Attendance Policy

Treeton C of E Primary School

(Part of Diocese of Sheffield Academies Trust)

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Vision Statement

Let your light shine (Matthew 5:16)

Our vision is to nurture and inspire our whole school community, to use their God-given gifts, to be the best that they can be, so that they can let their light shine to the world.

To do this we seek to inspire our children to:

- have courage
- have respect
- have faith

These three 'haves' are understood in a distinctive Christian way. Our vision is that children will 'have' these virtues – that they will form and mould the character of our children and become the way in which they flourish in school and life.

Rationale

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance at school is maximised and that unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism is kept to a minimum.

LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the DfE document 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (May 2022) and refers to the DFE statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures (January 2015). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and responsibilities that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

It also refers to:

- School census guidance
- Keeping Children Safe in Education Sept 2023
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (February 2023)

Treeton C of E Primary School is committed to maximising educational opportunities and achievement for all students. For students to gain the best from their time at Treeton C of E Primary School it is very important that they achieve excellent attendance and punctuality. Pupils who have higher levels of attendance achieve better both academically and socially. Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with. Statistics show that 91% of pupils with fewer than six days absence each year are more likely to go on and achieve at least five GCSEs. Of the pupils who had more than twelve days absence each year, only 36% achieved five GCSEs. In addition, there is a direct link between underachievement and attendance below 95%

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Aims

• To maximise the attendance of all our pupils to facilitate the highest standards of achievement
• To strive towards every pupil attending 100% of the time
• To promote excellent punctuality and attendance so that pupils are prepared for the secondary stage of their education and beyond that, the disciplines of adult working life

What you can expect from Treeton C of E Primary School:

• We will promote excellent attendance and punctuality and will investigate any unexplained and/or unjustified absence.
• We will work closely with parents/carers where a pupil's absence is cause for concern.
• We will support pupils to achieve excellent attendance and punctuality.
• We will support pupils returning to school after prolonged absence.
• We will reward high and improving attendance.

What Treeton C of E Primary School expects from students:

• To attend school on school days and be on time.
• To be punctual to all lessons
• To ensure all messages and notes relating to absence, medical appointments etc. from parents/carers are given to a member of the office staff or emailed to enquries@tp.dsat.education.

What Treeton C of E Primary School expects from parents/carers:

• To ensure their child attends the academy, punctually, dressed in full uniform and equipped to learn.
• To ensure their child attends every day the academy is open unless they are too ill to do so.
• To avoid keeping their child away from the academy for any reason other than illness or other authorised explanation.
• To avoid arranging holidays during term time.
• Avoid arranging routine appointments such as dental check-ups etc. during school hours
• To immediately inform the school office if their child is unable to attend by 9.30am, including the reason for absence and expected date of return.
• For safeguarding reasons, a call is required for every day of absence. If a call is not received the academy has a policy of contacting parents/ carers to find out why the pupil is absent on their first day of absence and if contact is still not made with the school, a member of SLT will conduct a visit to the home address.

Registration

The law requires the register to be taken twice a day – at the start of the morning session and once in the afternoon session. This is at 8.45 am and at 1.00 pm
Pupils are expected to arrive at 8.45am in order to be ready for the start of registration period at 8.45 am.
Registers close at 9.00 am in the morning and 1:15 pm in the afternoon, after which students will be marked as unauthorised absence unless a satisfactory explanation has been received.
The register is marked using the DfE Attendance and Absence Codes (see Appendix 1).

Punctuality
The school gates close at 8:50am
Any pupil arriving after this time should sign in at the school Reception office.
Pupils arriving after registration has closed will be marked as having unauthorised absence
Continued repeated offenders will result in punctuality letters sent and parents/carers being invited into school for a Punctuality review.

How we Respond to Absence
If a pupil is absent at morning registration without contact from a parent/carer to explain the absence, the school will contact parents/carers. We take our safeguarding responsibilities seriously and will always do our best to contact parents/carers to ensure that they are aware of their child's absence using the following methods:
• Telephone number of Contacts 1-4 (as identified by parents/carers on pupil's registration form)
• Text message to main contacts
• Home visit
The school asks that parents/carers ensure that we always have the most up to contact details. It is important that parents/carers ensure that we have a minimum of 2 contact numbers, but the more that can be provided the better, for cases of emergency. The reasons for all absences will be retained on pupil records.

