

TOWNSEND CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL



ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PRACTICE

The school adopts and follows the guidance and policy provided by Hertfordshire County Council (Children's Services Integrated Services for Learning)

CONTENTS

	<u>Section</u>
Introduction	1
Statement of Intent	2
Responsibilities – Parents and Carers	3
Responsibilities – Schools	4
Responsibilities – ISL Attendance Teams	5
The Use of Legal Action	6
Penalty Notices for Parents/Carers of Truants	7
School Attendance Orders	8
Admission and Attendance Registers	9
Authorising Absence	10
Administrative Codes	11
Approved Off-Site Educational Activity	12
Flexi-schooling	13
Part-time time-tables	14
Family Holidays during Term Time	15
Appendices	
Policy for Attendance Improvement Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised	1
Attendance Codes, Descriptions and Meanings	2
Supporting Good/Improved Attendance at Townsend	3

1. Introduction

Townsend C of E School is committed to achieving excellent levels of attendance for individual children and for the school as a whole. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that if children attend school regularly and punctually they will be best able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them.

The Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Policy has been used to guide, assist and empower our school to meet its responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures can be applied.

2. Statement of Intent

Townsend C of E School wants to work closely together in partnership with parents/carers in order to achieve excellent levels of school attendance and punctuality for all pupils.

3. Responsibilities – Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are responsible in law for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs that they may have.

Parents/Carers whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school.

Parents/Carers should:-

- ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- instil in their children an appreciation of the importance of attending school regularly
- ensure that they are aware of this Attendance policy and all the details
- impress upon their children the need to observe the Townsend C of E 's code of conduct and Behaviour Policy
- take an active interest in their children's school career, praising and encouraging good work and behaviour and attending parents'/carers' evenings and other relevant meetings
- work in partnership with this school to resolve issues which may lead to non-attendance
- **notify the school if their child/children are absent. This should be done on the first day of absence. They should also provide an explanation for the absence. This explanation should be confirmed - preferably in writing - when the children return to school**
- avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- should not book holidays during term time

4. School Responsibilities

The school is responsible for supporting the attendance of all students and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance.

Every member of staff has a shared responsibility for promoting supporting and intervening with issues around attendance. Form tutors who have twice daily contact with students clearly have a significant role to play with school attendance and it is their individual knowledge and care of the students wellbeing that supports this process. Directors of Learning oversee and monitor their work in this area and Miss Lingwood (Deputy Head) is the schools lead in whole school attendance.

The school is required to call attendance registers – Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers will be taken at the beginning of each morning and once during the afternoon session. If any pupil (Years 7-11) leaves the site during the school day/he or she must

- Have a note from a parent/carer explaining the reason
- Must sign out at reception
- Must be collected by a parent/carer on school premises. Students (years 7-10) are not allowed to leave the site on their own without a parent/carer collecting them from reception. In exceptional circumstances and with written parent/carer permission Year 11 pupils may be allowed to leave the site to attend a medical appointment.
- Year 12/13 students leaving the site at any point through the school day must sign out and sign back in at the school reception.

Registers will record whether each pupil is present; attending an approved educational activity; absent; or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances. In the case of a pupil of compulsory school age who is absent the register will also indicate whether the absence has been authorised by the school.

Registers should open and close at regular, set times and attendance information is publicised to parents/carers with all grade sheets that are issued, with school reports and on request by parents/carers.

When calling the register the appropriate mark and/or symbol will be placed against each pupil's name - gaps should not be left so that entries can be made later. In marking registers, schools will use the national set of symbols as advised by the Department for Education (see Appendix 2)

When the reason for a pupil's absence cannot be established at the beginning of a session, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and any subsequent correction to the register made as soon as practicable after the reason for the absence has been established.

In order to reduce the possibility of post registration truancy we also take class registers at the start of each lesson. The school also carries out spot checks.

At Townsend we aim to work actively to maximise attendance rates - both in relation to individual pupils and for the school as a whole. Every child should be aiming for above 95% attendance and anything below 90% is deemed by the Government as Persistent Absence

To support the school's aims to maximise attendance, Townsend has in place

- clear systems and strategies to address the attendance of any child that causes concern as i) being under 90% ii) shows a sudden decline iii) displays a particular pattern of absence
- clear systems and strategies to address persistent absence (under 90%) through a variety of interventions that start with prompt actions from the form tutor with communication home
- clear procedures to support parents/carers in ensuring the regular and punctual attendance of pupils and promptly respond to any issue which may lead to non-attendance
- clear systems and strategies in place to respond to first day absences of vulnerable students or other identified students who require prompt contact with home. Directors of Learning for Year groups provide a list of students in priority order for the education support team to contact home on the first morning of absence. This list is regularly reviewed and updated

The school is sensitive to the needs of individual parents/carers and this is reflected in the way in which attendance issues are addressed. As a school we understand and recognise that some parents/carers have difficulty understanding written communications and therefore where appropriate will make sure alternative communication methods are in place. The school also recognises the reluctance of some parents/carers to come into school and will wherever possible ensure the appropriate external agencies are accessed to support full parental engagement with school attendance.

