





TOWNSEND

CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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1. Introduction

At Townsend, our vision 'Achievement For All, Respect For All' is underpinned by the concept of 'Love your neighbour' from the story of the Good Samaritan, Luke 10:25-37. We value everyone, and show love and respect for ourselves and others, setting high standards and supporting each other so that we can all flourish. The concept of 'love your neighbour' is taught in three strands:

1. Love your neighbour – treat others as you would wish to be treated yourself
2. Love yourself – self-care is important, look after yourself physically, mentally and spiritually
3. Love the journey – whether academic or personal, Townsend supports everyone's journeys to enable you to flourish individually and collectively

Townsend Church of England 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, they will achieve better outcomes, be safe and supported and be able to make and sustain relationships. Attendance is a whole school approach and all staff are committed to ensuring pupils attend school. Every child should be aiming for above 95% attendance and anything below 90% is deemed by the Government as Persistent Absence and anything below 50% is deemed as severely absent.

The Hertfordshire County Council Attendance Policy guided, assisted and empowered our school to meet its responsibilities and to provide an agreed framework within which consistent practices and procedures are applied.

2. Statement of Intent

Townsend Church of England 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. We will do this by ensuring as a school we:

- Develop and maintain a positive and effective whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance.
- Embed a culture where attendance is everyone's business and where a 'support first' approach is used.
- Provide support, advice and guidance to parents, children and young people, taking into consideration the vulnerability of some children and young people and the ways in which this might contribute to absence.
- Will handle confidential information with sensitivity and work collaboratively to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Are conscious of potential safeguarding issues related to attendance.
- Recognise the individual child or young person when planning for reintegration following periods of absence.
- Promote effective partnerships with the Hertfordshire ISL Attendance Team (Hertfordshire LEA attendance service) and with other services and agencies (see appendix 6).
- Recognise attendance as an important area of school improvement and make sure it is resourced appropriately to create, build and maintain systems and performance.
- Apply this policy fairly and consistently and recognise the individual needs of children and young people and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Schools will consider their obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

- Understand the importance of school as a place of safety where pupils can enjoy trusted relationships with staff and pupils, particularly for children with a social worker and those who have experienced adversity, recognising that children missing education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues.

3. School Responsibilities

- The Headteacher will be responsible for the implementation and management of this policy underpinned by clear expectations, procedures and responsibilities. These are communicated to and understood by staff, pupils and their families, ensuring compliance with DfE guidance for schools and local authorities.
- Ensure there is a Designated Senior Leader with responsibility for attendance and punctuality of pupils, who will be responsible for the day-to-day running of the attendance management, accurate completion of admission and attendance registers, tracking and intervention systems, providing regular reviews to their senior team and school governors.
- Ensure all teaching and non-teaching staff know and understand their responsibilities for attendance and adopt a consistent approach in dealing with absence and lateness. Staff will actively work to maximise attendance rates, both in relation to individual pupils and the pupil body as a whole, receiving the training and professional development they need. 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 and have a significant role to play in ensuring good attendance of individual pupils.
- Ensure Directors of Learning for Year Groups oversee and monitor the attendance of pupils in their year groups and will work with students and families to ensure attendance is as high as possible.
- Ensure the school Attendance Engagement Officer and Attendance Administration Officer support the work of form tutors and Directors of Learning.

The school is responsible for supporting the attendance of all students and for dealing with problems that may lead to non-attendance. We will aim to identify the barriers to low or non-attendance and work together with families and pupils to overcome those barriers where possible. We will do this using a range of strategies and with reference to the following documents:

- Working together to support school attendance (DFE)
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65f1b048133c22b8eecd38f7/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_applies_from_19_August_2024_.pdf)
- Mental Health Issues affecting a pupil's attendance guidance (DFE)
(https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf)
- Emotionally Based School Avoidance guidance (HFL)
(<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/local-offer/media-library/documents/resource-area-documents/summary-guidance-for-schools-on-emotionally-based-school-avoidance-pdf-438kb.pdf>)

We may also seek the advice, guidance and support of external agencies such as the Hertfordshire ISL Attendance Team (see appendix 1), Services for Young people and Integrated Services for Learning.

Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases. They are also used in an emergency to ensure all pupils are safe. Registers will be taken at the beginning of each morning (8.55am) and once during the afternoon session (2pm). If any pupil (Years 7-11) leaves the site during the school day they must:

- Have a note from a parent/carer explaining the reason
- Must sign out at reception
- Be collected by a parent/carer on school premises. Students (years 7-11) are not allowed to leave the site on their own without a parent/carer collecting them from reception.

