



This policy belongs to

Tibberton CE Primary School and St Lawrence CE Primary Schools

Attendance Policy

Revised: Autumn Term 2024

Consultation with Staff & Governors

and adoption of policy: Autumn Term 2024

Review Date: Autumn Term 2027

INTRODUCTION

Tibberton CE and St Lawrence CE Primary federation is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils and students. We recognise the importance of regular attendance in maximising the benefit of any educational opportunity. Encouraging and supporting excellent attendance is a crucial part of supporting our pupils and students to learn effectively.

This policy is written with reference to DfE guidance including 'School attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities', 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' and 'Children Missing Education'.

INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that all Tibberton CE and St Lawrence CE stakeholders including pupils/students and parents/carers understand the importance of regular attendance at school and their roles and responsibilities regarding attendance.

Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between school absence and overall achievement. Poor attendance also affects young people's ability to make and sustain friendships and can interrupt the routine of school life, making it hard to settle when they do attend.

Our federation aims to raise the achievement of all its students and to ensure that it meets the following aims:

- To encourage learners to adopt healthy lifestyles
- To ensure learners feel safe and adopt safe practices
- To ensure learners enjoy their education
- To encourage learners to make a positive contribution to the community
- To aid learners to prepare for their future economic wellbeing.

The federation recognises that attendance is a critical factor in student success. It therefore aims to achieve significantly improved attendance levels and to increase the number of students with greater than 95% attendance each year, whilst recognising that the attendance of SEND students is complex and multifaceted.

This policy takes into account the following Government documents:

Working together to improve school attendance, February 2024

Working together to improve school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance, Sept 2022

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (publishing.service.gov.uk)

OBJECTIVES

- To improve the overall attendance of students.
- To create an environment in which students look forward to attending school and lessons
- To make attendance a priority for students, parents, staff and governors
- To create a framework which defines roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
- To create a rigorous system for monitoring and analysing attendance across the federation

- To provide support and advice to parents
- To recognise the needs of individual students when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

To ensure that attendance data is accurate and regularly generated so that:

- Students can be praised/rewarded for their attendance
- Parents/carers can be quickly informed of any attendance and punctuality issues
- Individual students and groups can be monitored
- Targets for individual students, groups of students and the schools can be set and regularly reviewed.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Tibberton CE and St Lawrence CE primary federation's Attendance Officer is Mrs Kiran Kang.

The Family support worker is Miss Ellie Delaney.

The Headteacher (Mr Craig Battrick) is responsible for championing attendance across both schools, supported by Miss Laura Broome (Tibberton administrator) and Mrs Amanda Care (Business Manager).

The link Governor for attendance is Mrs Caroline Sands.

The Governing Body will:

- Meet regularly and review attendance figures and monitor progress against national SEND targets
- Ensure implementation of this policy

The Executive Head teacher takes overall responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of the Policy by:

- Developing and monitoring policies that create an environment in which all students feel valued and safe and in which they are encouraged and able to achieve success
- Meeting with the governing body and reporting on attendance figures
- Giving attendance a high profile with students, staff and parents/carers
- Identifying clear roles and responsibilities and ensuring that staff have the time and resources to fulfil them
- Ensuring that there is sufficient funding to support reward systems

The Head Teacher and Assistant Heads will:

- Ensure that attendance has a high profile within all year groups.
- Ensure that attendance and punctuality procedures are followed across all year groups
- Ensure that students on long term absence/exclusion access the curriculum and are supported on their return
- Liaise fortnightly with the Attendance Officer, Family Support worker, class teachers and other relevant agencies to ensure procedures are being followed for students with continued low attendance
- Assist the attendance officer in meeting with parents and students whose attendance is low and/or below 80%.
- Ensure that attendance is regularly discussed in worship and during the teaching of PSHE and that students with high levels of and/or improved attendance are praised and rewarded regularly
- Analyse the attendance data to ensure that students with low attendance are detected early and appropriate action is taken.
- Be aware of federation and Local Authority priorities with regard to attendance, persistent absence and punctuality, and plan interventions to secure improvements for targeted groups

- Ensure that teachers make contact with families and record and pass on information to relevant staff.
- Direct tutors to make subsequent contact for students with repeated absences.
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance.

Teachers will:

- Give attendance a high profile by praising students with high attendance and relating this to attainment
- Ensure that the register is taken prior to morning or afternoon lessons at the correct time, using the correct codes
- Set work for students who are absent for a long period
- Ensure that systems are in place so that work missed can be easily made up
- Ensure that the classroom continues to be a safe environment where plans are made to meet individual student needs and lessons continue to be as relevant and stimulating as possible
- Refer concerns and action taken to relevant staff
- Be the very best of role models in terms of attendance.