The school also monitors any differences in the attendance of the different learner groups including the most vulnerable. Form Tutors work closely with Directors of Learning for Year groups to intervene and support pupils and families to ensure there no child is disadvantaged with regards access to education.

Punctuality

Townsend will take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness (whether at arrival in the morning in school or at an individual lesson through the day) will be monitored and followed up by subject teachers and form tutors. A clear range of strategies are in place for school leaders to ensure appropriate action is taken and that parents/carers are informed where the issue is persistent. Punctuality Reports can be used and where there is a persistent late arrival to school or a persistent late arrival to lessons, teachers will propose that the individuals make up missing time at break times or after school. On these occasions parents/carers will be informed and the school is grateful for their support.

All School policies, brochures and website are clear about the time at which each school session begins and finishes. Schools should not keep a register open for the whole session.

When a pupil arrives late and the register is still open he/she will be marked as 'late' but counted as present for that session.

Students arriving a few minutes late in the morning due to bus issues/traffic are required to go straight to lesson 1 and to make sure the teacher updates the register to present. If possible the teacher should record the number of minutes late and the reason for lateness.

If a child arrives after 9.15 the students will need to sign in at reception and the education support staff team will update the school's register. If a child arrives after the second lesson (10.50) then they will be deemed as absent for the morning session and although marked in at reception when they arrive, the form tutor will require a note from the parent/carer explaining the session absence. When the parent/carer provides a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'authorised absent' for that session using the correct code.

If a student pupil arrives after 10.50 and parent/carer fails to provide a satisfactory explanation, he/she will be marked as 'unauthorised absent' for that session. (Code U)

When a pupil arrives late having missed registration, his/her presence on site is recorded in a 'late' book in the school office for purposes of emergency evacuation and safeguarding, etc.

5. Support from the Integrated Services for Learning (ISL) Attendance Team

The ISL Attendance Teams fulfil the statutory duty of the County Council in enforcing regular school attendance. In doing so it enables schools and parents/carers to meet their respective responsibilities.

Each school in Hertfordshire has a link Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who will work in close partnership with the school. Rebecca Porzio from West Attendance Team is Townsend's link Attendance Improvement Officer.

In working closely with schools the Attendance Teams will offer the following services:-

ATTENDANCE DUTY SYSTEM

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact an AIO between the hours of 9.00 am to 4.30 pm, Monday to Thursday and between the hours of 9.00 am to 3.30 pm on a Friday.

Types of enquiries may include –

- school issues e.g. register coding, holiday absence etc.
- enquiries relating to a pupil
- 10 day absence returns
- request for Early Intervention letters
- Fixed Penalty Notice enquiries
- Removal from Roll enquiries
- requests for referrals

VISITS TO SCHOOLS

All schools have a named link AIO who will liaise with the school and undertake whole school work for their allocated schools.

Whole School Attendance Overview

This will be the first meeting of the year with each school to ensure all schools meet statutory requirements and have systems in place to promote high levels of attendance. Any issues arising from this visit will inform targeted whole school work for the academic year, focussing on supporting schools to reduce Persistent Absence and the absence of vulnerable groups.

Data analysis is an important part of this process and AIOs will support schools to analyse their attendance data and draw up plans to address any specific issues. Analysis may include:

- persistent absence
- absence profile
- use of register codes
- comparison of form groups in individual years
- percentage of absence due to holidays
- attendance of vulnerable groups
- types of absence e.g. a few pupils with significant absence or many pupils with occasional absence
- lateness after registers close
- year by year percentage attendance
- attendance trends – is attendance increasing or decreasing?

Other than engaging in casework there are a variety of supportive ways in which AIOs can work with schools to increase attendance levels.

At Townsend our Attendance Improvement Officer meets with Miss Lingwood and Directors of Learning for Years to analyse attendance data. She also holds attendance clinics/surgeries with students and parents/carers where there are ongoing concerns.

