



Pupil Attendance Policy

T.E.A.M. Education Trust

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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

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1	29.5.20	Original Document	
2	13.5.21	Addition of Appendix A: Child Missing in Education referral process	S Albery
3	18.10.22	Amendments to make processes explicit, follow legislation and consider Working together to Improve School Attendance guidance. Change to Appendix A.	N Rees

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1. Scope

This policy relates to all schools and settings across TEAM 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

TEAM 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 and low levels of Persistent Absenteeism across all Trust schools.

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 significantly affect their learning. Poor levels of attendance in school can also affect young people as they transition to adulthood.

Through the year, school leaders and governors monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need and can be made.

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 (25 hours) 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, TEAM 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

The following legislation outlines the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011 • The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- Local authority guidance on issuing fixed penalty notices

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' September 2022.

4. Admissions Register ('the school roll')

The admission register (sometimes referred to as the school roll) must contain specific personal details of every pupil in the school along with the date of admission or re-admission to the school, information regarding parents and details of the school last attended.

A pupil's name can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register if a reason set out in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended, applies.

5. Attendance Register

Schools must also take the attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. On each occasion they must record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent, or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Each TEAM Education Trust school will close their register no more than thirty minutes after morning and afternoon sessions have started. This is in line with varying start times for each of the schools. Arrivals after the close of registers will be marked as a 'U' code, which is an unauthorised absence mark for the session.

The timings for the school day will be published by each TEAM Education Trust school and will include timings for each of the sessions and the close of registers.

Specific codes are used to mark pupil attendance on the attendance register and can be found below in appendix 1.

6. Retaining and amending registers

Effective and timely use and sharing of register data is critical to improve attendance. Schools are expected to use an electronic management information system to keep their attendance and admission registers to improve accuracy, speed up the process of sharing and analysing information, and make returns to local authorities and DfE easier.

Registers are legal records and all schools must preserve every entry in the attendance or admission register for 3 years from the date of entry. As the attendance register is a record of the pupils present at the time it was taken, the register should only routinely be amended where the reason for absence cannot be established at the time it is taken and it is subsequently necessary to correct the entry. Where amendments are made, all schools must ensure the register shows the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date on which the amendment was made, and the name and title of the person who made the amendment.

7. Day to Day Absence Procedures

Parents should advise school that their child will be absent by contacting the school office no later than before the start of the school day.

It is the responsibility of the parents to inform school directly for each day of a child's absence. This is due to the school having a duty of care in line with safeguarding procedures.

Notification of absence messages via third parties, such as other parents, transport staff, social media will not be accepted. A clear reason for absence will be required. Where limited reasons of reasons for absence have been provided, further information will be requested to ensure robust logging in line with attendance processes.

TEAM Education Trust implement a first day response process. Therefore if a pupil does not attend school and no adequate reason has been provided, then a telephone call and/or text message (in some Trust schools) will be actioned. The member of staff making the first day response welfare call will ensure the school register is updated as necessary.

If there is no contact from parent to notify the school of a child's absence, then a home visit will be made. Home visits maybe conducted by a member of school staff or a member of TEAM Education Trust Central Team. Where absence persists for 3+ days, a home visit will be made to ensure all TEAM Education Trust schools are fulfilling their safeguarding responsibilities. Additionally, a home visit may be made at any point during a child's absence to complete safe and well checks.

8. Reasons for 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 to ensure robust monitoring procedures.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for reasons that have been clearly explained, such as one unavoidable absence due to

illness or medical appointments unavoidably made during school hours . Absence can only be authorised by the school and 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.

9. Medical Appointments

TEAM Education Trust understand specialist medical appointments are often likely to fall during the school day. In which case, supporting medical evidence in the form of the appointment letter/card or text message with the appointment details, will need to be provided. Where sessions have been missed as a result of these appointments and evidence has been provided, this will be counted as an authorised absence and marked as 'M' on the pupil register.

Any routine medical appointments (such as check-ups at the dentist or eye tests) must be made outside of school hours.

Where an **emergency appointment** is necessary, parents must:

- notify the school as soon as possible
- bring the pupil back to school in a timely manner (whole day appointments are not permissible)
- obtain evidence of the appointment (e.g., appointment slip / text message)

Where sessions have been missed and evidence of the appointment has been provided, this will be considered as an authorised absence. If medical evidence is not provided, the absence will be marked as unauthorised.

10. Lateness and Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents to ensure their child attends school on time, every day.

Pupils who arrive at school late, during registration, will be marked as late, which is an authorised mark. Pupils who arrive after registers close will receive an unauthorised mark for the session (see appendix 1).

TEAM Education Trust schools will work closely with parents to overcome barriers which prevent pupils arriving on time. If significant punctuality issues persist and the

pupil continually arrives after the close of register, this will affect their pupil attendance record and may result in the case being referred to the Local Authority for consideration for a Penalty Notice to be issued for lateness.

11. Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. A leave of absence can be requested by completing a 'Leave of Absence Form' available from the school office.

- Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head Teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head Teachers will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e., the parent/carer with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance by completing a leave of absence request form. The application form is available from the school office. Failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- The Principal will not authorise leave of absence under any circumstances of more than ten (10) days in one academic year.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as "unauthorised". This will result in legal action against the parent/carer, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- Where a child resides with two parents a separate penalty notice will be issued to each parent.
- The term "parent" used in the code of conduct is defined by Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 and Section 2 of the Children Act 1989. In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person:
 - a) who is not a parent of his/her but who has parental responsibility for him/her, or
 - b) who has care of him/her

In line with Government guidelines, TEAM Education Trust schools will not authorise absences for holidays in term-time unless there are exceptional reasons. All requests will be considered individually by the Principal and where appropriate, the governing body. The completed 'Leave of Absence' request form will need to clearly outline the reasons why this request is to be considered as 'exceptional circumstances'.

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.

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

12. Pupils with Medical Conditions or Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities. Their right to an education is the same as any other pupil and therefore the attendance ambition for these pupils should be the same as they are for any other pupil. TEAM Education Trust schools will be mindful of the barriers these pupils face when working with their parents to improve attendance and will put additional support in place where necessary to help them access their full-time education. This will include:

- Having sensitive conversations and developing good support for pupils with physical or mental health conditions. For example, making reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability or putting in place an individual healthcare plan where needed.
- Working with parents to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, including where applicable ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed. In addition, schools will work with families to help support routines where school transport is regularly being missed and work with other partners to encourage the scheduling of additional support interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day.
- Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements.
- Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance.

13. Part time Timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education (25 hours). In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. Supporting

medical information will be required, where appropriate, to ensure the reduced timetable is implemented in line with guidance.

A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full time.

Any pupil on a part-time timetable will have formal arrangements in place for regular reviews, involving the pupil, school, parent and any external professionals/agencies who support the pupil. In agreeing a part time timetable, parents will sign an agreed form, alongside the school, outlining the details of the reduced timetable. The form will also outline safeguarding responsibilities and demonstrate that a duty of care has been considered in making such amendments to a pupil's timetable.

14. 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
- A Penalty Notice may also be issued when the level of unauthorised absence is 10% or more over a period of ten school weeks.
- Where parents take their child on holiday during term-time without the written permission of the Principal.

TEAM Education Trust schools never take such action lightly and will always proactively work with parents to improve attendance without having to enforce it.

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

15. Children Missing Education (CME)

Children missing education are defined by the Department for Education (DfE) as “Children of compulsory school age who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school”. Local Authorities have a legal duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to make arrangements to identify, as far as it is possible to do so, children missing education. Children Missing from Education are:

- not on a school roll
- not being educated in a school or anywhere else
- identified as being out of education for over 20 school days.

Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life. Children and young people who do not access school or appropriate alternative education are deemed to be vulnerable and their risk is increased as they continue to be without a school place.

All TEAM Education Trust schools must inform the Local Authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of ten school days or more .

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten days after an unauthorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for twenty consecutive school days, the pupil can be removed from the admission register after making reasonable enquiries, but have failed to establish the whereabouts of the child. All TEAM Education Trust schools will work with the relevant local authority and follow the children missing education procedures.

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

TEAM Education Trust schools strive to work with parents to support and promote high standards and expectations relating to school attendance. 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, where required.

17. Roles and responsibilities

17.1 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.

17.2 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.

17.3 Principals will;

- Take the lead and work with all stakeholders to ensure 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).
- Work with parents/carers, designated staff and external agencies to request targeted support where attendance is a concern for individual pupils
- Refer to TEAM Education Trust specialist panel (TEAM Matrix) for support where attendance remains a significant concern for individual pupils, despite support being implemented

17.4 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;
- Make and request home visits to conduct safe and well checks in line with the absence processes
- Ensure, if appropriate, children and young people who are unable to attend school due to medical reasons have opportunities to access educational activities.

17.5 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.

17.6 TEAM Education Trust will;

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.

- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- • Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Take an active roll in attendance improvement, support their schools to prioritise attendance and work together with school leaders to set whole school cultures
- Set high expectations of all leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Identify and monitor attendance patterns across the schools to identify common issues and barriers and share effective good practice
- Ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils, but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils. This includes those with long term illnesses, special educational needs and disabilities, pupils with a social worker and pupils from cohorts with historically lower attendance such as those eligible for free school meals.
- Repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of school(s)' processes and improvement efforts to ensure they are meeting the needs of pupils as experiences and barriers to attendance evolve.

Appendix A: Codes taken from DfE guidance 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' September 2022

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Authorised absence codes:

Code	Definition	Scenario
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been suspended but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma, and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school

Unauthorised absence codes:

Code	Definition	Scenario
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time- no more than 5 days)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Other codes:

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil is of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel because of a local/national emergency
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day