

Attendance Policy and Procedures

Totnes St John's CofE Primary School is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. We are committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expect all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. We do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible in line with procedures agreed by the Governors.

It is the policy of our School to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. We will actively promote, encourage and reward 100 per cent attendance for all our students. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through the School's rewards system
- to ensure a consistent approach in line with all schools within the Totnes Learning Community

Statutory Duty of Schools and Parents

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that students arrive at School on time, properly attired, and in a condition to learn. All schools will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

The Educational Welfare Service and School Attendance

The EWS is a part of the Devon Local Authority. Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)?

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and, as a parent/ guardian, this is your responsibility. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring you to pay a fine of up to £120 per parent/carer, per child if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500.

You will be given every opportunity to improve your child's attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

Statutory Attendance

There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration.

AM: Students will be registered at the beginning of each morning (9.00am) by the teacher. Registration closes at 9.15 am; any arrivals before this time will be classified as LATE (Code **L**) Arrival after that time is recorded as an UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE (Code **U**).

PM: Registration takes place at the beginning of the afternoon session by the class teacher.

X: we shall be using this code for all children below statutory school age who are absent for any reason, including part time education.

All registration will be recorded on the SIMS system at the end of each week by the administrator.

Class registers must be taken at the beginning of all sessions by the teacher.

Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences.

The attendance register will be kept for three years.

Request for absence during Term Time

All requests must be made using the S2 form, available from the office, a minimum of 3 weeks before the request absence. We do not encourage any absence during term time and may no longer authorise absences unless for exceptional circumstances.

- No absence will be authorised in the first two weeks of any term or during May when SATs for Years 2 and 6 take place
- No absence will be authorised for pupils with attendance falling below 95%

If a parent/carer is refused an absence request and the pupil is still taken out of a school by the parent/carer, the School / Education Welfare Officer will be informed.

Reporting Absences

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the School of the reason for a student's absence as soon as possible – preferably on the first day. The School will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted by the Administrator.

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods:

- By phone to the Administrator.
- Personal contact with Administrator at school, where a note will be passed to the teacher.
- If you are unable to contact the administrator, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the class teacher on the first day back at school.

In the case of long term illness the school should be notified.

If it is known that the student will be absent for more than 2 weeks, the EWO should be notified.

Where over the course of an academic year, a student has 20 sessions of illness, the School will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future period of illness related absence. This evidence could be a Doctor's note, appointment card or copy of a prescription.

Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the Administrator if their child has been identified as truanting from the college. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving on time.

Persistent cases will be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Staff guidance and procedures .

Reporting to Parents

Annual Report to parents/carers includes summative information on attendance as well as comment on punctuality

Distribution of Data

The Administrator will produce for Head teacher:

- a) printout of all attendances for previous week*
- b) reports on persistent lateness to school in the mornings (6 or more) .*
- c) all pupils below 95% attendance*
- d) % attendance figures for all pupils half termly.*

The Head teacher will report attendance data to the Governors termly and targets annually.

User Codes and reconciliation of registers

- If a student is absent, use Code **N** (unless there is already a code which has been entered).*
- If a student is late during registration use Code **L** .*
- Only the national attendance codes issued can be used.*

Absence from School

Authorisation of absences from school :

- Parent provide written, signed note from parent/carer on students return, unless parents/carer has contacted the school by another acceptable means. (see above)*
- Teacher to record on registration system using appropriate code.*
- Teachers to hand in absence notes/records at end of every week to the Administrator. These will then be archived for 3 years.*

Follow up procedures for unauthorised absence or persistent absence (including illness) from School: See attached flow chart 'Encouraging Good Attendance'

Follow up procedures for lateness to school in the morning:

Admin contacts home or sends standard letter if student regularly arrives late at school. Admin will alert Head to any pupil who has 6 or more lates in any half term. Head will contact parents.

Where there is no improvement if lateness continues to persist the Head will refer the pupil to EWO who may consider instigating legal procedures.

Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Governing Body: Reviews policy, receives a termly report via Head's Report to Governors. A Governor will have specific responsibility for attendance.

Head: Oversight and implementation of policy.

Administrator: Administration of attendance and punctuality data within the framework of this policy, first day contacts.

Teachers:

Keep an accurate register and follow up of absences and lateness within the systems and procedures of this policy.

Education Welfare Officer: Implementation of LA procedures in enforcing attendance and assisting year teams with advising students and parents of the legal consequences of failing to meet these obligations. The EWO is the attendance enforcement arm of the LA. The EWO for our schools will be fully informed of all absences giving cause for concern and will have full access to the electronic registration system

Policy updated May 2015

Review annually, last review June 2017, next review June 2018

Encouraging Good Attendance

Ongoing

Teacher and Admin

- Weekly Attendance Data provided to Admin.
- First Day Calling.

Teachers

- Keep Accurate AM and PM register.
- Follow up Absence promptly.
- Inform Head Teacher of any attendance concerns.

Head Teacher

- To co-ordinate and monitor the above.
- Ensure Escalation Process consistently followed with discretion where appropriate.
- Responsible for Pupil & School Attendance Data and meeting Local and National Attendance Targets.
- To co-ordinate / monitor attendance of vulnerable groups (SEN / CIC / EAL / Travellers).

Intervention

Under 95%

- No requests to be authorized.
- Send absence request Refusal Letter.
- If absence still occurs consider Penalty Notice.

Under 93%

- Send Green Letter.
- Teacher meets and discusses with parents/carers.

20 Sessions – Illness

- Consider sending Medical Evidence Letter.

Lateness

- If Persistent lateness, Head to send Late letter.
- Discuss lateness with parents/carers.
- If no improvement escalate to EWO

Under 90%

- Send Amber Letter.
- Head meets and discusses with parents/carers.
- Agrees action plan with parents/carers and child.

Under 90%

- Send Red Letter.
- Head Teacher meets and discusses with parents/carers.
- Plan immediate improvement.
- Discuss with EWO.

If No Improvement

- School and EWO consider Fast Track or alternative action.