How we respond to lateness
• Pupils arriving late after doors/gates close must report to the school office, where a record of their late arrival will be made with the time of arrival and reason for the lateness.
• Pupils arriving up to 30 minutes after doors closing will be deemed to be late, and given a late mark (L). Individual school policies will determine the length of time allowed until the close of registers.
• Pupils arriving after this designated time and the close of registers will be marked as 'U'.
• Staff will monitor lateness, and note persistent offenders. Arbor registers will be annotated with the number of minutes late.
• Where a pattern of repeated lateness is seen, the school will send the relevant 'Late' letter 1 to remind parents of the importance of good timekeeping.
• Where the problem persists, the school can ask the DSAT EWO to speak to parents by telephone to discuss their child's lateness and try to identify causes/seek remedies to the problem.
• If there is no subsequent improvement, school will send 'Late' letter 2, and parents will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher and EWO.

Authorised Absence
Authorised absence is where the school has given approval for absence in advance or where the explanation given afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for the absence. Parents/carers may not authorise absence; only the school can do this. Wherever possible, pupils should attempt to arrange non-school activities outside of their school timetable. Where this is not possible, the following is a list of reasons for absence which would be authorised:
• An emergency medical or dental appointment
• Exceptional family circumstances e.g. family bereavement and/or attendance at a funeral
• A religious observance
• Involvement in a public performance
• A recognised examination
• Exclusion

Standard medical/dental and other appointments should be arranged out of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, pupils should, where practically possible, come to school before the appointment, sign out and return to school after the appointment. Evidence of medical/dental appointments will be required and shown to the school office or digital evidence emailed to the school office on enquiries@tp.dsat.education. Following an explanation from parents/carers regarding a pupil's absence, the school will decide whether or not it accepts the explanation and authorise/unauthorise accordingly. Absence which hasn't been explained will remain as unauthorised. Parents/carers should not take their children out of school for days out, to attend sporting events, etc.

Irregular Attendance at School

Where a pupil's absence is cause for concern, the school will write to Parents/Carers and/or invite the Parents/Carers into school or visit Parents/Carers at home. Where no sustained improvement in attendance is demonstrated despite support from the school, the Local Authority attendance process will be implemented including sending a warning letter regarding the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) and the request to issue an FPN. **See also Trust Attendance policy for DSAT**

Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN)

An FPN will be issued in the following circumstances:

• When a pupil is taken out of school during term time for a holiday which has not been authorised by the school and following current guidelines from the local authority.

• Where a parent allows their child to be present in a public place during school hours, without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed or permanent exclusion.

Penalties require each parent to pay a fine of £60 per child if paid within 21 days or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay within the specified timescale could result in prosecution in the Magistrates Court for failure to ensure regular school attendance.

Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a Persistent Absentee when they miss 10% of their schooling across the academic year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and we need parents'/carers' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Any pupil whose attendance has reached the PA threshold or is at risk of moving towards that threshold is given priority for intervention.

This intervention will be as follows:

The school's response to attendance issues/following attendance pathways

• The school will identify and monitor pupils whose attendance gives cause for concern.

The Trust will set a target for attendance, to be reviewed each academic year.

• The Trust target for the academic year 2023-24 is 96%.

• Pupils falling below this will be deemed to be of concern. The attendance leads in school are, Mrs Minhas – Head of School and Mrs White, Administrative Officer, should review the attendance certificates, and if necessary, make initial contact with the parent/carer to express their concerns and offer Early help support. At this stage we will send the first letter according to Rotherham Local Authority Attendance Pathway, and monitor for 3-4 weeks.

• If attendance continues to fall below 90% (as defined by the DfE) a child will be deemed to be 'Persistently Absent' (PA). Absence at this level is likely to cause considerable damage to any child's educational prospects and the school will need parent/carer's fullest support and co-operation to address this. If not taken up already, Early Help support should be offered again. The school will continue on their Local Authority pathway as prescribed. Parents will be invited to meet with the head and Trust EWO.

• If attendance does not improve over the next 3-4 weeks, the next pathway letter will be sent and parents will be invited to a formal attendance review panel in school with the Headteacher/ Attendance Lead and Trust EWO. The LA Attendance lead may also be invited to this meeting. A support plan will be created for the family, and further professional help accessed if not already in place. Regular review meetings will be held in school to monitor progress.
• Children whose attendance continues to fall to below 50% are deemed to be Severely Absent (SA) and will need a specific targeted plan. This should be created in liaison with support from the Local Authority attendance lead (Education Welfare Officer).
• Parents should be advised that failure to comply with the above interventions could eventually lead to the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices, or prosecution in court. The Local Authority will contact parents regarding the issuing of fines or any other legal action. Persistent Absence data at Treeton C of E Primary School is communicated to the Local Authority via the School Census on a termly and annual basis.

