



*Thrive • Care • Succeed*

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Adopted by the Governors of Teignmouth  
Community School on 29<sup>th</sup> November 2023**

**Review date: November 2024**

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### Amendment Record

VERSION No.	DATE	AMENDED BY	NATURE OF CHANGE	REVIEW DATE
1	Nov 2022	Chris Darvill	New Policy	November 2023
2	Sept 2023	Billy Lee	Amendment	September 2024
3	Nov 2023	Billy Lee	Amendment	September 2024

Senior Leader responsible for managing this policy

Name	:	Billy Lee Deputy Headteacher
Position	:	Deputy Headteacher
Contact Details	:	billy.lee@teignmouthschool.co.uk

## 1.0 Policy Aim

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that actively encourages and supports the regular attendance of all pupils (wherever possible).

Teignmouth School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining regular attendance. The school will endeavour to work in partnership with families and agencies to make sure that any problems or barriers to pupil attendance are given the right attention and support at the earliest opportunity.

This policy is supported by policies on **safeguarding**, **bullying**, and **behaviour**.

Research supports common sense and shows that there is a strong link between regular attendance and good attainment. Regular attendance is important for your child because:

- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and educationally.
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to manage.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders settle into school more easily.
- Regular attenders enjoy improved social, educational, and work opportunities later in life.

This policy has been created to help support the school in effectively managing pupil absence so that our pupils (your children) can make the most of the educational and life opportunities available to them. We want your child to thrive.

## 2.0 The Law requires ‘regular’ attendance. What is ‘regular’ attendance?

Attending ‘regularly’ has been defined by the Supreme Court (*Isle of Wight Council v Platt* [2017] UKSC 28) as attending in accordance with the rules of the school.

**This means that your child is expected to attend on all of the days that the school is open to them.**

Teignmouth School is dedicated to complying with the legal requirements of *The Education Act (1996)*.

## 2.1 Legal framework

### ***The Education Act (1996)***

#### **Section 7 - Duty to ensure Children receive a suitable education**

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.

This means that if your child is registered at a school, then as parents/carers, you have a legal duty to ensure that your child attends punctually every day that the school is open to them (unless the absence is recognised as unavoidable)

Pupils who have missed more than 10% of school sessions are considered persistently absent, while children who have missed more than 50% of school sessions are referred to as severely absent.

### 3.0 Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation (and evidence) for the pupil's absence is given to the school, this allows the Head Teacher to make an informed decision as to whether it is appropriate to authorise the absence or not. Only a Head Teacher, or delegated senior leader, can authorise an absence.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the school at the ***earliest opportunity on the morning of each day's absence*** (this is a safeguarding requirement to protect your child) and let them know the reasons for the absence and the date that you expect the child to return to school.

#### 3.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term. As previously mentioned, parents/carers will need to contact the school at the earliest opportunity on the morning of each day of absence (safeguarding).

For prolonged absence due to illness, it is suggested that parents/carers provide the school with evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription. Providing this evidence will help the Head Teacher, or delegated senior leadership team staff member, make an informed decision as to whether it is appropriate to authorise the absence or not. If the reason given for the absence or the evidence provided is not considered genuine or appropriate, then the Head Teacher, or delegated senior leadership team staff member will unauthorise the absence.

#### 3.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure that these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

To help the Head Teacher decide if it is appropriate to authorise the absence, it is recommended that an appointment card (or similar) is passed to the school.

#### 3.3 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise an absence under ***exceptional circumstances***, such as for a family bereavement. This is entirely at the discretion of the Head Teacher, or delegated senior leadership team staff member.

#### 3.4 Exclusion

Suspensions are treated as authorised absences.

### 3.5 Requesting Term Time Absence

This School has adopted the **Local Authority Code of Conduct (September 2019)** in respect of leave of absence in term time. All parents who wish to take their child out of school for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form (S2). This can be obtained from the school Office or the Website.

#### ***The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)***

##### **Regulation 7 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (2006)**

states the three important criteria for Schools when considering requests for Authorised Term Time Absence, these criteria are:

- The leave request must be made in advance,
- The request should come from the parent with whom the pupil normally resides,
- The request should be supported by evidence of the exceptional circumstances relating to it.

***This means that for a request to be authorised, it must evidence that the request meets the criteria of Exceptional Circumstances.***

***The Law does not grant parents/carers a right to take their children out of school during term time. The Law only allows Head Teachers, or delegated staff, to authorise the request when they have evidence of the Exceptional Circumstance.***

***The Government is very clear that a family holiday is NOT an Exceptional Circumstance.***

If the S2 request is refused and the parents/carers proceed with the leave of absence, the school will have no choice but to refer the absence to the Local Authority. The Local Authority could then (in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) issue a Penalty Notice to both parents/carers for each child who is absent. Failing to pay a Penalty Notice can lead to a Court Summons.

