



Tudor Court Primary School

Attendance Policy

Reviewed HT	November 2024
Assigned to Committee	FGB
Frequency of Review	Annually
Ratified by the Governing Body	October 2024

Rational and Background

Tudor Court Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school (Section 7, Education Act 1996).

Where parents register their child at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school. Please refer to NHS guidelines <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

The Department of Education (DfE) has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: "Working together to improve school attendance", May 2022. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

It will be shared widely with Parents/Carers and available on the school website. It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to raising attendance rates. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Introduction

This document is a statement of aims, principles and strategies for Attendance. Government guidelines on attendance and punctuality have been taken into consideration when formulating this policy.

"Working Together to improve school attendance, May 2022" states 'Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex both within and beyond the school gates and often specific to individual pupils and families.'

Tudor Court Primary is a successful school that aims to provide the best learning opportunities for children living in the local community. Without the help and support of parents, some children will find it difficult to adjust to the structured environment that schools have to be in order to achieve their objectives. For children to gain the greatest benefit from their time at school, it is vital that they attend regularly and arrive at school, on time, every day that the school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable.

Tudor Court Primary will work with children, families, the local authority and other partners to identify barriers to good attendance and offer support as appropriate. In cases where this offer of support fails to improve a child's attendance, statutory action may become necessary.

This policy sets out the information parents will need to explain to their child why good attendance is important to their future success and how, with their support, attending school regularly will help them to achieve their full potential.

Attendance lead at Tudor Court Primary School:

Mr P Kyriacou – Head Teacher

Other staff with responsibility for attendance:

Mrs V Corby – Family and Child Support Worker

Mrs K Knapman – Administration Assistant

Governor with responsibility for attendance:

Mr P Brewster – Chair of Governors

Why Regular Attendance is so important:

The effect of absence on progress					
<i>A whole year has 365 days; a school year has 185 days. That leaves 180 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping and other appointments.</i>					
No absence	7 days absence	11 days absence	18 days absence	28 days absence	37 days absence
185 days of education	178 days of education	174 days of education	167 days of education	157 days of education	148 days of education
100%	96%	94%	90%	85%	80%
Very Good Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.		Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder for your child to make progress.		Serious Concern Your child will find it very difficult to make progress.	

Learning

Any absence that a child has from school affects them as their learning becomes disrupted and social interactions can also be affected. Regular absences will have a serious effect on their academic progress and can affect a child's confidence and emotional well-being within school.

Ensuring a child attends school regularly is the legal responsibility of all parents and carers and allowing absence from school without good reason is an offence and may result in a prosecution.

A few days a week/month can quickly build up:

365 days in a year	<u>Attendance</u> 185 school days in total or 37 weeks	<u>Absence</u>
100% attendance	185 days	0
96% attendance	178 days	1 week and 2 days absence
90% attendance	167 days	4 weeks absence
85% attendance	157 days	6 weeks absence
80% attendance	148 days	Absence equal to the first school term Sept-Oct
75% attendance and below	139 days	9+ weeks absence

Attendance & Safeguarding

Safeguarding the interests of each child is everyone's responsibility and within the context of this school, promoting the welfare and life opportunities for children encompasses attendance, behaviour management, health and safety, access to the Curriculum and anti-bullying.

A child may be at risk of harm if they are frequently absent. Therefore, failing to attend school regularly will be considered as a safeguarding matter.

The Law relating to attendance

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable: -

- (a) age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/she may have either by regularly attendance at school
or otherwise'

The Law relating to safeguarding

Section 175 of the Education Act 2002 places a duty on local authorities and governing bodies to have regard to guidance issued by the Secretary of State with regard to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and students under the age of 18.

Absence Procedures:

It is vital that the school is told as early as possible if a child is not going to be attending school. Absence can be reported via the answer phone, calling the school from 8.30am on the day, or alternatively can be reported 24 hours via the following email: office@tudorcourtprimary.com or via the WEDUC app – report absence function. If the school is not informed of a child's absence, a member of staff from the office will make contact to discuss the reason for absence. The school has the right to contact parents on any subsequent absence days to stay in touch and find out how the child is during the absence time. It is important that parents regularly notify the school of their latest contact telephone number or any change of address. If the Parent/ Carer does not contact the school and the school cannot contact the Parent/ Carer or other contacts held, a member of the Senior Leadership team and Family Support Worker may have to make a home visit. Depending on the outcome of the visit, it may be necessary to report the child as a 'missing person' to the Police or Social Services as this could be considered a safeguarding concern. Failure to give the school an acceptable reason for an absence will result in an unauthorised absence mark. Therefore, parents are asked to give details rather than just 'unwell' when reporting their child's absence. Parents are required to provide at least two emergency contact numbers to the school, to ensure that they are able to communicate with someone if needed.