The Attendance Officer can also support through

- a) advice on particular issues raised by the school
- b) attendance at Parent/Carer Evenings and/or Year 7 New Intake Evening
- c) support with staff training
- d) attendance at Governors meeting to share information about some of the different areas of attendance

Where a student's attendance causes concern and the full range of school's actions and interventions appear to have limited or no impact on improving the child's attendance, the school will formally refer the individual to the Attendance Team. Once a case has been accepted, the AIO will undertake direct work with pupils and their parents/carers. This may include:

- arranging meetings between the school, parents/carers and pupils
- making home visits to assess the situation and determine what action needs to be taken
- offering specific support to parents/carers and individual pupils, either at school or elsewhere
- facilitating meetings
- enabling the pupil and parents/carers to access appropriate support from other services and agencies

Attendance Improvement Officers will usually work with children whose absences have not been authorised. However, AIOs may work with children whose absences have been authorised, such as persistent absentee (PA) pupils (see appendix 1).

6. The Use of Legal Action

If a pupil, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the school fail to secure that pupil's return to regular attendance, the County Council will take legal action. A complaint may be laid against the parents/carers in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the pupil under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the pupil's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision. Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the AIO will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

In cases where parents/carers wilfully withhold a pupil from school, or persistently refuse to cooperate with efforts aimed at affecting a return to satisfactory school attendance, the ISL Attendance Teams will begin legal proceedings promptly on the grounds that no other course of action is available.

The Central Attendance & Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority will give approval before legal proceedings are commenced.

The Attendance Teams will consider applying for an Education Supervision Order when a parent/carer finds it difficult to exercise an effective influence over a child who has developed a pattern of poor attendance. Education Supervision Orders will not usually be applied for in relation to pupils in Years 10 or 11.

Before an application is made for an Education Supervision Order:

- other possible means of dealing with the pupil's poor attendance will be explored
- the attitudes of the parent/carer and pupil towards the poor attendance, and their wishes as to how it should be dealt with, will be noted
- the Local Authority will be of the view that the Order will have a significant effect on the pupil's attendance at school

7. Education Related Penalty Notices for Parents/Carers of Truants

Subsection (1) of section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 added two sections (444A and 444B) to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. These sections introduced penalty notices as an alternative to prosecution and enable parents/carers to discharge potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty.

A penalty notice is a suitable intervention in circumstances of parentally condoned truancy, where the parent/carer is judged capable of securing their child's regular attendance but is not willing to take responsibility for doing so. For example it could be used where a parent/carer has failed to engage in any supportive measures

Further information on penalty notices is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml> or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

8. School Attendance Orders

If a parent/carer fails to register a child of compulsory school age at a school (and he/she does not intend to educate the child otherwise than at school). The LA will serve a School Attendance Order under Sections 437 - 439 of the Education Act 1996. This requires the parent/carer to register their child at a school named by the Local Authority.

9. Admission & Attendance Registers

The rules governing the maintenance of registers, including removal from roll, are contained in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016.

All parents/carers should inform the form tutor or Director of Learning for that year of any changes whenever they occur by telephone contact through the school office or by letter. This will assist both the school and Local Authority when making enquiries to locate children missing education.

Where a parent/carer notifies the school that a pupil will live at another address a member of the Education Support Team will record in the admission register:

- a) the full name of the parent /carer with whom the pupil will live;
- b) the new address; and
- c) the date from when it is expected the pupil will live at this address.

Where a parent/carer of a pupil notifies the school that the pupil is registered at another school or will be attending a different school in future, schools must record in the admission register:

- a) the name of the new school; and
- b) the date when the pupil first attended or is due to start attending that school.

The school are required notify the Local Authority **within five days** via school admissions - <http://www.intra.thegrid.org.uk/admissions/seam.shtml> when a pupil's name is added to the admissions register at a non-standard transition point. Schools will need to provide the Local Authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of the first year of education normally provided by that school.

The school are required to notify the Local Authority of any pupil of compulsory school age who fails to attend school regularly, or who has been absent for a continuous period of more than 10 school days, without a legitimate reason. This duty also extends to academies and independent schools.

For further guidance see - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/csf/admissions.shtml>

Removal from Roll

There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in **Regulation 8** of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This responsibility applies to all Maintained Schools, Academies, Free Schools, Studio Schools, University Technical Colleges, Education Support Centres and Independent Schools. Full guidance on Removal from Roll is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare the school will contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or radicalisation the school will contact the local Attendance Team immediately.