Parents and carers

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age, with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan attend an establishment authorised by their Local Authority (LA). This includes a legal obligation to ensure children attend regularly and on time. Ensuring regular attendance is essential; permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by law and may result in prosecution. Tibberton CE and St Lawrence CE primary federation will always seek to work collaboratively with families in order to support regular attendance.

AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES

An absence is classed as authorised when a child is away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification or a request from a parent/carer, e.g. if a child has been unwell. Evidence may be required in order to authorise an absence, e.g. hospital appointment letter. There may be other occasions where the school will authorise an absence e.g. family wedding/funeral; any requests of this type must be made in writing to the Head teacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider essential and for which no authorisation has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority becoming involved. Support will be offered initially but if unauthorised absences continue, the LA has the right to apply a fine or legal proceedings.

Examples of unauthorised absence include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school to go shopping, to care for a sibling, for a family birthday.
- Refusal by the student to attend an allocated session.
- Absences that have never been explained.
- Children who arrive too late to get a mark.
- Illness without medical evidence.
- Holidays in term-time.

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents/carers must communicate this as soon as possible to their school's Senior Leadership Team in order that support strategies can be put in place.

Parents/carers can support their child's attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times, appropriate to the age of the child
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly
- Retaining open and honest communication with the school
- Having a positive attitude towards school attendance.

START AND CLOSE OF THE DAY PROCEDURES

St Lawrence CE Primary:

The gates open at 8:35am. They remain open until 8:45am, after which time children need to be taken by their parent/ carer to the school office. Children arriving after registers close at 9am will be marked late.

Lessons begin at 8:45am, with children being expected to settle straight to morning work set by their teacher.

The playground gates open at 3:05pm for parents/ carers to wait for their children on the playground. School finishes at 3:15pm and children will be dismissed to a known adult. If someone else is collecting your child, please make sure the office is aware of this.

Tibberton CE Primary

The gates open at 8:40am. They remain open until 8:45am, after which time children need to be taken by their parent/ carer to the school office. Children arriving after registers close at 9am will be marked late.

Lessons begin at 8:45am, with children being expected to settle straight to morning work set by their teacher.

School finishes at 3:15pm and children will be dismissed to a known adult. If someone else is collecting your child, please make sure the office is aware of this.

ILLNESS AND MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS

When a pupil/student is unwell, parents/carers should contact the school before morning registration on the first day of absence. A call must be made for each day of absence. When a pupil/student is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, evidence may be requested e.g. appointment card, letter, prescription, prescribed medication packs or boxes with the pupil's/student's name printed on them.

Should school staff become concerned about the amount of school missed due to illness, information may be shared with external agencies such as social services (see 'Safeguarding' below).

Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointments outside school hours.

Our federation recognises that pupils'/students' additional needs may include significant health concerns and involve regular or unexpected medical support e.g. admission to hospital or attendance at specialist clinics. We will always seek to work with our pupils/students and their families to support good attendance and, where this is not possible, to support continued learning through initiatives such as home learning programmes.

HOLIDAYS

Absence during term time can seriously disrupt pupils'/students' continuity of learning. Parents/carers should avoid booking family holidays in term time. Parents/carers do not have an automatic right to withdraw pupils/students from school for a holiday and must apply in writing for permission in advance. Holidays in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances and this must be started with a request in writing to the Headteacher.

ABSENCE AND EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE POLICY

At Tibberton CE and St Lawrence CE federation we believe that leave of absence during term time should be avoided as it can have a damaging effect on a student's education and overall achievement. However, it is recognised that on occasions there may be extenuating or compassionate reasons that justify such leave. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Amendment Regulations 2013 state that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. With regard to the regulation outlined above the school policy is as follows:

1. Parents must request leave for exceptional circumstances as far in advance as possible.
2. The request should be made in writing using the leave of absence form (available from the school office or via the school website). Requests cannot be made orally or via email to another member of staff.
3. This must include the reason why parents/carers feel that it is necessary to take a leave of absence. This may include any extenuating or compassionate reasons, including evidence of circumstances such as medical certificate or letter from employers.

On receipt of an application for leave on the appropriate form together with any supporting documentation, consideration will be given to the circumstance. An emailed letter outlining the decision of the school will be sent to the applying parent/carer within 7 days.

PUNCTUALITY

We expect all pupils and students to arrive on time for their scheduled provision. Late arrival is disruptive and can lead to pupils/students missing out on important work and information. Persistent lateness may lead to a fixed penalty notice being issued by the Local Authority.

