

**EXETER ROAD**

*Thrive, Care, Succeed*

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Policy Date: March 2021**

**Version: 1.5**

**Adopted by the Governors of Teignmouth Community School Exeter Road, on 11th March 2021**

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**Amendment Record**

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| **VERSION #**  | **DATE**  | **AMENDED BY**  | **NATURE OF CHANGE**  |
| 1.1  | 01/ 09/ 2013  | R Willmott  | Government changes relating to holidays in term time  |
| 1.2  | 21/09/2015  | R Willmott  | Change to PA category Addition of register closure time  |
| 1.3  | 08/03/2016  | R Willmott  | Added policy for single absence of 5 days or more. Register close at 9:30am  |
| 1.4 | 01/10/2019 | R Willmott | Update of rewards for all years. Update of the consideration process when a student has a number of “Medical Absence”  |
| 1.5 | 3/03/2021 | M Lewis  | Added in AM registration time, information regarding communication with parents/carers, clear guidance on timescales regarding S2 requests & need for medical evidence for 5+ days absence & clarified Teignmouth Secondary’s role within the Osprey Learning Trust. Plus new format. |

1. **Scope**

Teignmouth Community School, Exeter Road is an 11-19 School and is part of the Osprey Learning Trust, comprising of Teignmouth Community School (TCS) and TCS Sixth Form (TCS6). This attendance policy applies to TCS Secondary.

1. **Philosophy**

TCS Secondary is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. Evidence shows that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is essential. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. Therefore as a school we do all that we can to maximise attendance for all students. We adopt a whole school approach, and any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed quickly.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. TCS will actively promote and encourage 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. We believe that with good attendance children have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

1. **Objectives**
* to encourage full attendance and punctuality
* to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies when necessary
* to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance throughout the School and link this to the school recognition & rewards system
* to ensure a consistent approach throughout the School

1. **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 and Colleges are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. At TCS an electronic registration system is in place. Student attendance is recorded for every lesson dary along with AM and PM registration.

1. **Principles**

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that students arrive at school on time, in correct school uniform, with necessary equipment and ready to learn. The school will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

1. **The Educational Welfare Service (EWS) and school attendance**

The aim of the Education Welfare Service 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.

1. **What happens if a student does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)**

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child attends. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring the payment of a fine of up to £60 per parent/carer, per child if attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances the parent/guardian may be prosecuted and will be required to attend the Magistrates Court where up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500 may be imposed. Parents/carers will be given every opportunity to improve the attendance of the child, and a written warning will be issued before any legal action is taken.

1. **Statutory Attendance**

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

* **AM:** students will be registered at the beginning of the school day by their tutor/class teacher. AM registration is taken at **8.50am** every day with students being required to be in their Tutor Group room by **8.45am** at the latest. Students arriving after the register has been taken will be considered as late (code L). The register will be officially closed at **9.10am**. If a student arrives at school after this time, the attendance mark will be classified as an **Unauthorised Absence (code U)**
* **PM:** registration takes place at the beginning of the afternoon lesson (P5) by the class teacher. Unauthorised absence from PM registration will be recorded as truancy.

The school will ensure that all staff are familiar with the requirements of the registration process, the procedures for recording absence, and for explaining absences. Tutors/ class teachers have the responsibility to follow up any attendance concerns, and for reporting persistent problems to the relevant Head of Year/ Attendance Officer.

Class registers must be taken at the beginning of all lessons/sessions. Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences. Attendance & punctuality figures will be communicated to parents/ carers on a half-termly basis. The Attendance Register will be printed and kept for three years by the Attendance Officer.

1. **Leave of absence during Term Time**

As from the 1st September 2013, all schools are unable to authorise requests for absence relating to holidays in term time. This has been initiated by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 which has removed reference to holidays and the ten day period.

These changes reinforce the government’s view that every minute of every school day is vital and that students should only be granted authorised absence by the school in exceptional circumstances; e.g. illness, exclusions, or due to other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences may well result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

If your child is absent from school for 5 consecutive days or more we will require medical evidence to support the absence. If this is not provided then this may lead to Parental Responsibility Measures being instigated. We hope you will support school by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually every school day throughout the academic year that the law requires, unless prevented from doing so due to unavoidable circumstances.

All requests for absence must be made using the S2 form, available from Student Services, giving the school sufficient time to consider any request before the absence commences. All requests will need to be submitted by no later than **three weeks** prior to the intended absence. Leave of absence will only be considered for exceptional circumstances.

Should you choose to take your child out of school without the authorisation of the school, or without completing an S2 form, then Parental Responsibility Measures **will** be instigated.

