



Attendance Policy



Staff Responsible:	Miss L Elliott
Governor Committee:	Teaching & Learning
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1. Aims

Attendance is a key whole school improvement target. Town Farm Primary School firmly believes that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance and that it has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the school. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial and to achieve this we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. In this instance, regularly means the school's internal attendance target of 96%.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties 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](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The governors expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss with their class teacher or Headteacher any problems preventing them from attending school

The governors expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- Contact the school by the start of the school day on every day of absence, whenever any problems occur that may keep the child away from school
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- Provide the school with a medical certificate, appointment card or prescription document if absence due to illness extends beyond 2 days.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Referring children to the Inclusion Officer at Surrey County Council who may then decide to issue a fixed penalty notice

3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- Referring families to work with the Home School Link Worker, where necessary

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Miss Laura Elliott

3.4 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Benchmarks attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Will contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly and/or have persistent lateness, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- Provides regular attendance reports to school staff and reports concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Will liaise with the education inclusion officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues alongside the designated senior leader responsible for attendance
- Advises the Headteacher when to refer families to the Inclusion Officer

3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.6 School office staff

School office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system using the correct coding.

3.7 Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.45 am on the day of the absence (and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with legal requirements, local authority guidelines and school regulations.

4.2 Procedure

- The attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning session of each school day and once during the afternoon session. This is the responsibility of the class teacher.
- On each occasion the teacher will record whether the pupil is present (/) or no reason yet provided for the absence (N).

Any amendment to the attendance register will be undertaken by the attendance officer and may include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence was authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.3 Lateness and Punctuality

Pupils must arrive in the classroom by 8.45 am on each school day and by 9.00 am in Nursery.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 am for years R-6 and 9.00 am in Nursery. It will be kept open until 9.15am when the register will close, and 9.30 am for Nursery. The register for the second session will be taken at 12.30 pm for Nursery and Reception classes, 12.45 pm for years 1 and 2 and 1.00 pm for years 3-6 and will be kept open until 1.00 pm, 1.15 pm and 1.30 pm respectively, when the register will close.

4.4 Unplanned absence

Parents/carers must notify the school by telephone on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45 am or as soon as practically possible (see also sections 3 and 5).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents/carers to provide the school with a medical certificate, appointment card or prescription document or other appropriate form of evidence if absence due to illness extends beyond 2 days. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this.

4.5 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence so long as advance notice is given.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make these appointments out of school hours where possible. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested and the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school will authorise such absences can be found in section 5.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Any pupil who arrives after 8.45 am will be recorded on the Inventory office system in case of any emergency drill.
- Late pupils will wait with parent/carer until they are collected by the classroom teaching assistant and escorted to the classroom.

4.7 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. When a pupil does not attend school we will respond following statutory guidance as set out in the DfE Children Missing Education 2016:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 8.45 am, the school will make reasonable enquiries to contact them that day by phone, text message or e mail, using all contacts for the family recorded on Arbor, in line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004. The school will also record that they have completed these procedures.
- On the second day of absence if no contact has been made further reasonable enquiries will be carried out. The type of procedure may include checking with other known relatives, neighbours, landlords – private or social housing providers – and other local stakeholders who are involved. The school will also record that they have completed these procedures.
- If, by the end of the third day there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers and a member of the leadership team will be notified.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and a meeting will be arranged with the attendance officer and a member of senior leadership team.
- Parents will be informed that if the absence persists a referral will be made to the attached inclusion officer
- After 10 days of absence and if no contact made by the parent/carer a referral will be made to the inclusion officer
- Failure to comply with the expectations set by the inclusion officer may result in further action, an application for an Education Supervision Order, or court prosecution

- At any time during this process the school believes that non-reply to enquiries is out of character for the family or the school believes the child is in immediate danger or at risk of harm a referral will be made to children's social care and/or a police welfare check will be requested.
- The Surrey online reporting mechanism will be used to report the non-attendance of children and young people who have a safeguarding social worker who are expected to attend an education setting.

4.8 Reporting to parents

Attendance will be reported to parents three times per academic year via the termly reporting system. Attendance will be reported as a percentage with the following grades given:

- Below 96% - Low, needs to improve
- 96 - 97% - Expected
- 97.1 – 98.9% - Good
- 99 – 100% - Outstanding

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

At Town Farm School we expect that every child will attend school every day. The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. If a situation arises where a parent feels they need to request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, the parent must apply in writing, to the Head Teacher at least two weeks prior to the proposed absence using the application for leave of absence form which can be accessed via the school office or on the school website.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the Inclusion Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 4.4 and 4.5
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason.

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5.3 Circumstances when Penalty Notices may be issued

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** may be liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

Where an unauthorised or an authorised leave of absence is less than 5 days but there is reported sickness in the preceding or following days which takes absence to 5 days or more, and where historically there has been a pattern of such absences, the school may consider issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice if there is no accompanying medical evidence. This also applies to sickness days preceding or following school holidays.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 85% and there are no fewer than 10 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

5.4 Deleting a pupil from The Admission Register:

A pupil's name can only be removed from roll in certain circumstances, for example:

- (i) on the day that it is confirmed the child starts at another educational provision
- (ii) where a pupil was granted a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and fails to return.

In these cases a referral will be made to the Surrey Inclusion Service.

Full school procedures for children missing education and the removal of a child's name are set out in the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and will be followed.

