



Tylers Green First School
Attendance Policy

Ratified by the Governing Body: April 2020

TYLERS GREEN FIRST SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Introduction and Principles

At Tylers Green First School, children come first. The Governors and Staff at the school believe that it is vital that children attend school regularly and on time. Children who have good school attendance achieve better than those who do not. Children who are regularly absent or late miss out on lessons so that it can become difficult to catch up. Children learn important friendship and social skills at First school, and regular attendance is vital to helping the children become confident learners.

At Tylers Green First School we regard regular attendance as between 95-97%.

Attendance percentages		
Less than 95%	95-97%	97-100%
Below average	Broadly Average	Excellent

We understand that some pupils may have medical conditions or other reasons why their attendance is below 95%. We will work with families to try and identify any reasons for poor attendance and try to support families wherever possible to resolve difficulties.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

Recording Attendance

The register must record whether the pupil was:

Present, absent, present at approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Absence

Parents are asked to telephone the school office on the morning of the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. If we have not heard from a parent and a child is absent, we will telephone the parent to find out if the child is unwell.

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is *authorised* or *unauthorised*.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Late: Pupils who arrive late must sign in via the office so that staff know the pupil is in the building. After 9.00 am, the registers are closed and a child will be recorded as absent in the register.

Illness: In most cases a telephone call from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.

Leave of Absence and Extended Leave

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday. In line with the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time may only be granted where the circumstances are exceptional. Parents should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time must complete an Absence from School For Exceptional Circumstances Request Form (available from the school office) not less than one month before the proposed leave. Documentary evidence of leave and return dates may be required in order to process your request. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs or Phonics Screening Test
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken
- When the request was made

Requests for family holidays will not be authorised.

Families where siblings attend Tylers Green Middle School should be aware that the Headteacher will discuss any requests for a leave of absence with the Headteacher of Tylers Green Middle School. This is to ensure that the policies are consistently applied between the two schools.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response.

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be unauthorised. In such cases the school may refer the matter to the Education Welfare Service who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance

We understand that our school serves a multi-faith community. On occasion, religious festivals or celebrations may fall within school term time. We recognise the importance to the overall development of our children that they spend this important time with their families.

Parents should give advance notice if they intend their child to be absent due to religious observance. We believe it is reasonable to limit religious observance to one day for an individual occasion, and no more than three days in total in one academic year. Any further absence for religious observance will be unauthorised.

Monitoring

The Headteacher will regularly monitor the attendance of all pupils. Parents will be contacted if there are concerns relating to either lateness or attendance. Where a child is absent and the school does not know where the child is, the school will always call the parent to find out.

Letters are sent to parents to notify them that their child's attendance has fallen below 95%. If there is no improvement, parents will be invited to a meeting with the headteacher or SENCO to discuss how the family can be supported to improve attendance.

How to improve attendance

Wherever possible make doctor or dentist appointments outside of school hours. If your child is experiencing difficulties at school speak to their class teacher, SENCO or Headteacher.

Encourage regular bedtime routines and prepare book bags and uniforms the night before. Do not keep your child off school unless they are unwell – days out and visits from relatives are not reasons to stay off school. If you are not sure if your child is well enough for school, it's worth sending them in. Children can perk up when they are with their friends. If we feel your child is unwell, we will call you to take them home.

Support Systems

Poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties at home or school. Parents are strongly encouraged to contact the school to make us aware of any changes in circumstances or difficulties at home such as a divorce or bereavement. We can then identify support for the child.

We recognise that children with medical conditions and special educational needs are more likely to have lower attendance. In partnership with parents, we can offer strategies to support good attendance including time-limited part time timetables, learning support, referrals to support agencies and reward systems.

Legal Sanctions

Where support and intervention has not improved attendance, the Headteacher will notify the Buckinghamshire Education Welfare Service of the irregular attendance.

The Education Welfare Service or school, may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- Intervention/support has failed to bring about improvement and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.
- A pupil has taken leave of absence i.e. for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to avoid a prosecution. A £60 fine, per parent/carer, per child must be paid within 21 days. The fine increases to £120 per parent/.carer, per child if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Equality Act 2010

The school and Governors are committed to ensuring that this policy does not discriminate against any pupil with protected characteristics. We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.