



Pupil Attendance Policy

T.E.A.M. Education Trust

Approved by:	Trust Board	Date: 25.5.21
Last reviewed on:	13 May 2021	
Next review due by:	31 May 2022	
List of Associated Policies:	TEAM Accessibility Plan TEAM Admissions Policy TEAM Behaviour Policy TEAM Child Protection Policy TEAM Exclusions Policy TEAM LAC Policy TEAM Late Collection of Students Policy TEAM SEND Policy TEAM Supporting Students with medical conditions Policy TEAM Supporting Students who cannot attend school TEAM Trips & Visits Policy	

Version History

Version	Date	Detail	Author
1	29.5.20	Original Document	
2	13.5.21	Addition of Appendix A: Child Missing in Education referral process	S Albery

Contents

1. Scope.....	2
2. Aim	2
3. Legal.....	3
4. Types of Absence	3
5. Registration.....	4
6. Absence Procedures.....	4
7. Holiday in term time	4
8. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued.....	6
9. Working with Education Welfare Services (EWS) and the Early Help Team	6
10. Roles and responsibilities.....	7
10.1 Parents will;	7
10.2 Pupils will;.....	7
10.3 Principals will;	7
10.4 Designated Staff will;	7
10.5 All staff will;.....	8
Appendix A: Child Missing in Education Referral Process.....	9

1. Scope

This policy relates to all schools and settings across T.E.A.M. Education Trust. It must be augmented by local policies in each school that reflect their specific approach and processes in managing attendance and changes guided by the Attendance network coordinated by the Trust Champion and Early Help Team Manager.

For the purpose of this document, parents, carers and guardians are referred to under the general term of 'parents'.

2. Aim

T.E.A.M. Education Trust aims for all of its academies to have an environment which enables and encourages all members of school communities to fulfil the Trust's

vision of “together everyone achieves more”. We aim to have attendance rates that are better than national expectations.

For children and young people to reach their full potential it is vital that they attend and be on time every day the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child or young person’s schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Through the year, school leaders and governors monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need and can be made. We work very closely with families whose child has complex medical needs to ensure that learning continues, as appropriate. Children with complex medical needs will be reported by exception in order to acknowledge their attempts to comply with regular attendance.

3. Legal

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children and young people of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For pupils registered at a school, this means that pupils must attend regularly and punctually; failure to do so may result in their parents committing a criminal offence.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child or young person is no longer compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Although children and young people in Early Years Foundation Stage and Sixth Form are not compulsory school age, T.E.A.M. Education Trust places a high value on the need for good attendance throughout school so will therefore treat absences in these phases the same as compulsory age pupils in terms of register marks and follow up procedures.

Under the Education Act 1996 the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children and young people of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

4. Types of Absence

Every session absent from school has to be classified as either ‘Authorised’ or ‘Unauthorised’. This is why the information about the reason for absence is always required.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. Absence can only be authorised by the school not by parents.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave of absence' has been granted.

Unauthorised leave of absence in term time can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents keeping their child off school unnecessarily;
- truancy before or during the school day;
- absences which have never properly been explained;
- pupils who arrive at school too late to get a mark;
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays;
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed;
- holidays that exceed the amount agreed by the Principal.

For those children and young people who are struggling to attend school full time due to their complex medical needs, school and the parents may discuss flexible hours. When a parent seeks a reduction in hours or days, the school and health professionals will look at the individual child or young person and their needs and work with the parents to provide appropriate education for their child.

Any adjustments to this Trust Attendance Policy will be reflected in a school Attendance Statement if required.

5. Registration

The school day will be published by each Trust school and include details of when the morning and afternoon sessions start and end and when registers will be taken. Pupils not in school by the close of registers will be marked as absent for that session. Registers are taken by the class teacher and monitored by the Senior Leadership team.

6. Absence Procedures

Parents should advise school that their child will be absent by contacting the school office no later than 8am before the start of the school day. It is the responsibility of the parents to inform school directly. Messages via transport staff, other parents or social media will not be accepted and will be followed up by a welfare call. Office staff will then inform class teams that the pupil is absent.

T.E.A.M. Education Trust use a first day response policy therefore if a pupil does not attend school and no adequate reason has been provided then a telephone call will be made to the parent by office staff. The member of staff making the first day response welfare call will update the school register as necessary.

Parents are expected to keep in contact with school when a pupil is absent for a long period to keep school informed of the situation and any expected return date.

Parents are requested to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend for part of the day. Parents should contact the office to inform school of such appointments as early as possible. Pupils may only leave school premises if they are accompanied by a parent. Proof of the appointment will be requested, this could be an appointment card or a letter from hospital.

7. Holiday in term time

As of 1 September 2013 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 removed the option for Head teachers to grant leave of absence during the term time in 'Special Circumstances' of up to ten days in a year.