SAFEGUARDING

Tibberton CE and St Lawrence CE primary federation has a duty to effectively safeguard all pupils and students attending its schools. Supporting regular attendance is part of this safeguarding duty. Poor attendance and unexplained absence can indicate a possible safeguarding concern including (but not limited to) physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse or peer on peer abuse. Federation staff will always seek to work with families to minimise absence and ensure clear communication regarding any absence that might occur. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, these will be managed in accordance with Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

CHILDREN MISSING IN EDUCATION

Safeguards in place to prevent children missing education include:

Tibberton and St Lawrence school must hold a minimum of three emergency contact numbers for each pupil/student, unless there is a genuine reason why this is not possible e.g. parent fleeing domestic violence.

Any child going missing from education will always get immediate attention from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff are trained to be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

When a pupil/student is absent without notification, the school administrator will record the absence in the register and the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts in order to determine the reason for the absence. This will happen for every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing the school of absence and reasons why.

Any unexplained absence of a pupil/student with a Child Protection Plan will be reported to the pupil/student's social worker within one day.

Where a pupil/student does not present for school as expected, the school will endeavour to ascertain that pupil/student's whereabouts and wellbeing without delay, using all available parent/carer and secondary/emergency contact details.

Where no contact can be made with either the pupil/student or any named emergency contacts, a member of school staff should generally attend the pupil/student's home. If the pupil/student or a named contact still cannot be contacted, the school must report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where deemed necessary, the police. However, it is acknowledged that in some exceptional, local circumstances, such action may be counter-productive and it is for the school to risk assess such a scenario on the first day.

Regardless of this, if a pupil/student is absent for a second consecutive day without notification from a named contact, the school must report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where necessary, the police.

Staff at school will attempt to get eyes on any student missing for over 10 school days where no professionals have had contact and parents have not supplied medical evidence for their absence but have been in contact with school

Staff will always report to the Local Authority the name of any child who has been newly registered to attend the school but does not arrive on the expected day.

Staff will always report to the Education Welfare Service the continued absence of a child known or thought to have been taken overseas if the child does not return to school on the expected return date. The Federation maintains accurate attendance and admissions registers (all pupils/students are on both), in line with statutory requirements. This includes paying careful attention to off-rolling pupils/students in association with the Local Authority and knowing, and recording, pupil/student destinations consistently on the admissions register. Where a pupil/student destination is unknown,

and unable to be established after significant follow-up, the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service and/or Social Care Services will be informed.

Pupils/students will not be deleted from the admissions register. Staff will alert the child's Local Authority immediately if:

- the pupil/student has been taken out of school by their parents/carers and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
- the pupil/student has ceased to attend school
- the pupil/student has been certified as medically unfit to attend school or is in custody.

Keeping Local Authorities up to date is crucial so that they can check if children of compulsory school age are missing education, and might therefore be in danger of not receiving an education and be at risk of abuse or neglect.

When students are designated as Children Missing Education and have exceeded 10 days with no contact, the federation follows the Local Authority's Good Practice Guidance for Identifying and Safeguarding Children Missing from Education (CME). In line with these processes and following the statutory guidance set out in DFE 2016 we are in regular contact with the LA and provide them with information on changes to the roll as required.

No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval. Information on transferring files is contained within the Safeguarding and CP policy. In line with practices agreed with the LA and the guidance first set out in DFE-00261-2016 'Children Missing Education' (September 2016), the Attendance Officer will inform the Local Authority of any student who has been absent from school for 10 consecutive days to report the student as missing from education. In addition, the attendance officer will inform the school's Designated Safeguard Lead. The DSL will then make an assessment of the child's vulnerability and, where appropriate, a referral to social care for that child.

A Team Around the Child (TAC) meeting will be arranged by the DSL, if appropriate, in case of continued non-attendance. Appropriate staff will be informed of the outcome of the meeting by email from the Attendance Officer.

On the rare occasions that pupils/students are excluded for a fixed term, the school will confirm this in writing to both the family (and the Local Authority where this exclusion exceeds five days). While the school will provide the pupil/student with work to complete during their external exclusion (and mark it), they are not responsible for the pupil/student's safety and welfare during their time at home.

PENALTY NOTICES

Continuous absences will affect a student's overall attendance. When attendance falls below 85% (with 50% or more of the absences being recorded as unauthorised for any 6-week period, our procedures for persistent absence (see below) will be followed. This could result in parent(s)/carer(s) being issued with a Penalty Notice and further legal action.

