

Attendance Policy



Written by: Julia Hymers

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Agreed by: Full Governing Body

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In order to improve the overall attendance of pupils in school we aim to:

- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including pupils, parents, staff and governors.
- Develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents/carers and pupils.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Develop effective partnerships with supporting services and agencies through the Local Authority
- Recognise and address the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

Definitions

It is the Head Teacher's discretion as to whether a child's absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence:

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- We follow all guidance by UK Health Security Agency (previously public Health England) for any recommended exclusion periods due to illness.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised absence:

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Persistent absence (PA):

- The DFE define a 'persistent absentee' as a pupil who, at any point in the year, has accumulated absence at **15%** or more of the available sessions regardless of whether or not any of it is authorised. The PA status may change as the terms progress but these pupils are at particular risk of achieving poor outcomes at school and beyond.

Registration:

Codes:

There are a series of codes which are used to denote authorised and authorised absence (see 'Advice on School Attendance' DFE January 2012).

It is the school's responsibility to ensure the correct codes are recorded and that patterns and trends in children's absence are analysed.

Medical appointments

Children will be marked as M for a medical appointment.

Requests for leave of absence:

If parents are wanting to take their child out of school during term-time, we would like to ask that parents speak to the Head Teacher regarding this decision and how it will benefit their child. We believe that all children need to be in school for all sessions, but understand that children benefit from new experiences and high-quality family time. We aim to work with you to ensure that your child is still learning whilst out of Nursery.

Religious Observance:

The DCSF recommends the use of Code R when children are absent from school to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals. Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.

This is interpreted to mean that if the parent's religious organisation sets the day as a religious festival then the school must authorise the absence. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parent's religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

If the religious body has not set the day apart there is no requirement for the school to approve the absence or grant a leave absence. Additional holidays and days off linked to the religious festival but not "exclusively set aside for religious observance" by the religious body are not marked using Code R.

Roles and responsibilities:

All members of the school community have roles and responsibilities in promoting and ensuring good attendance and punctuality

Role of parents:

Parents have an essential role in ensuring their child's good attendance, in addition to the young age of children that attend our setting.

We ask parents to:

- Establish good attendance habits by acting as a role model and showing the children that good attendance and punctuality is important.
- Praise and reward good attendance, even small successes, e.g. getting ready quickly, even if resisting going to school.
- Talk regularly with their child about school and how they feel about it. Children are more likely to want to attend and learn if they feel supported and their anxieties are listened to.
- Contact the school by phone, email or letter as soon as possible to say why their child is absent, and when they are expected to return.
- Only grant days at home for genuine illness.
- If appropriate, arrange for a friend to take a child to school if a sibling is sick.
- Avoid taking holidays in school time.
- Ensure that wherever possible, medical appointments are made outside of the school day.
- Know routines of the school day to avoid issues, e.g. ensuring children have their P.E. kits on the right days.
- Establish a good bedtime routine, so that their child can sleep well, get enough sleep and make mornings less of a struggle.

Role of the Key Worker:

We ask staff to:

- Encourage good attendance.
- Ensure that registers are correctly and promptly marked.
- Set a good example in matters of attendance and punctuality.
- Provide a safe and secure environment in which to learn.
- Provide engaging and worthwhile learning experiences that encourage students to regularly attend lessons.
- Listen to and value children's views.

Role of the School:

As a school we:

- Create a school ethos that pupils want to be part of.
- Give a high priority to punctuality and attendance.
- Make initial contact with parents when concerns arise.
- Develop procedures that enable the school to identify, follow up and record unauthorised absence, patterns of absence and parent condoned absence with effective monitoring and intervention.
- Develop a range of effective strategies to follow up intermittent and long term absenteeism and promote good attendance.
- Encourage open communication channels between home and school.
- Develop procedures leading to the formal referral to the 'Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service' (see below).
- Adequately provide for pupils with difficulties, within the bounds of the resources available, and ensure that appropriate delivery of the curriculum.

Role of Governing Body:

Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

Role of the Local Authority:

The Local Authority provides an 'Advice, Assessment and Early Intervention Service', frequently referred to as the 'New Front Door'. The LA may also support the school with legal action to tackle poor attendance where appropriate.

If a pupil is absent:

- The school office will phone the child's primary contact to ask why their child is not in school. A voicemail will be left if no answer.
- A second contact will be phoned and voicemail left if not reply.
- Repeated attempts will be made via telephone call and email throughout the day.
- All attempts of contact will be logged on the SIMS system.
- If no response by the beginning of the second day of a child's absence, advice will be sought from First Contact.
- Parents will be reminded when the child returns to school of the contact details and ways to get in touch to report an absence.
- However, If the school have any safeguarding concerns about a child, they will contact the child's social worker (if they have one), family worker (if they have one), or First Contact to receive further advice no later than lunchtime on the first day of a child's absence.
- With guidance from a safeguarding professional above, staff may attend the family home for an unannounced home visit to check on the welfare of the child. Further information about home visits can be found in the supporting document '*Home Visits Protocol and Toolkit*' which can be found in the school office on request.
- Advice would then be taken from the same professional for next steps.

Intervening with Attendance Concerns:

Where we have concerns around a pupil's attendance we may intervene in one or more of the following ways:

- A member of SLT will review the attendance of all the school's pupils on a half termly basis and any pupils identified as a cause for concern or less than 85% attendance on a more regular basis.
- SLT will review each child's absence individually taking account of children, families and the context of the school.
- A letter may be sent to the parents of any pupil identified as having attendance problems, informing them of the school's concerns and offering support to resolve any problems that may be impeding a child from attending.

- Where patterns are identified a phone call or meeting between the Parent and Senior Leader may take place to discuss the pattern and resolve any issues preventing attendance.

Tudhoe Moor Nursery School pride ourselves on our relationships with families. We aim to work with families to improve children's attendance and ensure they receive the best learning they can during their time with us. We are aware that every family has unique circumstances and issues and that 'not one size fits all'. We are open to working with families and being flexible with sessions to accommodate differing needs.

If you are struggling with your child's attendance, please contact the school office on 01388 436 000 to arrange a confidential meeting with Mrs Hymers or Miss Bond to see how we can support you.