Leave of absence in term time is strongly discouraged. Parents are not automatically allowed to take their child out of school on holiday. Principals are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an 'Exceptional Circumstance'; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an "Exceptional Circumstance".

In-line with Government guidelines, T.E.A.M Education Trust will not authorise absences for holidays in term-time unless there are exceptional reasons. All requests will be considered individually by the Governing body/Principal.

Parents will be required to submit any request for absence in term time in writing at least 4 weeks before the proposed absence using the 'Request for Leave of Absence' form included in the school's supplementary attendance policy.

Parents will be expected to give a full explanation of why the holiday request is exceptional. A child or young person's previous absence will be considered before a decision is made. School will respond to all requests in writing, however, parents should not automatically expect the request to be authorised.

All requests for holidays and the responses will be kept on the pupil's record. If permission to take leave is not granted and a pupil still goes on holiday then the absence will be unauthorised. The school may make a request to the Local Authority to apply a fixed penalty notice. The fine is £120 to be paid within 28 days. The 28 days starts two days after the date of issue as shown on the notice. If the fine is paid within 21 days, payment reduces to £60.

In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

The Local Authority can only issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence or where a child - who has been excluded from school - is seen in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.

There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence can be issued in an academic year.

Parents should be aware that when two parents are issued with a penalty notice for the same child both penalty notices must be paid. The fine will apply to each parent for each child who fails to attend regularly and punctually.

The law defines a parent as:

- Any natural parent, whether married or not
- Any parent who, even if not married, has responsibility as a parent
- Any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person Having care of a child or young person means that if the child or young person lives with you and is cared for by you then you will be regarded as the parent irrespective of what your relationship is with the child

If a pupil arrives after the registers closes with no prior explanation then they will receive a late mark. If a pupil has a persistent late record, parents will be asked to meet with the Principal and/or a member of the Senior Leadership Team to resolve the problem, but can approach school at any time if there are problems getting pupils to school.

8. Circumstances where a Penalty Notice may be issued

Penalty notices can be used in a wide range of situations, including but not limited to circumstances:

- Where it is clear that parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly and on time
- Where parents take their child on holiday during term-time without the written permission of the Principal.

A formal written warning will usually be given in the first circumstance, but there will be certain circumstances where you will not be given a formal written warning. For example, where a parent has taken a child on holiday in term-time without the authorisation of the Principal.

The warning letter will tell the parent how many school sessions their child has missed and give a minimum of 15 school days to improve their child's attendance. If there is no significant improvement, a penalty notice will be issued.

The Trust never take such action lightly and would prefer to work with parents or carers to improve attendance without having to enforce it. However, the Trust will use these powers to ensure that your child regularly attends school.

In some cases, parents may be prosecuted for the offence of failure to ensure regular attendance at school.

The Trust can only issue a Penalty Notice in cases of unauthorised absence or where a child - who has been excluded from school - is seen in a public place in the first five days of exclusion.

There will be no limit on the times a Penalty Notice for unauthorised absence can be used in an academic year.

9. Working with Education Welfare Services (EWS) and the Early Help Team

Principals and school leaders meet with the allocated Education Welfare Officers on a regular basis to discuss persistent absentees. These are pupils with an attendance of 90% and below. Children with complex medical needs will be discussed by exception with both services having a clear plan of action e.g. contacting health colleagues, providing educational support in the home, etc.

When a child or young person stops attending school for 10 days and no contact can be made to establish the child or young person's whereabouts school will complete a (CME) Child Missing Education form and submit this to the Local Authority.

Child Missing in Education: Appendix A outlines the referral process

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an authorised absence school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to establish the whereabouts of the child. This only applies if the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause. Before this point, the school will take the necessary actions to

assure themselves that a child is safe and secure if they have not attended school, and this may involve referring to children's social care.

10. Roles and responsibilities

10.1 Parents will;

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually;
- Contact the school office on 1st day of absence to give a reason for their child not attending school with an intended return to school date;
- Contact school regularly during a pupils absence to keep staff updated;
- Do not pass on messages to school via transport staff;
- Avoid holidays in term time wherever possible and apply in advance by completing the relevant 'Leave of Absence' request form;
- Avoid medical and dental appointments in school hours wherever possible;
- Attend meetings in school;
- Ensure their child goes to bed at a reasonable time;
- Ensure their child is ready for transport in a morning;
- Ensure their child comes in to school ready to learn;
- Discuss any issues affecting attendance or punctuality with school via Senior Leadership Team or keyworkers.

10.2 Pupils will;

- Acknowledge behaviour required out of school e.g. early bedtime and good evening routines;
- Attend school punctually;
- Speak to parents/teacher if issues arise that may have an impact on their school attendance.
- Co-operate and participate in interventions and support offered by the school or external agencies.
- CEO & Trust Board will monitor through the Trust Champion and data returns (3 x year as a minimum).

