

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

First Published: January 2017

Review Date: July 2019

Trust Board Approval: Pending Approval

Last Updated: May 2018

Statement of Intent

We, at Turner Schools are committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our pupils. Regular attendance is critical if our pupils are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Poor attendance disadvantages children.

Aims

The purpose of this policy is to clarify understanding of the importance of attendance and punctuality and outlines procedures for dealing with attendance and punctuality in school. Turner Schools will promote high levels of attendance and punctuality and will aim to reduce unauthorised absence.

Attendance

Children are expected to attend school for the full 190 days of the academic year unless there is a good reason and evidence for absence. Registers are kept for all classes including the under 5s. Pupils are marked present or absent at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. The Governor's, Head of School and Staff, in partnership with Parents/Carers, have a duty to promote full attendance at Turner Schools.

Parental Responsibility

Parents/Carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child(ren) attend school regularly and arrive on time at school by 8.55am when the school day starts. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law.

It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent before the morning register is taken. Evidence of absence such as a doctor's note, prescription, medical appointment card etc will be requested when your child returns to school.

Governors Responsibility

To monitor and challenge the impact of the school's efforts to improve attendance across the school.

Principal's Responsibility

The Principal has overall responsibility for attendance and punctuality. They must ensure that the policy is followed through monitoring and evaluation and report data to governors on a termly basis. Where attendance or punctuality is an issue then they will ensure that outside agencies such as social services, Early Help or School Liaison Officer are working with the family.

It is the Principal's responsibility to promote and celebrate individual pupils good attendance through class or whole school assemblies.

Only the Principal can authorise absence for approved reasons. Where there is doubt, the Principal should take a consistent approach. The absence must be unavoidable. The Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified. Authorised absence codes will only be used after there has been some communication between the parent and school.

The following reasons are examples of the kinds of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent non-specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Waiting at home for a delivery
- Arriving late, after 9.10am

Term Time Holiday

From September 2013 the Department for Education have amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Principal's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

Requests for holidays or leave of absence in term time will not be authorised.

If a leave of absence or term time holiday is taken anyway, the case may be referred to the Attendance Service who will issue a Penalty Notice for £120. The penalty is £120 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days reduced to £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

The Role of the School Staff

Class teachers complete a register at 9am and 1pm daily. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers mark pupils present, absent or late. It is the class teacher's responsibility to report to the Inclusion Manager and Family Liaison Officer if there are concerns

Administrator's Responsibility

Registers are set up for each class at the start of the year and, once returned from class, will be stored for the majority of the day in the office.

Office staff will pick up and deal with messages from parents of absence or lateness and inform the class teacher. If no message is received they will contact the parent by 10.30am logging the information for absence or lateness. If no communication is received, a letter is sent requesting reasons for absence for a 7-day return. If parents arrive late to school with their child then the administrator will ask for a reason and record.

At the end of the week the registers are entered onto a SIMS database using the National Attendance Codes.

Attendance reports will be generated at the request of the Head (for outside agencies) or by the parent.

Family Liaison Officer's Responsibility

The FLO is responsible for following up on ANY non-attendance, making the Early Help referrals when necessary, liaising with internal colleague and outside agencies and providing all requested data from the Principal or Governors.

Timeline of School Action for Low Attendance

All the below will be documented:

97 - 100% attendance - class teacher to investigate and notify FLO of concern.
95-97% FLO to investigate absence

92 - 95% attendance - monitored by FLO and Principal. Parents invited in to offer support.

Below 92% - FLO to consider Early Help and alert the school's designated safeguarding lead.

A pupil be considered as a 'persistent absentee' if attendance drops below 90% and outside agencies will become involved.

Local Authority Action

Where there is no improvement in a pupil's attendance and/or there is at least 10 sessions (5 days) absence in a term the school will consider home visits, Multi agency meetings or issuing a penalty notice.

Penalty Notices for Poor Attendance

The Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded. If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

Truancy

Parentally-condoned absences.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed.

Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be £120 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days reduced to £60 per parent, per child, if paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the penalty may result in prosecution by the Local Authority.

Children Missing Education

No child may be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Principal and the Attendance Service. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance should be followed.