If a child is absent from school, parents must:

- Contact the school before 9:30am on the first day of absence and inform the school of the reason for the absence.
- Provide school with an appointment card/appointment letter if taking their child out of school for a medical appointment; children should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Provide the school with medical evidence of any absence lasting more than 5 consecutive days (i.e. medical note, medical appointment card, medicine bottle – named and dated)
- Provide the school with medical evidence for all future illness if their child's attendance falls under 96%. **Please note that it is that the burden of proof with regards to providing medical evidence sits with parents. Therefore, if medical evidence is not provided when requested the absence will be unauthorised.**

If the school does not receive information from a parent/ carer regarding absence – it may be considered as a safeguarding matter.

If a child is absent from school, without prior notification, the school will:

- Send a Weduc text/email then Telephone the parent on the first day of absence
- Attempt to contact any other persons listed as a contact if they are unable to contact a parent/carers. If the school is still unable to speak with any of the contacts listed, they may carry out a home visit. If there is nobody at home and the school has a safeguarding concern, they will call the police.
- It may also be necessary where no contact has been made to seek advice from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- Send a letter of expectation if the absence reporting procedure is not being adhered to (Safeguarding concern)
- Apply the attendance escalation stages once a child meets the stage criteria. Attendance is monitored on a daily basis and the attendance team meets every 3 weeks to monitor every child's attendance. As a result, letters/ stage escalation will occur when needed and the threshold met (Please note – earlier intervention may be applied – and will be considered on a case by case basis)

Please note: any unauthorised absence due to a holiday/leave of absence may automatically put a child into the below 90% attendance/Persistent Absence category – the school is obliged to still follow absence procedures even if this is caused by holiday leave.

A WEDUC message and/ or email will be sent each month to parents where attendance falls below 96%. Should attendance continue to fall, we will initiate our formal procedures:

Stage 1

*Attendance drops below 90% - letter to Parent/Carer informing of below 90% attendance – opportunity to discuss barriers to attendance with Family and child support worker.
3 week monitoring period and review*



Stage 2

No improvement or further drop in attendance – letter to Parents/Carers and invite to meet with Family Support Worker to discuss barriers to attendance. CAF (common assessment framework) discussed as way to secure further support. Any further medical/illness absences will require medical evidence (If not - then unauthorised) An action plan may be devised and a review meeting held. Monitoring period is established.

If Parents/Carers do not attend meeting or fail to engage, then meeting will still be held – absence recorded on the minutes.



Stage 3

*No improvement or drop in attendance after 6 weeks – Attendance lead letter to parents
In school meeting with Attendance Lead and family Support Worker. Formal warning of the risk of statutory action given at this meeting.*

Parenting contract drawn up and shared. Parents/Carers to sign and given a copy including date for review meeting. 6 week monitoring and review

If no improvement or parenting contract breached – statutory action considered – application for a penalty notice or referral made for prosecution- notification of possible penalty notice letter sent.



Stage 4

Referral to Local Authority and letter sent with evidence from actions at stage 1-3 to be submitted for assessment – Penalty notice likely

School Attendance Support Team (Thurrock Local Authority) (Stage 4)

Thurrock School Attendance Support Team (SAST) are a team of experienced and highly professional officers providing the highest quality service to families, schools and other agencies in respect of school attendance matters. SAST supports schools and academies in the promotion of positive attendance and provides a service where school attendance levels are a concern in line with the Education Act 1996.

Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) for pupils and is essential if pupils are to maximise the opportunities available to them. It is a parent's responsibility to ensure that their child attends regularly.

A child is of compulsory school age from the start of the term after their 5th birthday up until the last Friday of June in year 11.

An offence occurs:

- If a parent fails to ensure a child's attendance at a school at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school; or
- An excluded child is found in a public place, without reasonable justification, during the first 5 school days of a formal exclusion from school.

Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 defines "parent" as "all natural parents, whether they are married or not; any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person; and any person who, although not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child means that person with whom the child lives and who looks after a child, irrespective of what their relationship is with that child, is considered to be a parent in education law."

A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution and offers parents the opportunity to discharge their responsibility for the period of non-attendance by payment of a penalty rather than by prosecution through the Criminal Court. The use of a Penalty Notice should be considered at the earliest opportunity; if it is believed it will address the non-attendance before it becomes entrenched.

Penalty Notices

Tudor Court Primary School has adopted Thurrock Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for Unauthorised Absence from School as part of its Attendance Policy

Circumstances in which a Penalty Notice may be issued;

Irregular Attendance:

- Penalty Notices can only be issued in respect of unauthorised absence, when the following criteria are met:
- At least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence are recorded against the pupil's name
- Parents will first be sent a letter warning that a Penalty Notice could be issued and allowing them 30 school days to evidence a commitment to improving their child's attendance (See Appendix 2 of Thurrock Penalty Notice Code of Conduct for Unauthorised Absence from School document).

