

THE TEDDER COUNTY PRIMARY
WHOLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. AIM

1. The staff and governors of Tedder County Primary School regard good attendance and punctuality as high priority. We are committed to a whole school approach to attendance and punctuality. Our aim is to ensure our school works in partnership with parents, our local community, and the Local Authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

In order to achieve these aims the school will:

- Offer a safe and supportive environment, which welcomes children regardless of race, gender or ability.
- Establish clear and effective procedures for administration.
- Foster a climate where the school community, teachers, parents/carers, governors and pupils value attendance and punctuality.
- Comply with legal requirements.
- Ensure any child presenting poor levels of attendance and punctuality are noted, monitored and appropriate action taken.
- Have systems in place offering rewards and incentives for regular attendance and punctuality.
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance through established procedures.
- Support governors in taking an active role in promoting good attendance and governance.
- Work in partnerships with parents/carers, the Education Welfare Service, Social Care and other outside agencies.

2. EXPECTATIONS:

We expect pupils to:

- Attend school regularly and on time.
- Be appropriately prepared for the day.
- Inform a member of staff of anything that may hinder them from attending school.

We expect parents/carers to:

- Ensure their children to attend school, every day, on time.
- Contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- Arrange holidays and medical appointments outside school hours.
- To ensure that their children arrive in school well prepared for the school day and to check that they have done their homework.
- To regularly update emergency contact details.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep them away from school.

Parents and pupils can expect the following from school:

- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a pupil fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody without the consent of the student or their parent).
- Recognition and Reward for good attendance.
- A quality education

3. ENCOURAGING ATTENDANCE THROUGH REWARDS:

Attendance will be encouraged by:

- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 15 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate time.
- Recording of attendance on individual School Reports.

- Rewards and recognition, including a certificate for 100% attendance awarded at the end of the school year.
- Regular communication with parents and pupils on the importance of attendance.

4. **ABSENCES**

A leave of absence during term time will only be granted where an application is made in advance to the school and the Headteacher considers that the leave of absence should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to that application. Exceptional circumstances will be judged by the Headteacher on a case by case basis; however, affordability of holidays and availability of parental leave are unlikely to qualify as exceptional circumstances. While the final decision rests with the Headteacher, the following are examples of likely authorised/unauthorised absence.

Authorised Absence

The following could potentially qualify as exceptional circumstances:

- Sickness
- Medical or Dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside of school hours. Parents/Carers should try to arrange these appointments for out of school hours and may be asked for evidence of appointments.
- Compassionate leave for bereavement, serious illness, or funerals.
- Fixed term, or permanent exclusion.
- Contact with parents/carers immediately before, or after a long military deployment. This will usually only be granted for deployments in excess of 6 months.

When making a decision, the Headteacher will take into consideration the following factors:

Is the type of absence from school rare for this pupil?

Is the absence short?

Is the absence unavoidable?

Is the usual level of attendance high i.e. within 95%?

Unauthorised Absence

The following are likely to be recorded as unauthorised absence:

- Your child is in Y2 or Y6 and the period of the requested leave of absence falls during designated SATs weeks.
- Truancy - a pupil is away from school without authority from the headteacher. This includes parentally condoned absences.
- Late after registration is closed (unless a legitimate reason or evidence for the absence is provided).
- Any absence which has not been informed to the school.
- Staying at home to look after siblings or sick relatives.
- Time off to see relatives, birthdays, etc.

Term Time Holidays

The law gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. Parents should consider the disruptive impact of absences on the entire class when planning family holidays. Any application for term time holidays must only be in exceptional circumstances and, where possible be accompanied with evidence demonstrating these circumstances. The Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances are exceptional and warrant the granting of authorised absence. Affordability of holidays and the ability of parents to take leave are not, in themselves, regarded as exceptional circumstances. They would need to be accompanied by additional exceptional circumstances. Where term time holidays are requested without exceptional circumstances, the school will issue a letter formally warning parents/carers that they may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice if they proceed with their plans. If parents take children out of school for term time holidays without notifying the school prior to this, a Fixed Penalty Notice will also be issued.