If a student at any point of the day feels unwell and does not feel they can stay in school they must go to the school office to collect a green slip, which must then be signed by their Director of Learning to give permission to go home. The pupil should then return the slip to the school office, who will telephone a parent/carer to collect the student. Students should not phone their parents to collect them without permission.

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. When a student is absent from school and no reason has been given by the parent/carer by 9am, parents/carers will be informed by the school that their child is absent. 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. 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.

Registers will 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.

In order to reduce the possibility of post registration truancy we also take class registers at the start of each lesson and we follow up when students are not in lessons. The school also carries out spot checks.

To support the school's aims to maximise attendance, Townsend Church of England School has in place (see appendix 2):

- 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 attendance improvement officer 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 concerns 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 where 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, pupils on free school meals, SEND students and students known to a social worker. Form Tutors work closely with Directors of Learning for Year groups to intervene and support pupils and families to ensure no child is disadvantaged with regards access to education.

We will take a 'support first' approach in line with the Department for Education's 'Working together to improve school attendance'. Through a support first approach we will work with parents and carers to tackle the barriers to attendance and intervene early before absence becomes entrenched.

A support first approach will include:

- Having high expectations of all pupil's attendance and challenging pupils and parents where attendance does not meet the Government expectations.
- Rigorously monitoring all pupils' attendance, identifying any patterns of poor attendance and liaising with pupils and parents/ carers to help improve attendance.
- Meet with pupils and parents/ carers to identify the barriers to school attendance and work together to improve attendance.
- Provide support or guidance to external agencies who can support improving school attendance.
- Seek to work with external agencies to break down barriers to attendance and support pupils and their families.
- Work with attendance partners where support is not being accessed by the family to ensure they are accessing any support offered to improve attendance.
- Use attendance contracts between the school and families where necessary to improve attendance.
- Where absence is due to a medical reason, we will work with the family to develop individual healthcare plans using any guidance from a medical professional.

4. Sixth Form attendance

Year 12 and Year 13 students are expected to attend school all day, from 8:45am until 3.25pm. Home study will only be agreed for Y13 students at a time deemed appropriate for the cohort and parents/carers will be expected to sign an agreement for their child to take part in this. The minimum expected attendance figure is 95% and excellent punctuality is expected. The following interventions are used to improve and monitor sixth form attendance.

95%-100% attendance	Recognition in assemblies and Celebration assemblies.
90%-95% attendance	Form tutor conversation – consistent = phone call home
Below 90%	Parents meeting with the Head of Sixth Form/Form tutor

Where a student may have poor attendance, this will be discussed with the student and the parent/carer. Steps are taken to improve attendance, such as attendance and punctuality report. If attendance does not improve and falls below 80%, we may look to withdraw pupils from their programme of study or they may be asked to pay for the exam entry. This would be a last resort and we would hope by working with students and parents/ carers that we can improve attendance.

Year 12/13 students leaving the site at break or lunchtime or for consortium lessons must sign out and sign back in. Consortium schools share attendance data of their students on a weekly basis. Pupils are transported to consortium schools by minibuss and a register is taken by the consortium minibuss driver and given to the head of sixth form.

5. Punctuality

Townsend Church of England School will take steps to actively encourage excellent levels of punctuality. Lateness to school and to lessons, is monitored and followed up by subject teachers and form tutors. It is included on the school's behaviour framework and will be sanctioned according to this.

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 ensure that the individuals make up missing time at break times or after school. School start times and lesson times are published in school policies, brochures and on the school website and pupils need to ensure they are on time. School will not keep a register open for the whole session.

If a child arrives after 8.45am they will need to sign in at reception and the school attendance administration officer will update the school's register. If they arrive late on more than one occasion each week (Monday to Friday), they will be issued with a 30-minute centralised lunchtime detention. A detention will be issued for every day they arrive late after the first late of the week.

If a parent / carer produces a note / email which the school deem to be a valid reason for their child's lateness, no sanction will be issued but the child will still be marked as late. (See appendix 4).

6. 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. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances. Please see Appendix 5 for Illness Absence Guidance.