Retrospective applications will not be considered. These periods of absence will be marked as unauthorised.

If an S2 request has not been completed by parents/carers and the school have been given a reason for an absence that it feels is not genuine (example – advised absence was down to illness when a family holiday is suspected) then the Head Teacher, or delegated member of staff, will unauthorise the absence and escalate (**see section 4.2**).

### 3.6 Religious observance

Teignmouth School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends. Official days set aside by the faith for religious observance will be an authorised absence.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

### 3.7 Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller students, in common with all other students, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the ***Education Act (1944), Section 86***, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and that the child is regularly attending school when that trade/business permits (and the minimum 200 session criteria is met).

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller students is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their child is receiving a suitable education when not at school.

### **3.8 The School Day and Late arrival**

#### **Morning Registration starts at 8:45am**

Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late (L Code).

#### **Morning registration ends at 9:15am**

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Pupils arriving after the register closes will be marked as excessively late and the absence will be unauthorised (U Code) for the whole of the session.

Persistent excessive lateness may result in disciplinary action by the Local Authority.

#### **The school day ends at 3:15pm**

### **4.0 School action: following up absences**

Class registers are taken electronically. Where there are unexplained absences, the school will contact the parents or carers to establish the reason. If after a reasonable time, no contact with the school is made or where it is not possible to establish the reason, the absence will be unauthorised.

If the school has grounds to believe that the reasons for an absence are not genuine, then the Head Teacher, or delegated senior leadership team staff may choose to unauthorise the absence.

#### **4.1 Missing Lessons (truanting)**

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupil/s who are discovered to be truanting.

Parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the reasons for the truancy and to discuss school expectations and school support systems that could help.

Parental support is expected in this instance. Our school takes the safety of your child seriously. To help keep your child safe they need to be in the place/lesson that they are expected.

#### **4.2 School Action: Managing pupil absence and concerns**

The school has in place rigorous systems for monitoring pupil absence. These systems are designed to pick up on early signs or patterns of absence. If the school considers your child's absence levels to be of concern, then the following actions may be taken by the school.

- School will contact parents/carers by phone, text or email to bring attendance concerns to the attention of parents/carers.
- School will contact parents/carers by letter to bring attendance concerns to the attention of parents/carers.
- Parents/carers will be invited into the school to meet with the Attendance officer to discuss concerns, explore barriers to attendance and to agree an action plan to resolve the situation.
- Parents/carers may be encouraged to sign up to a Parenting Agreement to commit to making the changes necessary to bring about the regular attendance of their child.
- School may make referrals to Early Help or other agencies that might be able to provide support.
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, the school has a legal requirement to share information with the Local Authority Safeguarding and Social Care Team.
- School may make a Home Visit to the family home.
- Where the attendance drops below 90% (the Government Persistent Absence threshold), the school has a responsibility to inform the Local Authority.
- Where the school has exhausted its processes for supporting attendance and there has not been satisfactory improvement, the school will have no choice but to refer the pupil to the Local Authority Education Welfare Service.
- The School's Attendance Improvement Escalation Process can be found on the school's website.

#### **4.3 Who to Contact with concerns**

The first port of call for parents/carers when looking to discuss pupil absence is Student Services 01626 774091 (Option 1 – Student Services).

Should this prove unsuccessful matters can be escalated to your child's Head of Year.

The Senior Lead for Attendance is Billy Lee – Deputy Headteacher.



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#### 4.4 Local Authority Action: Potential Legal Penalties for Absence

Unauthorised Absences could result in the instigation of Local Authority Parental Responsibility Measures. These could include a Penalty Notice, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a summons from the Magistrates Court.

**Penalty Notice.** Penalty Notices can only be issued in line with the **Local Authority Code of Conduct (September 2019)**. From September 2013, if a Penalty Notice is issued, each Penalty Notice will be for £60 and should be paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice increases to £120 if paid from day 21 through til day 28. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days a Magistrates summons will be issued.

**Education Supervision Order.** This is where the Local Authority applies to the Family Court for a Court Order to support and manage improved regular attendance.

**Magistrates Summons.** For a first offence the maximum fine issued by the Court could be £1000 per parent/carers. If the matter returns to the Magistrates Court on a subsequent occasion the fines can extend to a maximum of £2500 per parent/carers and/or a custodial sentence of up to 3 Months.

**See Below for a breakdown of roles and responsibilities**

## **Appendix 1.**

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **Governing body**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children, and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year
- take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data, including for vulnerable groups, and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future
- ensure that data is used within the school to measure the impact of strategies used to improve attendance.

## School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior leader to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend.
- ensure that families are referred to appropriate support and Early Help
- document all specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings
- ensure that the local authority is informed in a timely manner if pupils struggle to regularly attend.

## Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

## Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 3.0**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher (**see section 3.5**)

## Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable
- speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 3.8**). Pupils are held responsible for this, and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation