

Tas Valley Church Schools Federation

Attendance Policy



Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	Tas Valley Federation
On:-	
Chair of Governors:-	Diane Perry-Yates
Last updated:-	

Attendance Policy

1. Statement of intent

- 1.1 The Tas Valley Federation 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.
- 1.2 The Tas Valley Federation is committed to:
 - Promoting and modelling good attendance behaviour.
 - Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
 - Implementing our policies in accordance with the Education Act 1996 and the Equality Act 2010.
 - Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
 - Rewarding regular attendance.

2. Legal framework

- 2.1 This policy has due regard to statutory legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:
 - Education Act 1996
 - Equality Act 2010
 - Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (including 2013 and 2016 amendments)
- 2.2 This policy also has due regard to the relevant statutory DfE guidance.

3. Roles and responsibilities

- 3.1 The governing board has overall responsibility for the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of The Tas Valley Federation.
- 3.2 The governing board 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.
- 3.3 The governing board has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.
- 3.4 The headteacher is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of the Federation.

- 3.5 Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers, are responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 3.6 Parents are expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child during term-time and this is made clear in the home/school agreement.
- 3.7 Parents are expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that their child attends school every day.

4. Definitions

- 4.1 For the purpose of this policy, the school defines:
 - “Absence” as:
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Not attending school for any reason.
 - An “authorised absence” as:
 - An absence for sickness, accepted as valid by the school.
 - 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.
 - An absence due to an exceptional circumstance, agreed by the headteacher, that falls outside of the above categories.
 - An “unauthorised absence” as:
 - Parents keeping children off school for a reason other than those included in the ‘authorised’ categories above.
 - Truancy before or during the school day.
 - Absences which have never been properly explained.
 - Arrival at school after the register has closed.
 - Holidays in term-time which have not been agreed.
 - A medical absence not viewed as valid by the school
 - “Persistent absenteeism” as:
 - Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

5. Training of staff

- 5.1 The Federation recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers and office staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 5.2 This training will be included in whole-staff safeguarding training, updated regularly.
- 5.3 Staff will be made aware of their duty to report concerns around attendance of individual pupils.

6. Absence procedures

- 6.1 Parents/carers are required to contact the school as soon as possible on the first day of absence to confirm the reason for absence. If appropriate, the parent/carer will be asked to confirm the intended return-to-school date.
- 6.2 A phone call 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.
- 6.3 If the school office receive no answer to phone calls, they will repeat attempts to make contact with the home during the first day and on subsequent days.
- 6.4 If there is concern about a lack of explanation and inability to contact home, steps may be taken to pursue other routes of contact. For example, by contacting the school setting of siblings; contacting work numbers; contacting other person's sharing parental responsibility etc.
- 6.5 If no contact has been made by the third day, a letter will be sent by first class post to the home address advising of school concerns. It might be decided that the headteacher or deputy headteacher should make a visit to the home; this should never be carried out alone and should be risk assessed before undertaken.

7. Involvement of the Local Authority

- 7.1 Parents/carers at risk of becoming a persistent absentee will be alerted to this in good time and be invited to speak to the headteacher and/or to the attendance officer in order to address this situation. This may take the form of a Fast Track Panel.
- 7.2 If a pupil's attendance drops below 90 percent, the attendance officer may be informed, and a formal meeting may be arranged with the parents to attempt to resolve the situation by agreement.

- 7.3 If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the attendance officer has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.
- 7.4 The school recognises that from 1 September 2020, in accordance with the Norfolk County Council Code of Conduct for Issuing Fixed Penalties regarding School Attendance (Sept 2020), the criteria for the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice will be:
 - At least 9 sessions (4.5 school days) lost to unauthorised absence by the pupil in the last 6 weeks

- 7.5 Parents have been advised of this information.

8. Contact information

- 8.1 Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

9. Lateness

- 9.1 Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- 9.2 The gate opens at 8.45am and the school day starts at 8:50am Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- 9.3 Registers are marked by 9:05am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 9.4 The register closes at 9:20am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- 9.5 After lunch, registers are marked by 1:20pm. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- 9.6 The register closes at 1.30pm Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.
- 9.7 Pupils attending after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but this will count as a late mark.