Parents/Carers should:

- Ensure that their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn
- Notify the school if their child/children are absent by 8.45 am. This must be done on the first day of absence providing an explanation and daily thereafter to keep the school updated on the child's health.
- Provide medical evidence if required for their child's absence.
- Providing school with sufficient and up-to-date information about their child's medical needs. Parents should make sure that in the first instance they inform the school their child has a medical need and provide evidence of this medical need from a medical professional.
- Provide evidence of medical appointments during school time to the attendance team. This includes medical appointments during our Abbey Services.
- Instil in their children 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 Church of England School's code of conduct and Behaviour and Behaviour Management 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
- Avoid arranging medical/dental appointments during school hours
- Not book holidays during term time
- Submit any absence request at least 20 days before the proposed absence to the Headteacher for exceptional circumstance. Do not assume absence will be granted until you have received confirmation from the school.

7. COVID 19

The NHS recommends if your child/children have tested positive for COVID-19 they need to try to stay at home and avoid contact with other people for three days after the day they took the test.

8. 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 address or contact number 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 the attendance improvement officer 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>

9. 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 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. **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.**

10. Elective Home Education

Parents have the right to educate their child at home. As a school, we would discourage this for any child. However, if a parent wishes to electively home educate their child, we request a letter to be sent to the Headteacher informing us of this decision. Parents will be responsible for ensuring the conditions of home education are met once the pupil is removed from roll.

11. Children Missing from Education

As a school, we will work with parents and the local authority to ensure that children are receiving a suitable education. We will do this through the admissions and removal from roll procedures outlined in this policy. As a school we will notify the local authority if a child is absent, without reason for ten consecutive days. It is a parent's responsibility to inform the school of a change of address and in the case of a new school, the name and address of the new school being attended by the pupil. We will make reasonable enquires to establish the whereabouts of a child and will work with the local authority to ensure children are in education.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f5e4a40f0b6230268f135/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

12. 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/carers 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 supporting medical evidence and this will be requested by our school attendance team or your child's Director of Learning.**
- The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent/carers 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 (parent/ sibling/ grandparent)
- 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). These must be submitted to the Headteacher 20 days before the requested 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.

- Evidence is provided for a medical appointment during school hours, this includes on our Abbey days.

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.

12.1. Request for absence for exceptional circumstances

The Absence Request must be completed and submitted to the Headteacher 20 days before the proposed absence.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' amongst others as:

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

Absence without a valid reason, or where there is no explanation, is recorded as unauthorised absence.

- Holidays will not be authorised during term time, regardless of the reason for the holiday.
- Absences that will not be authorised: looking after siblings, birthdays, shopping, non-school trips, weddings (unless immediate family with evidence provided).
- Medical evidence must be provided for 5 days or more absence or where patterns of absence have emerged.

12.2. Persistent and Severe Absence

Where a child's attendance falls below 90% or more of the current school year, school will work with the pupil and family to put targeted support into place and remove any barriers to attendance.

We have to pay particular attention to those students where attendance falls below 50% as these severely absent pupils may face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and are more likely to need more intensive support to improve attendance.

We will regularly monitor and intervene with persistently and severely absent pupils throughout the year. (See appendix 2)

12.3. Fixed Penalty Notices

We will be adhering to the Hertfordshire County Council Penalty Notices Unauthorised Absence (Truancy) Code of Conduct when looking to issue fixed penalty notice fines.

From 19th August 2024 a new national threshold of 10 unauthorised sessions for any reason (equivalent to five school days) within a rolling 10 school week period has been introduced for when schools must consider issuing a fixed penalty notice. A fixed penalty notice can be issued for any

combination of unauthorised absences over a 10 week rolling period. They can be consecutive or span over two terms.

The national framework sets out that a maximum of two penalty notices per child can be issued per parent in a 3 year rolling period. If a parent then commits a third offence in a 3 year rolling period, the local authority will need to consider options available to them to improve attendance.

The three year period and escalation of fines begins from the date on which the first penalty notice is issued. Arrangements for payment are set out below and would be included within the fixed penalty notice:

- The first penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between days 22-28.
- Where it is deemed to issue a second penalty notice to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first offence, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 and is payable within 28 days. There is no reduced sum.

A 'parent' is defined as:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- Any person who, although they are not a natural parent, has parental responsibility (as defined in the Children Act 1989) for a child or young person.
- Any person who, although is not a natural parent, has care of a child or young person. Having care of a child or young person means that a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their relationship is with the child, is a parent in education law.