Leave of Absence during Term Time (including holidays in term time)
The Trust will not authorise holidays in term time. Our schools will refer any cases of unauthorised holiday absence that meet Local Authority thresholds for the issuing of a Fixed Penalty Notice, currently £60 per parent/per child for any leave of absence of 5 days or more. This FPN will increase to £120 per parent/per child if not paid within 21 days.

If parents do wish to take their child out of school during term time, applications for leave of absence should be made to the school at least 20 days prior to the date of absence. Leave of absence request forms must be collected in person from the school office, and not given out by class teachers.

Where a leave of absence request is deemed to be due to exceptional circumstances, the headteacher will consult with the Trust EWO on a case-by-case basis to ascertain whether the FPN can be waived. However, the absence will still be classed as unauthorised.
Families requesting leave of absence for the purposes of Religious Observance should speak to the Head of School for guidance.

It is expected that an application for a leave of absence is completed and submitted to the academy office at least 4 weeks in advance of the proposed absence. Head teachers cannot retrospectively authorise absence from school under any circumstance. If the school believe an unauthorised leave of absence has been taken, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be served.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

• We believe that all pupils are more likely to have excellent attendance if the curriculum is engaging and personalised to meet their needs. The general curriculum is monitored and revised on an annual basis so that it meets the ability needs of pupils and where individuals have particularly needs such as SEND they will have an Individual Education plan or Support Plan in place, which is reviewed approximately every 12 weeks.
• Pupils are regularly informed of their class attendance levels and a weekly award is given in whole school assembly to the class with the highest attendance percentage. The class is rewarded with an extra afternoon break of 5 mins or 10 mins.
• Where appropriate, pupils whose attendance falls below the attendance target of 96% will be set a target for improvement and progress towards these targets will be regularly reviewed.
• Good and improved attendance and punctuality will be promoted and rewarded with a certificate presented in whole school assembly or a letter sent home.
• Pupils, parents/carers and staff are regularly reminded about the importance of good attendance. This information is a regular feature on the weekly newsletter.
• Parents/Carers are encouraged to contact the class teacher or head of school at any time to discuss their child's attendance if they have concerns so that a plan of support can be put into place.
• Regular meetings will be held with the appropriate members of staff/external agencies to identify and support those pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern.
• Pupils who have been absent for extended periods of time will be supported as appropriate to re-integrate back into school.
• Effective links are made with feeder secondary schools, and particularly our local feeder secondary school, Aston Academy to facilitate the smooth transition to the secondary phase of education.
• Pupils' attendance will be reported at all parent/carer meetings and on pupil record of achievements.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

All members of the staff have a role to play in improving attendance and reducing absence.

Class Teachers
• Welcome and value the attendance of all pupils to school.
• Will ensure all pupils are accurately registered.
• Will ensure that pupils know the importance of the register being taken.
• Will identify pupil absence accurately on the register and take appropriate action this may include contacting home
• Will ensure attendance percentages be entered into Pen Portrait documents so that these can be part of the discussion about each pupil, linked to their performance and how they can be supported.
• Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will raise these with the head of School
• Will support students to improve their attendance.
• Will work with other members of staff to share information and support pupils and their parents/carers to improve attendance.
• Will arrange for work to be sent home if the student will be absent for a known period.
• Will arrange a suitable reintegration for student who returns from a prolonged absence, which may include: liaising with the student and parents/carers about support needed, informing all relevant staff of the circumstances, consider a personalised programme of return, if appropriate.

Office staff who monitor attendance

• Will monitor registration on a daily basis.
• Will complete first day protocol checks.
• Will receive calls and emails from parents/carers regarding student absence.
• Will contact parents/carers regarding reasons for student absence.
• Will issue the cumulative attendance report to attendance lead for parent meetings.
• Will monitor absence and attendance regularly.
• Will ensure that registers are being completed and inform head teacher where there are persistent concerns.
• Will identify any absence trends or concerns and will liaise with the class teacher and head teacher

The Headteacher and Senior Leaders

• Will contact parents/carers where attendance concerns have been identified and provide support to improve their child's attendance, including making home visits if this is necessary.
• Will support pupils to improve their attendance.
• Will work with outside agencies, including the Local Authority, where appropriate to improve attendance of individual students.
• Will provide data to the Local School Board on a regular basis.

The Headteacher and Senior Leaders including the Local School Board

• Will ensure that the attendance policy is implemented and regularly reviewed.
• Will ensure the whole academy ethos promotes excellence in attendance and punctuality.
• Monitor the curriculum to develop ways of improving the provision of educational experience.
• Utilise attendance data to inform strategic planning