1. **Reporting Absences**

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school of the reason for a student’s absence on the first and **every day** of the non-attendance. It is our expectation that parents/carers will make every effort to contact the school by 9.30am on the morning of the absence. Parents/ carers can notify the school of an absence by calling the school number – 01626 774091 and selecting Option 1 for Student Services. The school will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted by the school if the reason for absence is not confirmed by parent/carer.

Where a student is absent due to sickness and is genuinely unable to attend school, then the school, after being informed, **may** authorise a student’s absence. In law, only the Head Teacher/ Principal can authorise a student’s absence, and may require additional medical proof, particularly if your child’s attendance is already a concern and/or below 95%. The evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, text or email confirmation of appointments etc. rather than a doctor’s note. Input from GP’s will be sought where there are complex health needs or persistent absence issues.

Failure to notify the school of the reason for a child’s absence will result in an unauthorised absence being recorded. Where attendance and/or punctuality becomes a concern the school will engage support from the Educational Welfare Service. This may lead to formal proceedings against parents/ carers. More serious cases can led to Court proceedings which may result in a fine and/or a custodial prison sentence for the parent/ carer.

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

* By phone to the Student Services Office or School by 9.30am on the morning of each absence.
* E-mail Student Services at TCS, Exeter Road at: studentservices@teignmouth.devon.sch.uk
* If contact with the school is not possible, a parental note explaining the absence must be given to Student Services on the first day back at School.
* For absences known in advance parents/carers should contact the school to confirm times and dates. Only emergency appointments will be authorised. Medical/dentist/optician appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible appointments should be made at the beginning or end of the school day so that students can attend lessons before and after their appointment. Students **must sign out** at the Student Services Office, and need to be able to support their request to leave school with acceptable confirmation from the parent/carer (i.e. telephone call to the school office / signed note by parent/ carer). For the purpose of safeguarding, where the request cannot be confirmed the student will not be allowed to leave School.

If a student is taken ill during the school day they must follow school procedure. We do not give permission for students to contact home themselves; absences resulting from this will not be authorised. A decision will be made regarding whether the student should return to class, or whether parents/carers should be contacted to make appropriate arrangements to go home. For the purposes of safeguarding, students will only be sent home where parent/carer consent is given on the occasion of their illness. Where it is necessary to call emergency services the First Aid procedure will be followed. (See First Aid Policy).

If a student’s attendance becomes a concern due to illness, (usually below 95% or 3 or more separate periods of absence within a five week period) the school will follow the procedure for absence due to illness and will contact parents to confirm if the student is being seen by an appropriate health care professional. There are three possible responses by the school which are:

1. Unauthorise the absence and any further absence due to lack of a justifiable medical reason
2. Authorise the absence and consider arranging a meeting with parents/carers and appropriate Health Care professional to consider whether and Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) is required.
3. Consider any safeguarding concerns that may need a further referral to outside agencies.

The School and Education Welfare Service will contact parents/carers by phone, email, letter or home visit at any additional time that attendance becomes a concern.

It is a responsibility for parents/carers to provide information relating to medical conditions which affect a student’s attendance to school. This information is not asked for routinely and the School will not be liable for any changes made for obtaining this information.

A student whose attendance is 90% or below at any point in the school year is categorised by the Government as a **Persistent Absentee**, this is regardless of the reasons for absence or whether they are authorised or unauthorised. These students are closely monitored and parents/carers will be contacted by the school on a regular basis. It is our expectation that parents/carers will co-operate and work closely with the School to improve attendance.

Where attendance is 95% or below students will be asked to complete an Attendance Action Plan to set a target for improvement and to consider the reasons for absence.

1. **Truancy**

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child receives an education and therefore attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the school if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases of truancy will be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice. (See above for Penalty Notices). If a student is absent without explanation, the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), a representative from school, or a Community Police Officer may visit to establish the reason for the absence. Local truancy checks will also be conducted in co-operation with the local Police.

1. **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 by an appropriate member of staff, if their child is not arriving to school on time. The school day starts at 8.45am with students being required to be in their Tutor room/ base by this time, so AM registration can be taken promptly at 8.50am.

Any student who is late to school must sign in at the Student Services Office before proceeding to their class. Students who are late are required to follow the sanction procedures for lateness as per our Behaviour Policy. It is our expectation that the parent/carer will support and work with the School to improve punctuality. Persistent lateness will be classed as unauthorised absence. If a student is regularly late for school parents/carers will be invited into school to discuss the reasons for lateness and to agree a plan for improvement. Persistent cases will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

**Key Terms and Definitions**

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| **ACRONYM**  | **TERM**  | **DEFINITION**  |
| PA  | Persistent absentee  | As student who has attendance of 90% or lower regardless of the reason  |
| EWO  | Education Welfare Officer  | Employee of Devon County Council with responsibility for ensuring the legal requirements associated with attendance are met.  |