Under the Hertfordshire Code of Conduct a penalty notice can be issued to each parent for each child.

For further information please visit: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/schools-and-education/at-school/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence/penalty-notices-for-unauthorised-absence.aspx>

12.4. Notice to Improve

Parents can be sent a notice to improve by the school if the national threshold for a penalty notice has been met. The notice to improve is a final opportunity for parents to engage in support and improve attendance before a penalty notice is issued.

A notice to improve will have a validity of 6 weeks and attendance records will be reviewed daily during this 6 week period. If further unauthorised absence is recorded, consideration will be given as to whether a penalty notice needs to be issued.

13. 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.

Attending School

/ \	Present
L	Late to school - before 9.30am arrival. This does not affect attendance percentage.

Attending a place other than school - authorised absence

K	Attendance education provision provided by the local authority
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V	Educational visit or trip
P	Participating in sporting activity
W	Attending work experience
B	Attending another approved education activity arranged by school (alternative provision/ online learning)
D	Dual registered with another education provider

Authorised Absence

Only the school within the context of the law, can authorise and approve absence - not parents. The fact a parent has submitted a note, does not mean the school must accept the explanation as a valid reason for absence.

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad
M	Leave of absence for medical or dental appointments
J1	Absence for attending an interview for employment or another school/ college
S	Study leave
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend
C2	Absence due to a part time timetable
C	Absence due to exceptional circumstances
T	Parent travelling for occupational circumstances
R	Religious observance
I	Not medical or dental - both physical and mental illnesses
E	Suspended or permanently excluded children and no alternative provision made
Q	Unable to attend school due to lack of access arrangements (local authority)
Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available (transport provided by LA or school)
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread travel disruption
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed
Y5	Unable to attend due as pupil is in criminal justice system

Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Unauthorised absence

G	Holiday not granted by the school
N	No reason for absence yet established – after 5 days with no reason provided, this will automatically become an unauthorised absence.
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances or unauthorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register

13.1. 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.

13.2. 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.

13.3. Part-time timetables

All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education and parents/carers are responsible for ensuring they receive this. In exceptional circumstances, there may be a need for a part time timetable for short periods of time to meet an individual pupil’s needs and to support them coming into school. If a part-time timetable is necessary it will be temporary and time-limited with parent/carer agreement. A part-time timetable will be no longer than 6-8 weeks and if this needs to be extended medical evidence from a medical professional will be needed. Part-time timetables are not long-term solutions and will not be used for behaviour reasons.

14. Requests for Family Holidays During Term time

Amendments to the 2006 Pupil Registration (England) Regulations which came 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 headteacher 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 Headteacher in communicating their decision making regarding individual requests for leave of absence for holidays in term time.

Parents who wish to request time off for their child/ren in term time from school should complete the form 'Request for Authorised Absence for exceptional Circumstances' which can be found on the school website. This form should be returned to the Headteacher to be considered.

Holidays in term time will not be authorised and parents should be aware that if this unauthorised absence is taken you may be at risk of being issued with a Fixed penalty Notice.

If a student has at least 10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 week school week period (which can span different terms or school years and do not have to be consecutive), including holidays the Headteacher can apply for a Penalty Notice to be issued by the Local Authority. This can be for each parent/ carer for each child. The fixed penalty notice issued to a parent for a child will be charged at £80 if paid within 21 days, rising to £160 if paid between days 22-28.

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 Local Authority Attendance Officer working with children whose absence has been authorised

- if the Local Authority Attendance Officer 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 Local Authority Attendance Officer 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).

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 Local Authority Attendance Officer who will work in close partnership with the school. Rebecca Porzio from West Attendance Team is Townsend Church of England School's link Local Authority Attendance Officer. In working closely with schools, the Attendance Teams will offer the following services:-

Attendance Duty team

A dedicated telephone line through which schools can contact 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

Our named Local Authority Attendance Officer will liaise with the school and undertake whole schoolwork for Townsend Church of England School.

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 schoolwork for the academic year, focusing 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. The Local Authority 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 is accepted, the Local Authority Attendance Officer 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

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

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 co-operate 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.

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 www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml or from the local Attendance Team Manager.

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

Appendix 2

School Attendance Strategy – Supporting Attendance

Absence from school and ongoing late arrival are both safeguarding concerns. Therefore, both should be treated as priorities and actions implemented promptly. It is a parent/carer responsibility to ensure their child attends school and contacts school regarding any absence. It is a schools responsibility to ensure pupils are attending and follow up absences, ensure attendance procedures and policies are followed and to challenge absence from school.