Unauthorised Leave of Absence (including term time holidays)

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in 2013 so that references to family holiday, including reference to Headteachers/Chair of Governors allowing up to 10 school days for a term time holiday, and extended leave were removed. The amendments make clear that Headteachers /Chair of Governors may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers/Chair of Governors should determine the number of school days the child may be away from school if the leave is granted.

Please note that even in exceptional circumstances leave of absence will not normally be granted if:

- a child's attendance is below 96% for the current academic year
- the period of absence coincides with the start of term, or is near to or coincides with tests, SATs, exams or other significant events in the school calendar.

Penalty Notices can only be issued in respect of unauthorised absence and must meet the following criteria.

- If a Head Teacher /Chair of Governors) does not authorise a request from a parent for term time leave of absence and the parent takes the leave

Exclusions:

Where a pupil of compulsory school age who has been suspended from school, either for a fixed period or permanently excluded is found to be present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of the suspension, without reasonable justification.

Penalty Notices are issued per parent per child

Once a person is issued with a Penalty Notice they must pay a penalty. This is set by regulation at £80 if paid within 21 calendar days (after the date of issue), rising to £120 if paid after 21 calendar days but within 28 calendar days.

Leave of Absence Requests:

Parents must apply for leave of absence in advance of taking it, failure to do so will result in the absence being marked as an unauthorised holiday code 'O'. All applications need to be made at least 4 weeks before the period of absence and before personal/ travel arrangements are made.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday taken, the Absence Procedure will be followed as necessary. If a leave of absence is taken, staff will not set extra work for children to do during their absence or on their return.

Lateness:

Punctuality is important. If a child misses the start of the day, it can have a detrimental effect on their progress as they find it hard to settle and they will inevitably miss vital introductions to lessons. It also disturbs the class routines, which has a negative effect on other children's learning.

The school grounds open at 8:20am and classroom doors at 8.40am, children must be in class for registration by 8:50am. If a child arrives at school after 8:50am they will need to enter via the school office for their details to be recorded on the class electronic register. If a child is up to 30 mins late they are marked in the electronic register as 'late' (L), pupils arriving more than 30 minutes after the close of registration will be regarded as absent from the morning session and will be given an unauthorised absence mark (U). This will have an impact on a child's attendance record.

Obviously there are times when a child may be late into school due to heavy traffic or an appointment, this type of lateness is marked accordingly, although the school does need to be notified prior to the lateness. If an appointment is later in the morning or afternoon the school will expect the parent/carer to send their child into school to obtain their 'present' mark and then collect them nearer to the appointment time. Ideally, where possible, appointments should be made for a child outside of the school day. We will make calls to parents to discuss reasons for lateness.

If parents are having problems getting their child to school on time they can approach the school at any time, where the Family Support Worker or other members of staff may be able to offer support

and help resolve the problem. The support could prevent the lateness escalation policy being applied – this will be reviewed on a case by case basis.

Understanding types of absence:

An electronic register is taken in the school every morning and afternoon (each classed as a 'session') and every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents) as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED when inputted into the system. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required by the school. You can see a breakdown of the Register codes either on your child's school report which is sent yearly or on a Pupil Attendance Report (PAR), which is available on the Weduc app.

The school will analyse attendance data to ensure they identify any patterns in absence and use this information to inform future actions and appropriate support .

AUTHORISED absences are sessions away from the school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments (which unavoidably fall in school time), emergencies or other unavoidable situations. Obviously children do need to be kept off school if they are too ill to attend, however, if they are simply 'not feeling right' or are just tired then this will not be authorised. It is also important that a child returns to school as soon as possible after feeling unwell, for example, it is not acceptable not to send a child back to school on Friday simply because they have been unwell Monday-Thursday. The NHS guidance can be consulted to support decisions on when you should send your child to school <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>

- It is imperative that parents are honest with the school about all absences, asking pupils to tell an untruth can be upsetting to the child, giving them the wrong moral message, as well as to the relationship between school and home.
- The school retains the right to convert an authorised absence to unauthorised should it become clear that a parent has not been truthful about an absence e.g. where a parent has said a child is sick and it later becomes clear a holiday/ long weekend was taken.

UNAUTHORISED absences are sessions away from the school which the school deems unreasonable.

Unauthorised absences include:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily/without good reason
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have not been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark. Children who arrive 30 minutes after registration closes will be given a U mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time.

As a school we reference Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings from Public Health England to manage absences and determine authorisation.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil is classed a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for any reason, both authorised and unauthorised absences. Please refer to the escalation policy on page 6.

At the end of the academic year anything over 19 days of absence will result in a child being labelled as a persistent absentee. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully in terms of both attendance and academic progress and PA cases will be referred to the School Attendance Support Team.