These days do not have to be consecutive and can fall over a weekend. We will always consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate on a case-by-case basis.

After two penalty notices, further action could be taken, for example an education supervision monitoring order, a notice to improve with a significant financial penalty under review by a District judge, or a final warning and court summons.

UNEXPLAINED CONTINUOUS ABSENCE

1st Day of Absence

All students not seen at registration should be marked as an unexplained (N) absence, unless tutors have prior knowledge and proof of the reason for the absence – which should be advised to the Attendance Officer immediately.

The administration team guided by the Attendance Officer will phone home on the first day of absence if no explanation has been received.

An absence letter will be sent via email on each day of absence if reason for absence is not provided and there is no contact from the family.

3rd Day of Continuous Absence

The attendance officer will phone home to follow up on the absence and a communication will be sent, requesting explanation for the absence. If no contact with family is made to obtain a reason for absence on the third day of absence, the school will call all contacts listed on child's profile to raise concern and obtain information of student whereabouts. The Family Support Worker and/or EWO or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit.

A re-integration plan will be made. The parent/carer will be offered additional support as appropriate and/or requested. The seriousness of the situation will be stressed including notification of the possibility of a penalty notice. Should there be no-one at home or no response, a letter will be hand delivered noting the visit outlining the possible next steps as above and requesting urgent contact with the school.

5th Day of Continuous Absence

If no contact with the family has been made for 5 consecutive days and no information was obtained following home visit(s) the school will refer to the student to Family Connect.

10th Day of Continuous Absence

If the student has been absent for 10 consecutive days and no update provided to school in all the steps above the child will be referred to 'Children Missing in Education' to the Local Authority. No child is removed from the school roll without first notifying the local authority and receiving their approval. For children where there are concerns regarding wellbeing or welfare, or for children who are subject to any safeguarding plan, we may conduct a home visit at any time to ensure that the child remains safe.

INTERMITTENT ABSENCE

It is also recognised that students will on occasions be ill but expects students to achieve 95% attendance for the year. We understand some of our students may be undergoing periods of medical ill health due to aspects of their SEND.

When there are periods of sustained illness it is expected that these will be supported through submission of medical evidence.

For this reason, a number of measures are taken to minimise intermittent, short-term absences.

- Phone calls are made daily to inform parents of their child's absence and request information to support it
- End of term reports to contain attendance percentage to update parents and carers on their child's attendance record
- Rewards for students with 100% attendance and tutor groups with the best attendance

Letters will be sent out to the parents of all students where attendance has been identified as below the federation's target. In occasional circumstances it may be deemed appropriate to not send out the letters outlined above although we expect the instances in which this to be the case to be minimal.

Throughout this process it is possible that a student may be identified as being persistently absent in which case the process below will be followed.

PERSISTENT ABSENCE

'If any child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, his/her parent is guilty of an offence.' (Education Act 1996). From September 2015, Persistent absence has been defined by the Department for Education as all attendance falling below 90%.

Where a student has intermittent attendance and the Headteacher deems it necessary, the Continuous Absence process will be followed for each day the student is absent.

The parent/carer will be sent a Warning Letter stating the reason for the warning being issued. The student's attendance will be monitored for a six-week period (minimum of 60 school sessions)

If no sustained improvement has been made the details will be forwarded to the Attendance Service at the Local Authority (LA) who will make arrangements for a Penalty Notice to be issued. If there has been an improvement, the parent/carer will be informed. Penalty Notices will be sent to each parent/carer of student/s at the federation where pupils' attendance meets the criteria for the issuing of a Penalty Notice warning.

The parent/carer will be sent a Warning Letter stating the reason for the warning being issued. The student's attendance and punctuality will be monitored for a period of between six and twelve weeks. If insufficient improvement has been made the details will be forwarded to the Senior Education Welfare Officer at the Local Authority (LA) who will make arrangements for the Penalty Notice to be issued. If there has been sufficient improvement, the parent/carer will be informed. All staff must enter each contact made with the parent/carer of the student as a record on CPOMS log. This record will then be used as part of the evidence provided to the LA in the event of a Penalty Notice being issued. Staff must continue to follow the Continuous Absence and Requests for Leave of Absence procedures in the event of a Warning Letter being sent to a parent/carer.

SEVERE ABSENCE

Severe absence is classified as those students missing 80% or more of school (Working together to improve attendance, 2022). A concerted effort will be made by all partners to prioritise support for these students in order to improve their attendance. If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities and other appropriate education support has been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reason continues, it is likely to constitute neglect and be referred to social care.