If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has “disappeared” the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Local Attendance Team.

10. Authorising Absence

It is only the school a child attends that can authorise an absence. *The fact that a parent /carer has provided a note or other explanation (telephone call or personal contact) in relation to a particular absence does not, of itself, oblige the school to accept it, if the school does not accept the explanation offered as a valid reason for absence. If, after further investigation doubt remains about the explanation offered - or when no explanation is forthcoming at all - the absence will be treated as unauthorised and the parent/carer informed.*

The reasons for non-attendance at school that will be deemed authorised absences are given below. Where any of our families require support or help with understanding the different reasons for authorised absences, support will be provided. If an interpreter is required the school will seek to provide this. The school will keep absence notes for at least a term but when a pupil's absence is a cause for concern the notes may be kept longer for this may be used in court as evidence there has been a formal referral to the Local Authority because attendance is causing an ongoing concern.

Absence should be authorised if:

- the pupil is ill or prevented from attending by any unavoidable cause. Where illness causes ongoing absence the school will require evidence medical supporting evidence
- the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carer belongs
- the school at which the child is a registered pupil is not within walking distance of the child's home; and no suitable arrangements have been made by the LA for any of the following: the child's transport to and from school; boarding accommodation for the child at or near the school; enabling the child to become a registered pupil at a school nearer to his/her home
- the pupil is the child of Traveller parents/carers who are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending alternative provision
- there is a close family bereavement
- a Year 11 pupil is granted study leave. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise
- leave of absence has been applied for in advance and has been granted because of exceptional circumstances relating to the application. **(Parents/carers should be reminded that they cannot expect, as of right, that the school will grant leave of absence)**

- leave of absence should be granted to allow a pupil to take part in a performance within the meaning of s37 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1963 (c) for which a child performance licence has been issued

Before granting a licence the Local Authority must be satisfied that the child's education will not suffer. A school letter is requested as part of the licence application as confirmation of this. If a school believes a child's education will suffer as a result of taking part in a performance they should provide reasons to the Local Authority in writing. The information must be specific to the child (saying for example that it is against school policy is not sufficient). If the school does not provide such information the Local Authority will issue the licence. The absence should be recorded as code C

- the pupil is absent with leave (defined as leave granted by any person authorised to do so). This will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and in the first instance permission should be sought from the Director of Learning for the Year group.

Further guidance is available at - <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Absence should be unauthorised if no explanation is forthcoming from the parents/carers or if the school is dissatisfied with the explanation

11. Administrative Codes

There are a number of administrative codes which are not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. They must only be used in the circumstances described:

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (Code Y)

This code is collected in the school census for statistical purposes but is not counted as a possible attendance. It may be used when:

- a) the school site, or part of it is closed due to unavoidable cause; or
- b) the transport provided by the school or the local authority is not available *and* where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- c) a local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

- Not required to be in school (Code X)

is used to record sessions that non –compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

- Pupil not on admission register (Code Z)

enables schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

- Planned whole of partial school closure (Code #)

should be used for closures that are planned or known in advance eg holidays, curriculum planning/training days (up to five per year) or the use of the school as a polling station.

- Different Term Dates for Different Pupils (Code #)

can also be used to record staggered starts or induction days. This is only acceptable where the school ensures that pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education over the school year.

12. Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

Pupils who are engaged in off-site educational activities will be recorded as attending (or absent from) an approved educational activity using the appropriate code.

The key features of approved educational activity are that they must be:

- educational *and*
- approved by the school *and*
- supervised by the school or someone authorised by the school

A pupil will be recorded as approved educational activity if he/she is attending:

- an approved work experience placement (Code W)
- a field trip or educational visit (Code V)
- an approved sporting activity approved by and supervised by someone authorised by the school (Code P)
- the pupil is attending an interview with a prospective employer, or another educational establishment (Code J)
- an off-site educational activity (Code B)

Note: The B code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school.

- Dual Registered – at another educational establishment (Code D)

Note: This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the school census. This code should be used where pupils are attending an Education Support Centre, hospital or special school on a temporary basis or for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children where they are known to be registered at another school for the session in question. Each school will only record the attendance/absence for those sessions where the pupil is expected to attend.

Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course need only be placed on the registers of their main school. They should be treated as “guest pupils” at the other consortia school/s.

13. Flexi-schooling

The Headteacher may agree to flexi-schooling arrangements where the parents/carers take on the responsibility for their child's education for part of the school week. This will be only with a written agreement from a parent/carer in place and under exceptional circumstances. Where agreement has been reached, pupils should be marked authorised absent from school during periods when they are receiving home education. (Code C).