10.3 Principals will;

- Take the lead in ensuring attendance has a high profile within the school;
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters;
- Ensure adequate protected time is allocated to discharge these responsibilities;
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance;
- Ensure there are designated staff to oversee educational provision for children and young people who are deemed too ill to attend school (class teacher and Senior Leadership Team).

10.4 Designated Staff will;

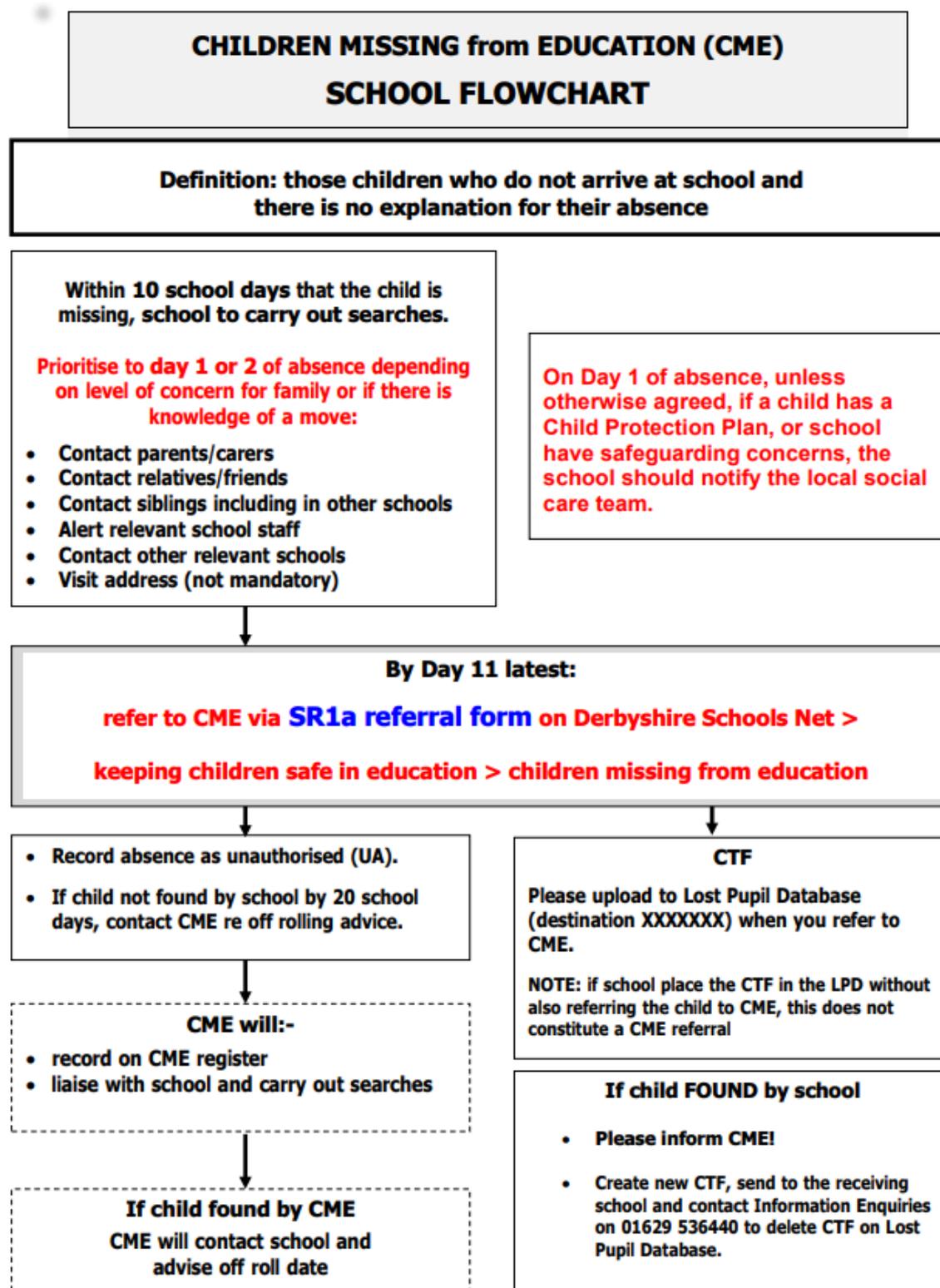
- First Day Response: Contact parents if an adequate reason for absence has not been provided;
- Input and update the attendance registers;
- Regularly identify and monitor school attendance and punctuality levels;

- Work with children and young people and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance;
- Ensure, if appropriate, children and young people who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons have opportunities to access educational activities.

10.5 All staff will;

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and young people and provide a safe learning environment;
- Ensure an appropriate and responsive curriculum;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupils concerns;
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance;
- See pupil attendance as the responsibility of all school staff and identify early Safeguarding triggers;
- Participate in training regarding school systems and procedures;
- Be pro-active in providing learning opportunities for children and young people who cannot attend school due to significant medical needs.

Appendix A: Child Missing in Education Referral Process



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