6. Strategies for working together to improve attendance

At Town Farm Primary School we encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment.
- By celebrating good and improved attendance (examples include weekly best class attendance, class best attendance trophy awarded, best class get to leave first from assembly, best class have an extra 10 minutes added to the 'Good To Be Green' time. The best class attendance for the term will receive a mufti day on the last day of term. All pupils with over 96% attendance for the school year will be entered into a prize draw to win a bike.
- By providing the attendance policy to new starters and 'Encouraging Good Attendance' flow chart to all parents annually (see appendix 3).
- Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn.
- By accurate and punctual completion of registers and rigorous use of attendance data and by publishing attendance statistics.
- To identify patterns of poor attendance and work together to resolve them.
- To listen to parents and pupils to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- To help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school.
- By informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness and persistent absence and where necessary include formalising support through a parenting contract or engaging with the Local Authority
- By referring the families to the attached inclusion officer if irregular attendance continues

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school by 8.45 am if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.4 and 4.5).

If a pupil's attendance drops below 96% we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this (see section 5.2). In some cases of repeat absence medical evidence to authorise absences will be required.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Once attendance falls to or below 90%, the attendance officer will meet with the parent/carer to draw up an action plan to improve school attendance, which will be monitored and evaluated on a weekly basis. The Surrey inclusion officer may also be notified at this point.

Attendance of below 85% will be referred to the local authority inclusion officer to follow up.

Each term absence data is published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Pupil-level absence data is collected on a weekly basis for both average attendance figures and for persistent absentees. Data of this will include: average weekly attendance, attendance for

vulnerable groups, class attendance data and comparison to both national and local authority averages. At Town Farm we also monitor potential persistent absentees (pupils with attendance between 90.1 – 92%) so intervention and support can be put in place to prevent these pupils from dropping into the persistent absentee bracket.

7.1 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence including daily and weekly monitoring of all pupils' attendance
- Send attendance letter 1 to parent/carer where attendance falls below 96% for an appointment to discuss absences with the deputy head and attendance officer and attendance monitored for next 4 weeks (see appendix 2)
- Send attendance letter 2 to parent/carer where attendance falls below 93% requesting medical evidence for future absences and attendance monitored for next 4 weeks (see appendix 2)
- Send attendance letter 3 to parent/carer where attendance falls below 90% advising that the school will discuss with the local authority inclusion officer further interventions
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

8. Nursery procedure

Children should be at school, on time, every day that the school is open, unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Parents are expected to inform school of an absence. The register closes at 9.30am and 1.00pm. Messages of absence from parents are passed to the key worker.

If a child is absent without an explanation for 2 days, the welfare officer will contact parents to ascertain the reason for the absence. If the child is known to social care, this service will be informed of the unauthorised absence on the first day.

If this does not produce a satisfactory explanation, the deputy head will make contact, initially by telephone. If there is no contact after one week, a letter will be sent to the family. If necessary, an appointment will be made to discuss the matter. If after one month there has been no contact, the child's name will be removed from the register and the place allocated to another child on the waiting list. The local authority will be informed that the child has left the nursery.

Any problems with regular attendance are best discussed between the school, the parents and the child. Children can sometimes be reluctant to attend school. If this is the case, it is never better to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse. Cooperation between

home and school is the best way to support children's well-being needs. Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together.

Parents of children whose attendance is inconsistent and generally poor will be contacted by the deputy head and their future attendance monitored. If there is cause for concern, the Surrey Family Help Hub may be contacted in order to ascertain if family support may be needed. In more urgent cases, social care may be contacted.

Although attendance at nursery is not statutory, authorised absence is only normally granted for emergency situations and medical appointments. All planned absences in term-time must be requested using the Leave of Absence Holiday Request Form.

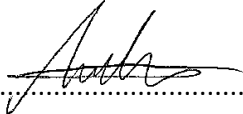
9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and as a minimum annually by the Deputy Head who has responsibilities for Behaviour and Attitudes. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

10. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding policy.
- Attitudes Towards Learning (Behaviour) policy

Signed:  (Headteacher)

Signed:  (Chair of Governors)

Date: 13th September 2023

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations

T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2 Letters to Parents**Letter No. 1**

Date

Dear.....

Re: [name]

I am writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 96% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

I therefore request that you contact Mrs Chilton on 01784 254380 as soon as you can to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can best support [name] in improving [his/her] attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A, Bhatti
Headteacher

Letter No. 2

Date

Dear

Re: [name]

I have noted that [name's] attendance has now fallen below 93% due to a number of illnesses over the year.

Whilst we appreciate that with some illnesses, attendance at school is not recommended and is not permitted during isolation due to Covid illness, I am concerned that the high number of absences may be affecting [his/her] success and fulfilment at school.

We are committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need, including looking into how we can help address any gaps in learning due to absence.

Therefore, should [name] be unable to attend school in the future due an illness, we politely request that evidence of this in order for the absence to be authorised (this can be in the form of a medical certificate, prescription, a stamped appointment card or the medication itself). Should this not be forthcoming the absence may not be authorised.

Yours sincerely

Mr A. Bhatti
Headteacher

Letter No. 3

Date

Dear.....

Re: [name]

I am writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below 90% attendance means that your child is now classified as being persistently absent.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents as our pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

I have therefore requested a discussion with the local authority inclusion officer to notify them of [name] attendance and the strategies in place to improve [his/her] attendance. Any possible further intervention suggested by the inclusion officer will be communicated to you in due course.

Yours sincerely,

Mr A. Bhatti
Headteacher

Appendix 3

Encouraging Good Attendance