14. Part-time time-tables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs. A part time timetable will be time limited and will only be made with parental agreement. The school should mark the sessions were the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

15. Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which come into effect on 1st September 2013 remove all references to family holidays and extended leave for holidays in term time. **The amendments make clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It is for the Headteacher to determine what constitutes exceptional circumstances and for them to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

The Local Authority has provided a standard letter that will be issued to parents/carers to support the governing body and Headteachers in communicating their decision making regarding individual requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time.

The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 and subsequent amendments in 2010, 2011, 2013 and 2016 is available at <http://www.legislation.gov.uk>

Further details information and advice on all aspects of school attendance in Hertfordshire is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

Appendix 1

HERTFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Policy for Attendance Improvement Officers working with children whose absence has been authorised

- if the AIO becomes concerned (through checking the attendance register) that a pupil has accumulated significant amounts of authorised absence this will be discussed with the relevant member of school staff
- if it is agreed that there is a concern about the pupil's attendance the school should share this concern with the parents/carers
- if concerns about the pupil's attendance remain, the AIO will consider asking the school to make a referral to the attendance team
- if a pupil is identified as being a persistent absentee (PA). Persistent absence is when a pupil enrolment's overall absence equates to 10 per cent or more of their possible sessions.

(Note: if a pupil's absence has been authorised by the school, the LA cannot cite that absence as evidence of non attendance under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996).

Appendix 2

ATTENDANCE CODES, DESCRIPTIONS AND MEANINGS

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Present at off site educational activity	Approved Education Activity
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school	Authorised absence
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment	Not expected to attend this session
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
G	Holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Holiday authorised by the school	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Other unauthorised absence	Unauthorised absence
P	Supervised sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Day set aside exclusively for religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational reasons	Authorised absence
U	Late and arrived after the registers closed	Unauthorised absence
V	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Not required to be in school (non-compulsory school age pupils)	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed to all pupils (Planned)	Not counted in possible attendances

Detailed advice on the use of these registration codes can be found at www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/advice/f00221879/advice-on-school-attendance

Appendix 3

SUPPORTING GOOD ATTENDANCE AT TOWNSEND

Townsend C of E School believes good attendance is critical for students achieving success. We strive for excellent attendance and punctuality across the school for all students of any need or disability and of any age. The school can only achieve this with parent/carer support.

What are some of the things we do to support promoting attendance?

- Deputy Head Miss Lingwood takes the lead with Attendance
- All staff at school take a shared role and responsibility for attendance
- There is regular monitoring and checking of attendance and data by form tutors Directors of Learning Subject Tutors and Miss Lingwood.
- Attendance reports are regularly shared with school governors
- The school works closely with the Local Authority seeking support guidance and advice when required and appropriate
- The school work with an extensive range of external agencies that support children and families with specific needs or vulnerabilities. This includes access to a Family Worker.
- The school work closely with ESMA (Education Support for Medical Absence) where a child is unable to attend school on medical grounds
- The school will deploy a member of the education support team to provide a 'meet and greet' service for parent/carer and child where there is a reluctant attender and as appropriate
- The school deploy a member of the education support team to support students with particular emotional needs that impact attendance
- The school will consider making timetable adjustments for a fixed period of time where it is appropriate and supports a student returning to school after an absence or remaining in school where there is a reluctance to attend
- The school use a variety of rewards and incentives to recognise excellent attendance or improved attendance. This includes an annual bowling trip to reward 99% attendance for the previous year and termly year certificates
- The school will provide support advice and guidance to any parent/carer who is struggling to get their child to school. On occasions this may also involve seeking external advice for parents/carers
- Bus subsidies may be provided to families on request to support with transport on dedicated school buses
- The school identify any attendance issues/patterns of absence promptly so that intervention is early
- Buddies and 6th form students are provided for those students who may benefit from additional support arriving at school or once in school
- Where there is a sudden and short term financial difficulty or another exceptional circumstance at home, the school may be able to consider financial support for transport to and from school for a fixed period of time
- The school provides additional support for any child who is identified as requiring further support through the transition process from year 6 to year 7. This may be through additional school visits prior to starting year 7 or additional support in the first few weeks

The school is always willing to meet and discuss with a parent/carer any issues around a child's attendance. The initial contact should be with the child's form tutor and should be as early soon so that a 'worry' does not become a barrier to attending school.