5. RESPONSE TO ABSENCE

First day of absence:

- If a child is absent from school the parent/carer should inform the school stating the child's name, class and reason for absence. Messages can be left on the school answer machine.

- If a parent/carer does not inform the school admin staff will ring the parental home on the first day of absence or undertake a home visit to ascertain why the child is absent.

Escalation of intervention:

Attendance will be monitored to ensure it remains consistent throughout the whole school year.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 95% (GREEN STAGE):

- The class teacher will consider the reasons for absence and then the following will happen:
- The class teacher will call the Parents/Carers to discuss the issue and explain that further absence is likely to trigger an Amber Stage where their illness is affecting attendance sporadically or the same illness is recurring, the Parents/Carers will be advised that evidence confirming the illness will be required.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% (AMBER STAGE):

- A letter will be sent home to the parents and they will be invited in to school to discuss their child's attendance with the class teacher.
- Should the school deem it necessary, then the Education Welfare Officer will be informed.
- Targets will be set to improve the attendance. The class teacher will discuss that further absence is likely to trigger a Red Stage.

If a pupil's attendance falls below 85% (RED STAGE):

- Parents will be invited in to school to ensure that they understand the significance of such poor attendance.
- An action plan will be set up with the Headteacher.
- A school attendance contract and support plan will be incorporated and the possibility of a Penalty Notice will be discussed. A Formal Warning Letter may be issued.

- Outside agencies may be involved - EWO, Social Services, Homestart etc.

Reintegration:

- The return to school for a pupil after long term absence requires special planning. For example, it may be appropriate to establish a Pastoral Support Programme as detailed in the DfEE Social Inclusion: Pupil Support Guidance.
- The appropriate staff will be responsible for deciding on the programme for return and the management of that programme.
- All staff need to be aware that this is a difficult process that will require careful handling and that any problems should be notified to the responsible staff member as soon as possible.
- Programmes may need to be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in lessons as appropriate. Support from the SEN Co-ordinator may be required
- Staff will be notified of the return of the long-term absentees via the staff notices/daily briefings.

6. SCHOOL ORGANISATION:

In order for any policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the pupils by their behaviour, the importance of the education being provided. This means ensuring that all staff arrive to lessons on time and well-prepared. The following have specific responsibilities:

Headteacher:

- To oversee the whole policy.
- To oversee the operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data
- To oversee the work of administrative staff
- To report to governors.

Phase Leaders (with responsibility for Pupil Support)

- To liaise with members of teaching staff.

- Support operation of the attendance system and the collation of attendance data.
- To liaise with EWO

Class Teachers

- To complete registers accurately and on time.
- To follow-up immediately any unexplained non-attendance by contacting parents.
- To record all reasons for absence in the register.
- To inform the headteacher of concerns.

Governors:

- Appoint a Governor to lead on attendance issues.
- Make a report to each Governors' Meeting.

Parents:

- Contact with school on first day of absence or as soon as possible.
- Absence notes if longer than initially indicated.
- Support for general attendance.

Education Welfare Service:

- Liaise with Head of School and SENCO.
- Home visits, either pre-arranged or without notice as considered necessary.
- Group work.
- Undertake Legal Proceedings on behalf of the LEA where appropriate.
- Accept referrals, initiate contact with parents of carers and undertake assessments.
- Plan and review casework.

- Provide feedback to schools.
- Strategic/policy advice and support in relation to matters of attendance, the employment of young people and young people involved in performing.

Office Staff:

- Produce updates from weekly registers, error sheets, absence code sheets, weekly % information, OMR sheets.
- Telephone absence slips to be put in registers.

7. LIAISING WITH VARIOUS AGENCIES WHEREVER APPROPRIATE

Good relations and working practices are essential. Agencies have difficult roles in that they endeavour to support both the school in meeting its legal obligations as well as home and pupil in ensuring that the latter's educational opportunities are maximised to the full. Some parents need the support of these agencies so that they can fulfil their legal obligations to their children. These agencies could include:

- Educational Welfare Service, the "attendance enforcement arm" of LCC.
- Educational Behavioural and Support Services.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Special Educational Needs Service.
- Social Services.
- Careers and Guidance Service.
- Youth Service.

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