10. Term-time leave

- 10.1 At Tas Valley Federation, 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.

- 10.2 The headteacher is unable to authorise holidays during term-time unless evidence is provided that parental leave is completely unavailable during any school holiday period or where exceptional circumstances make it vital for the holiday to be taken in term-time. Where this is the case, other factors will also be considered before authorisation is given, including the child's attendance record, and the maximum leave in this circumstance will be for one full week.
- 10.3 The headteacher is only allowed to grant a leave of absence for other reasons in exceptional circumstances. Applications must be made in advance and the headteacher must be satisfied by the evidence which is presented, before authorising term-time leave.
- 10.4 The headteacher will determine the amount of time a pupil can be away from school. Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the headteacher.
- 10.5 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.
- 10.6 Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:
- Immediately before and during assessment periods
 - When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absences
 - Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10 percent for any reason
- 10.7 If parents take their child out of school during term-time without authorisation from the headteacher, they may be subject to referral to the local authority and sanctions such as fixed penalty fines.

11 Missing children

11.1 The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets

- Cloakroom areas
 - The library
 - The Hall
 - The Group Room and the Food Tech Room
 - Staff room/ offices
 - The school grounds, including sheds
- 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.
 - If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
 - If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.
 - The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

- 11.2 If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked after child, or has any special educational needs, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- 11.3 When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- 11.4 The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.
- 11.5 Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- 11.6 The headteacher will carry out a full investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- 11.7 A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

12 Religious observances

- 12.1 The school will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 12.2 Parents are required to inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.

13 Appointments

- 13.1 As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 13.2 Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card will be sent to the school office.
- 13.3 If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by a parent.
- 13.4 Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

14 Young carers

- 14.1 The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.
- 14.2 The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.
- 14.3 The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

15 Monitoring and review

- 15.1 The school monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 15.2 The headteacher reports on attendance at each meeting of the Full Governing Board.
- 15.3 The school is subject to a Local Authority Register Audit on a regular basis and the outcomes are shared with the governing body; an action plan is drawn up on the basis of outcomes.
- 15.4 This policy is reviewed annually by the headteacher.

APPENDIX A

Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings

Code	Description	Category
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	Approved Educational Activity
C	Other Authorised circumstances (not covered by a more appropriate code)	Authorised Absence
D	Dual Registration (pupil attending another establishment)	Approved Educational Activity
E	Excluded (with no alternative provision made)	Authorised Absence
F	Extended Family Holiday (if agreed)	Authorised Absence
G	Family Holiday (NOT agreed or over the agreed length)	Unauthorised Absence
H	Family Holiday (if agreed)	Authorised Absence
I	Illness	Authorised Absence
J	Interview	Approved Educational Activity
L	Late (before the close of registers)	Present
M	Medical/Dental Appointments	Authorised Absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised Absence
O	Unauthorised Absence (not covered by any other category)	Unauthorised Absence
P	Approved Sporting Activity	Approved Educational Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised Absence
S	Study Leave	Authorised Absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised Absence
U	Late (AFTER registers closed)	Unauthorised Absence
V	Educational Visit or trip	Approved Educational Activity
W	Work Experience	Approved Educational Activity
X	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not Counted
Y	Enforced Closure	Not Counted

Z	Pupil not on roll	Not Counted
#	School closed to pupils	Not counted

APPENDIX B

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL DURING TERM TIME

(b)

Important Information for Parents

- Head teachers comply with the 2013 amendment to the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (2006) Regulations 2013** which means that they cannot authorise a leave of absence from school unless it is exceptional; every case should be treated on an individual basis and with due consideration of the circumstances. Ultimately, it is the Head teacher of the school who decides if a period of leave during term time should be authorised or not
- Head teachers may grant leave of absence if they consider exceptional circumstances apply
- If the exceptional circumstances are agreed, the Head teacher will determine the length of the absence authorised
- Requests for leave of absence should be made in advance and before any arrangements are confirmed or money committed
- If leave of absence is granted please contact school to discuss measures to minimise the impact of the absence on your child's academic progress
- This form MUST be completed by the parent who intends to remove the pupil from school during term time
- Failure to make a request for a leave of absence in advance will result in the absence taken being recorded as unauthorised

Please note: Parents do not have any legal entitlement to take their child on holiday during term time.

1.2

I wish to apply for Leave of Absence from school to be granted to:

Full name of child/ren.....

Address.....

From (1st day of absence) To (last day of absence)

Total number of school days..... Expected date of return to school.....

Reason for proposed absence - please provide reasons to support the application including evidence:

Please read the following and sign to indicate you agree:

I would like to request the above absence. I understand that the school strongly advises against taking unnecessary absence during term time, and accept that this may have a detrimental impact on my child/ren's progress. I undertake to make sure my child/ren catch up with any work that is required of them.

Signature of parent(s)/carer (s).....

Date:

(1)
been:

Your request for leave of absence from school during term time has been considered and has

(2)

Agreed Days agreed.....

Not agreed

Signature of Headteacher.....

APPENDIX C

Dear Parent/Carer,

Attendance at school and legal intervention

I am writing to you following clarification from the Local Authority about their current systems for ensuring good school attendance.

Research commissioned by the Department for Education shows missing school for even a day can mean a child is less likely to achieve good grades, which can have a damaging effect on their life chances.

At Tas Valley Federation, our aim is to work with parents to ensure that all our pupils receive the most from their education and reach their full potential. This letter is to remind all parents/carers that the law that requires them to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

The Government remains very clear that no child should miss school apart from in exceptional circumstances and schools must continue to take steps to reduce absence to support children's attainment. The Local Authority operates a system where any pupil will meet the criteria for legal intervention through the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice where they have:

1. 9 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence where some or all of the absence may be attributed to an unauthorised holiday in term-time (please note that each day consists of two sessions and that 9 sessions is therefore the equivalent of 4.5 days)
or
2. 15% unauthorised absence over a period of 6 school weeks for reasons other than unauthorised term time holiday.

Any pupil at the Tas Valley Federation who meets either of the criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, it is a fine of £60 per parent per child which must be paid in one payment within 21 days. If a Notice is unpaid within 21 days, the fine will double to £120 per parent per child if paid within 28 days. If a fixed penalty notice fine is not paid in full within the timescale set out above, the Local Authority is required to start legal proceedings against the parent(s) in the local Magistrates' Court for the offence of failing to ensure their child has attended school regularly.

When your child returns to school after an absence, a letter or email confirming the reason for the absence is required, even if we have previously been notified by phone. This is in the interest of full and accurate recording. I hope we can count on your support in this matter, please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any questions.

Yours sincerely

Appendix D

Addendum to Attendance Policy

in view of COVID 19

1. Aims

1.1 The Tas Valley Federation an effective Attendance Policy in place reflecting business as usual. This document serves as a COVID-19 annex/addendum and reflects how we have adapted our provision to meet the current circumstances.

2. Registration

2.1 To support social distancing at pick up and drop off times, it might be necessary, in line with government guidance, to operate staggered times for picking up and dropping off children. Any changes will be clearly communicated to parents/carers.

2.2 Likewise, to maintain separate year group bubbles, lunchtimes may be staggered, and afternoon registration completed at a different time to usual.

2.3 Staff are aware of the appropriate register codes for COVID related absences.

3. First Day Absence

3.1 If a child is absent, administrative staff will make contact with parents/carers to confirm the reason for the absence, and where appropriate, the symptoms of illness. If it is deemed necessary, the school will provide advice about testing for COVID-19, and the requirements for self-isolation.

3.2 In the event of a suspected case of COVID-19, staff will advise the family to self-isolate and obtain a test. The parent/carer is expected to notify the school of the test.

3.3 In the event of a confirmed case of COVID-19, the school may be required to contact the Norfolk Outbreak Management Centre, in line with the school's risk assessment for COVID-19.

3.4 All suspected and confirmed cases of COVID-19 are recorded so that the school is aware of the circumstances, last date of attendance, date of onset of symptoms (if appropriate), date of test, date of results, and any requirements for self-isolation. This information is shared between the Administrative Staff and the Headteacher.

4. Safeguarding

4.1 The school may be required to provide information about the attendance of children deemed vulnerable via a weekly return to the Local Authority Attendance Team.