

**Outcomes
First
Group.**



Pupil Attendance Policy

The Tower School
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Headteacher: Lauren Gibbs

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

The Tower School seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

All school staff will work with pupils and their families to support parents in helping them to meet their legal duty and to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

To meet these objectives The Tower School has established an effective and efficient system of communication with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies to provide mutual information, advice and support.

Implementation: It is the responsibility of line managers to ensure that staff members are aware of and understand this policy and any subsequent revisions.

Compliance: This policy complies with all relevant regulations and other legislation as detailed in the *Compliance with Regulations & Legislation Statement*.

2.0 AIMS

The aim of The Tower School's attendance policy is to enable the school to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

The Tower School takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This document is supported by our policies on **safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning**.

3.0 LEGAL FRAMEWORK

The Tower School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws, set out by the legal framework and has produced this document accordingly.

The *Education Act 1996* states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable

- (a) to their age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- (a) when they attains the age of five, if they attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following their attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age when they turn 16 years of age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June). They must then do one of the following until they are 18 years of age:

- (a) stay in full time education, for example at a college,
- (b) start an apprenticeship or traineeship
- (c) spend 20 hours or more a week working or volunteering, while in part-time education or training

4.0 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance rules and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the rules effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and report these to the parents and local authorities.
- take time at governors' meetings to regularly review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- ensure that senior leaders make the necessary referrals to the local authority and other relevant agencies in individual cases of non-attendance
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop and engage with multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance process, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and with the necessary equipment
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (see section 4), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- support a regular routine at home in terms of extended learning, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance

- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the headteacher (see section 4.5)
- sign a home-school agreement.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we give our pupils regular and positive feedback about the importance of regular attendance by awarding certificates and other rewards that can include off-site visits.

We request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance rules, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (see section 4.7). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation
- sign a home-school agreement

5.0 CATEGORIES OF ABSENCE AND PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING ABSENCES

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

5.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day of absence.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper. If these are not provided on request it may result in the absence continuing to be classed as unauthorised.

5.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

5.3 Authorised absences

There may be some exceptional instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

5.4 Exclusion

Fixed term exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The form tutor will arrange for work to be sent home.

5.5 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term

time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Headteacher four weeks in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the headteacher's decision is final on whether the request and the length of the absence is approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

It remains the headteacher's decision whether to authorise any request for absence during term time.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action by the school or prosecution by the local authority.

5.6 Religious observance

The Tower School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

5.7 Late arrival

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon. In the morning **registration begins at 08:45am**. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The morning registration period ends at 09:00am**.

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

In the afternoon registration begins at 1:20pm. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late. **The afternoon registration period ends at 1.30pm**.

6.0 SCHOOL ACTION: CHILDREN MISSING EDUCATION

Class registers are submitted on iSams at the end of the registration period. In line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024, The Tower School is required to hold at least three emergency contact details for each child.

Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the teaching team will take the following steps:

1. Contact parents and/or all three emergency contacts by phone. The reason for absence will be marked accordingly on iSams.

1. a. If the teaching team are unable to reach any of the three emergency contact numbers, they will inform the Safeguarding Officer.

1. b. The Safeguarding Officer will use a CME checklist (appendix 1) to ensure required steps are being followed.

2. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the teaching team will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed. School may also send missed work home during a longer-term period of absence.

Where a child has unauthorised absence from school for a period of more than 10 days and both the school and LA have been unable to contact the parents, the school will liaise with the local authority Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The school will take all necessary steps to promote regular attendance.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be persistently truanting. Parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The school may take further action against the parents, including referral to the EWO.

7.0 SCHOOL PROTOCOL

Attendance will be monitored each half term and where there is an attendance percentage of less than the expected 92%, an initial attendance notice letter will be sent out.