Unauthorised Leave of Absence (term time holiday)

Unless it is agreed that the leave is for 'exceptional circumstances' all leave will be unauthorised and will show as such in the register. Medical Evidence will be required if a child is off sick prior to a holiday or immediately after a holiday.

If a child continues to incur unauthorised absences, an application will be made for a Penalty Notice to be issued. If the absence is not authorised and the holiday taken, the case may be referred to the School Attendance Support Team who may issue a Penalty Notice (See below).

Any holidays taken will incur absence marks and parents may still receive letters stating their child is below the recommended attendance level (if the leave of absence is 10 or more this will definitely be the case – see diagram on page 4). This can cause parents upset but it is important parents are kept updated on their child's attendance and how absence due to holidays contributes to poor attendance. For more information, please refer to the DFE Guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence>

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday taken, the Absence Procedure will be followed as necessary. If a leave of absence is taken, **staff will not set extra work for children to do during their absence or on their return.**

What incentives do we have for attendance?



Class of the Week

Each week during the Celebration Assembly 'Class of the Week' is awarded to the highest attending class in each Year Group. These classes are awarded a class trophy and are able to have extra playtime at the end of break/lunch.

Termly Rewards

The Class with the best attendance at the end of the term in each key stage will have a non-school uniform day.



Engaging/informing Parents

The school will use standard letters for informing parents of attendance concerns. . Standard letters will be sent out when:

- Stage 1 - Attendance has fallen to 90% or below – Letter sent to parent/s
- Stage 2 - Attendance has not improved since Stage 1, letter sent from FSW via Weduc, meeting offered/held to discuss barriers to attendance and target setting.
- Stage 3 - Attendance has still not improved, Stage 3 letter sent & Stage 3 meeting held with Senior Leader and FSW. Penalty warning given and parenting contract drawn up
- Stage 4 - Attendance has not improved, Stage 4 letter – Penalty Notice Warning likely

All letters referring to a fall in attendance are sent via the school communication system and can be replied to electronically.

Exclusion from School

A pupil of compulsory school age who has been suspended from school, either for a fixed period or permanently is not allowed to be present in a public place during school hours in the first five days of the suspension, without reasonable justification. Parents will have been notified in writing by the school at the time of the suspension of this and the days to which it applies.

Those responsible for attendance matters in this school:

In order for the school's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support

these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

In addition to this, the following staff have specific attendance related responsibilities:

- **Class Teacher** – To complete electronic registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily; to be alert to early signs of issues which may result in non-attendance; to inform the admin. officer of any attendance concerns. The class teacher may also make phone calls/ arrange meetings in order for attendance to be challenged at a very early stage. The class teacher will also discuss attendance at Parent/Carer evening which takes place twice throughout the academic year. The class teacher will pass on any evidence to the Admin Officer that the pupil may be taking an unauthorised absence – such as where another pupil says – ‘he/she is on holiday’ or the pupil themselves says I am going on holiday and must log such information to InTouch. In these cases, it is highly likely that if any leave has been authorised it will become unauthorised.
- **Admin Officer** - To ensure children who are late or absent are added to the electronic register including recording reasons and first day absence calls are made when parents/carers have not notified the school of an absence; to alert the FSW if unable to make contact, a home visit may be necessary.
- **Family Support Worker:** To oversee the registration process and liaise with class teachers over attendance concerns; to alert parents/carers over attendance concerns and/or for frequent lateness and to closely monitor all identified children; to consult and liaise with School Attendance Support Team and refer PA children to them; to promote good attendance within the school with assemblies, achievement certificates and rewards. Particular focus will be on monitoring the attendance of pupils eligible for Pupil Premium as it has been identified that this group of children have lower attendance than non- Pupil Premium children and this negatively affects their academic progress and results can therefore be lower. To liaise with parents/carers and to set and monitor an Action Plan to improve attendance.
- **Head Teacher/SLT and Governors** - To ensure all attendance procedures are carried out in accordance with the Attendance Policy and to work with the senior lead for attendance to raise the profile of attendance within the school and deal with the attendance issues that arise. To also authorise Stage 4 of the escalation process (Local Authority Penalty Notice).

Reintegration programmes

Where children have been absent from school for some time, they may need to return on a gradual basis. Individual cases will need to be discussed with the relevant members of staff and agreement reached as to the pace and time scale of any return.

Policy Summary

The school understands that children are ill from time to time. Individual pupil's academic attainment/progress does suffer if children miss school on a regular basis. The school has a responsibility to discourage parents from removing their children from education for any reason.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance; equally parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school.

All staff within the school are committed to working with both parents and pupils to ensure that attendance within the school is as high as it can be so that the pupils receive the best education that they can which will improve their life opportunities.