THS. All employers are provided with the school contact details and a named person in case they need to report nonattendance or any other issues

5.5 – Truancy within School

At Tottington High School we monitor attendance to each lesson of the school day using the registers, in order to ensure all students are safe in school and whereabouts known. If a student does not arrive to scheduled lessons/activities, teaching staff inform relevant teams via classcharts. If students cannot be located and are suspected of leaving school premises, parents will be informed and the police notified of a missing child.

5.6 – Use of attendance data monitoring and review

All schools must provide their attendance data to the DFE, most schools use their management information systems to send their data via school census. The figures returned are published by the DFE as part of the annual publication of school statistics. We collect, use and store attendance information about our pupils and may receive information about you from your previous school. The information we keep regarding attendance includes name, contact details, attendance records, late records and any relevant medical information.

Achievement against Fortis Academy's attendance targets will be reported upon to the Interim Executive Board. The Headteacher together with the Strategic Lead will monitor the effectiveness of this policy and procedures and where necessary make recommendations to the Academy Council for improvement.

6. Attendance Targets

The school will set attendance targets each year. A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and a senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work.

Our school targets are for academic year 2023-2024 are:

- Overall Absence – 5%
- Attendance – 96%
- Persistent Absence (PA) – 14%
- Unauthorised Absence – 0.6%

7. The registration system

The School will use *SIMS* and Class Charts for keeping the school attendance records. The national codes in the table below will be used to record attendance information.

Schools are responsible for recording students' attendance twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made on the attendance register for all students of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

The information below is an extract from the DfE attendance guidance and is adhered to by our school:

'Schools must take the attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is:

- Present;
 - Attending an approved educational activity;
 - Absent; or,
 - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- The school should follow up any absences to:
- Ascertain the reason;
 - Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken;
 - Identify whether the absence is approved or not; and,
 - Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register, or management information system which is used to download data to the School Census'.

Students move between subjects, rooms and teachers throughout the day and therefore a register is taken at the start of every lesson on Classcharts. This is vital to ensuring rigorous safeguarding and intervention in the case of non-attendance to lessons.

Tottenham High School Behaviour Policy 2023-2024

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. student attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
G	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Untimetabled sessions for noncompulsory school-age students	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to students	Not counted in possible attendances

8. Appendices

8.1 - Categorisation of Absence

Any student who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

Unauthorised absence

This is for those students where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. **Authorised absence**

This is for those students who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

Approved Educational Activity

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

Note Students recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

8.2 - Absence Process

