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Attendance and Truancy Policy

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## **Statement of intent**

Tor School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

* Promoting and modelling good attendance.
* Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
* Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
* Rewarding regular attendance.
* Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

(a) to age, ability and aptitude and

(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Signed by: | | | |
|  | Headteacher | Date: |  |
|  | Chair of governors | Date: |  |

# Legal framework

* 1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:
* The Education Act 1996
* The Equality Act 2010
* The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
* DfE (2016) School Attendance Advice
  1. All staff must ensure they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

# Definitions

* 1. Tor School defines “absence” as either:
* Arrival at school after the register has closed.
* Not attending school for any reason.
  1. Tor School defines an “authorised absence” as:
* An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
* Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
* Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
* An absence due to a family emergency.
  1. Tor School defines an “unauthorised absence” as:
* Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
* Truancy before or during the school day.
* Absences which have not been properly explained.
* Arrival at school after the register has closed.
* Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
* Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
* Leaving school for no reason during the day.
  1. Tor School defines “persistent absenteeism (PA)” as:
* Missing 15 per cent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

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# Key roles and responsibilities

* 1. The Management Committee has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of Tor School.
  2. The Management Committee has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
  3. The Management Committee has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school’s Complaints Procedures Policy.
  4. The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of Tor School.
  5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
  6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
  7. Designated members of staff will take the attendance register on Schoolpod at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session. As well as the start of each lesson.
  8. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education as quickly as possible when they arrive with us. Many of our pupils have been absent from school for considerable periods of time. Sometimes a full timetable can be problematic in terms of health and social needs. We endeavour to move to full time as quickly as possible.
  9. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
* Are being educated from home.
* No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
* Have an authorised medical note.
* Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
* Have been permanently excluded.
  1. Tor School will inform the LA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly, or has an unauthorised absence for a period of 10 sessions or more during the academic year.
  2. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.
  3. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that pupils attend school every day.
  4. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
  5. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

# Training of staff

* 1. At Tor School, we recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
  2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Attendance and Truancy Policy as part of their new starter induction.
  3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

# Pupil expectations

* 1. Pupils will be expected to attend school every day.
  2. Tor School expects all pupils to attend lessons punctually.

# Absence procedures

* 1. Parents are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of any absence.
  2. Alternatively, parents may call into school and report to theadmin office where arrangements will be made to speak to a member of staff.
  3. A phone call/text message/email will be made to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school.
  4. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
* Ascertain the reason for the absence.
* Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
* Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
* Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the School Census System.
  1. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to our Education and family Support Worker or a senior member of staff.

# Contact information

* 1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
  2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

# Attendance register

* 1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether the pupil is:
  + Present.
  + Absent.
  + Attending an approved educational visit.
  + Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
  1. Tor School will use the national attendance codes to enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:
* / = Present in the morning
* \ = Present in the afternoon
* L = Late arrival before the register has closed
* C = Authorised absence
* E = Excluded but no alternative provision made
* H = Authorised holiday
* I = Illness
* M = Medical or dental appointments
* R = Religious observance
* B = Off-site educational activity
* G = Unauthorised holiday
* O = Unauthorised absence
* U = Arrived after registration closed
* N = Reason not yet provided
* X = Not required to be in school
* S = Study leave
* T = Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence
* W = Work experience
* V = Educational visit or trip
* P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
* J = At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
* D – Dual registered – at another educational establishment
* Y = Exceptional circumstances
* Z – Pupil not on admission register
  1. Every entry into the attendance register will be preserved for three years.

# Lateness

* 1. Punctuality is of the utmost importance.
  2. The school day starts at 9.30am; pupils should be in their family room at this time.
  3. Registers are marked by 9.45am; pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
  4. The register closes at 9:50am; pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
  5. Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.

# Truancy

* 1. Truancy means any absence of part, or of all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.
  2. All staff will be concerned about the regular attendance of pupils, and the importance of continuity in each child’s learning.
  3. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must be signed out at reception and sign back in again on their return.
  4. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.
  5. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:
* In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
* If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
* A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term time and persistent late arrival at school.

# Missing children

* 1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from a member of SLT.
  2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:
* The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the SLT immediately.
* The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
  1. Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
  2. If the pupil has not been found after 20 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
  3. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
  4. The missing pupil’s teacher will log this on Schoolpod describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
  5. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a LAC, or has any special educational needs and/or disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
  6. When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
  7. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
  8. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

# Term-time leave

* 1. At Tor School, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
  2. Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example bereavement or serious illness.
  3. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil’s previous attendance record will be taken into account.
  4. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.

# Religious observances

* 1. Tor School will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
  2. Parents must inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
  3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parents belong.

# Appointments

* 1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
  2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school.
  3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.
  4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

# Young carers

* 1. Tor School understands the difficulties young carers face, and will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school, as well as throughout their time at the school.
  2. Tor School takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each situation will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

# Exceptional circumstances

* 1. When absence is due to exceptional circumstances, the ‘Y’ code will be used on the attendance register.
  2. Exceptional circumstances include when a pupil is unable to attend because:
* The school is fully or partially closed.
* Transport provided by the school or LA is not available and the pupil’s home is not within walking distance.
* There has been widespread disruption to travel services which has prevented the pupil from attending.
* The pupil is in custody and will be detained for less than four months.
  1. The use of the ‘Y’ code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes.

# Monitoring and review

* 1. Tor School monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
  2. We have thresholds for attendance and there are different interventions at each threshold. They are shown in Appendix A
  3. This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher
  4. Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff.

**Appendix A**

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| **Attendance falls below 96%** | **Phone call home from EFSW and letter and leaflet explaining the risks of attendance falling below 95%** |
| **Attendance falls below 93%** | **Informal meeting held with EFSW. Follow up letter with agreed actions** |
| **Attendance falls below 90%** | **Attendance Clinic with EFSW – Action Plan built with agreed actions and timescales** |
| **Continued absence or more than 10 UA** | **EWO referral** |

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