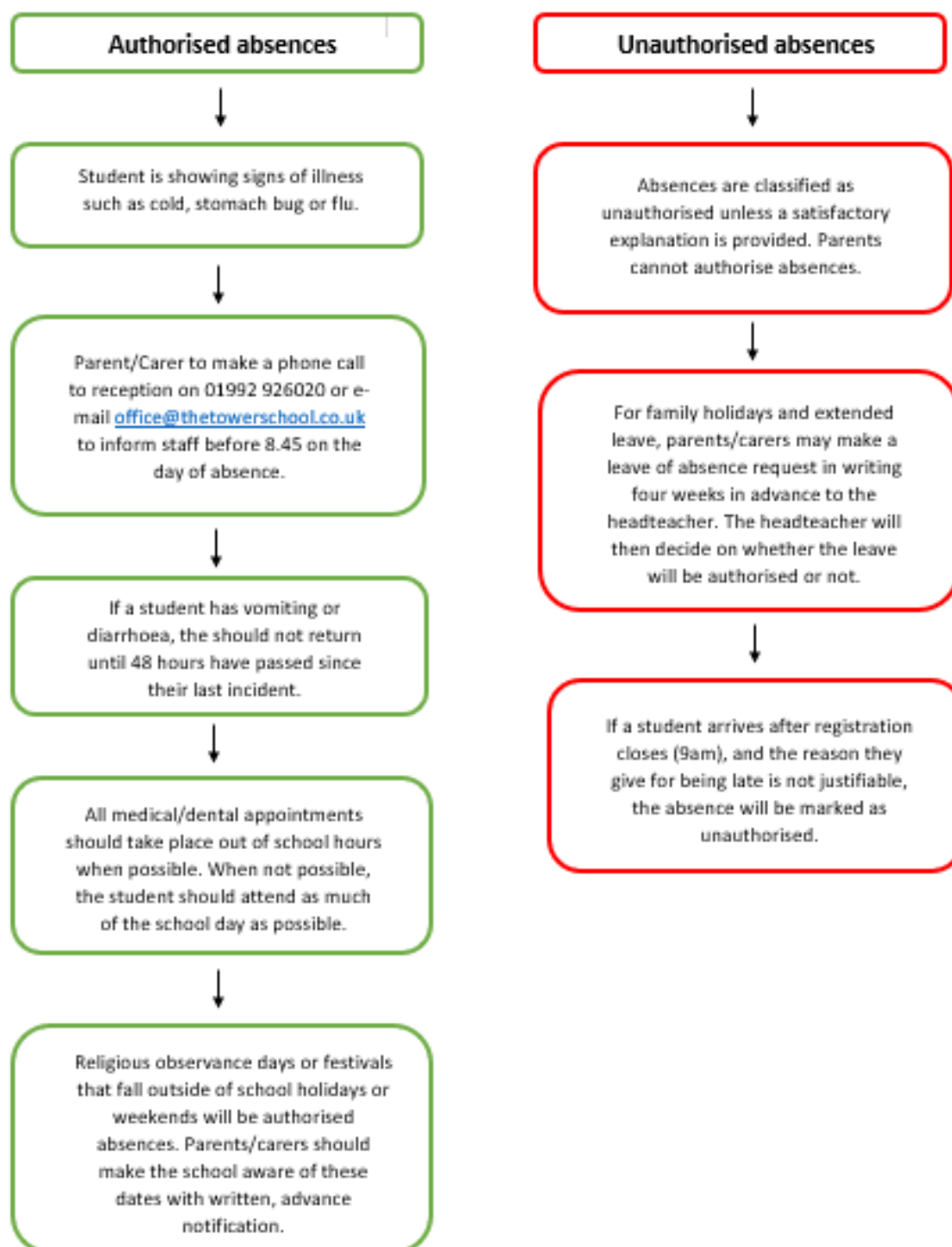
If a pupil's attendance percentage remains below 92%, parents will then be invited to meet with the Designated or Deputy Safeguarding Lead to discuss how school can support the family in raising attendance.

Should there not be an improvement in the pupil's attendance, the EWO will be notified and parents will be invited to attend a further meeting, in which the EWO would be expected to attend.

When pupils join The Tower School coming from either a broken placement, a long period out of school or when the pupil's circumstances change drastically, it may be necessary/recommended for a transition period to reintegrate pupils into full time education. This normally entails a transitional timetable with reduced lessons with the aim to gradually increase throughout the school term. This transition plan will be made in consultation with the pupil, their family and the Local Authority.

We recognise that each individual's learning journey is different and that there are a multitude of factors that could impact pupil attendance. However, it is the school's responsibility to monitor and record concerns over attendance in partnership with the parents to improve attendance where pupils have fallen below the 92% expectation.

Pupil Absence Flowchart



9.0 APPENDIX B
Children Missing Education Checklist

Pupil Details				
Forename			Surname	
Date of Birth			Year Group	
EH / Social Care Status				
		Action Taken	Who & When	Outcome
Week 1	Day 1	Check within school community for whereabouts of the pupil.		
		Contact the parent or carer by phone using all available contact numbers		
		Contact any other relatives/contacts by phone using all available contact numbers		
		Contact allocated Children's Social Worker (if applicable)		
		Refer to LA / MASH team		
	Day 2	Follow same steps in day 1		
		Contact EWO for the child's LA		
		DSL or DDSL to conduct home visit (local pupils only) and/or contact the Children Missing Education Team for assistance in locating the child through central checks.		
		Complete a CME referral and send to the Children Missing Education Team.		
	Day 3	Not satisfied? Contact 101 and request a welfare check on the child.		

Referrer Details			
Completed By		Position within School	
Contact Telephone		Date Referred to CME	