All staff are responsible for monitoring attendance both pastorally as a form tutor and academically as a classroom teacher. Directors of Learning for year groups and departments should be aware of attendance concerns in both year groups and departments. Please refer to the front page of this document for key people that are involved in whole school attendance.

Staff should refer to the Attendance Plan to ensure each stage is appropriately actioned to improve attendance at all stages

ROLES

Form Tutor	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a sense of belonging in your form group. Welcome students back when they have been absent and discuss and celebrate attendance. Noticing attendance is a key factor in improving it.• Checking in with students who have had a period of absence to check they are settling back in well• Responsible for recording a child present, absent or late on a twice-daily basis during registration periods.• Completing registers by 9am for morning registration and 2.30pm for afternoon registration.• Use the weekly report produced on Arbor to speak to individual students about attendance.• Support the attendance administrator in chasing up 'N' codes where necessary.• Sharing information with the attendance team if reasons for absence provided by parents directly to the form tutor.• Contact and/or meet with parents when asked to by Director of Learning as the first step in supporting a student with an attendance concern• Complete actions each attendance action week as directed by the attendance team• Ensure an attendance culture is created by:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Discussing the impact of attendance on attainment during form time- Discussing the impact of taking holidays in term time on attendance- Ensuring attendance statistics and learning hours missed are discussed with form groups as a whole and on an individual one-to-one basis• Notify the Director of Learning for Year immediately if they are concerned about the absence of a tutee.• Liaise with the Director of Learning for Year and attendance engagement officer about students who have long-term illnesses/ issues which may affect their attendance and ways in which this child can be supported.
Classroom Teachers	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Accurately record attendance of pupils in your lessons and highlight any anomalies in your class list to the data manager.• Create a sense of belonging in your classes. Welcome students back when they have been absent and discuss attendance. Noticing attendance is a key factor in improving it.• Have conversations with students who are absent from your lesson about the work they are missing• Give work missed to students who have been absent and check they have caught up by a deadline you set

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight to Director of Learning for your subject any attendance concerns in your subject for follow up • To alert classroom support and attendance if a child is not in your lesson but has been marked present during the day.
Director of Learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an overview of year group attendance and liaise regularly with form tutors about individual attendance • Deliver regular assemblies on the importance of attendance and run year group incentives for good and improved attendance • To meet with parents and pupils if attendance drops below 90% (attendance engagement officer will alert Year director of Learning if this happens) to discuss barriers and solutions to attending school and improving individual attendance developing bespoke plans to support individuals • To use the attendance checklist to ensure all support is offered to improve attendance • Liaise with form tutors about concerns of non-attenders and any actions the form tutor has taken • Meet with the Attendance engagement officer once a half term to decide on actions needed for students with low or decreasing attendance and whose responsibility each action is. • Identify specific groups of children whose attendance needs to be more closely monitored • As directed by SLT attendance link or SLT link complete a home visits where student absence is a concern or a welfare concern • Carry out visits to alternative provisions for students in their year group as directed by SLT attendance link • Keep a shared excel sheet on attendance actions throughout each half term to share with SLT lead for HFL AIO meetings. This spreadsheet should also include reduced timetables, ESMA referrals, alternative provision and factors which may be impacting student attendance
SLT Link	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss severely absence students and persistently absent students in line management meetings • Support DOL with parent meetings regarding attendance where necessary and those falling below the expected attendance
Attendance administration officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Phone vulnerable students daily who are not in school according to Arbor (according to vulnerable children list) • Email all parents/carers where there is no reason for absence. Call if no reply to the email and leave a message. If no message function, call once more. • Phone all alternative provision students to ensure they are attending • Monitor attendance email address • Update Arbor with absence reasons/ change codes for both AM and PM registration - chasing N codes and changing where necessary • Run/print off fire drill report • Email daily to DOL/ SLT lead students who are not in and there has been no contact from – add in how many days this has been for. • Missing register email and list • Issue detentions for students late to school according to the late to school procedure). • Update Arbor with any form tutors information on absence • Ensure weekly attendance reports are shared with form tutors on Arbor • Be responsible for attendance action week actions and spreadsheet • Updating Arbor with TLC Live sessions/ ESMA marks • Add students to the tracker who are under 90% attendance • Letters for under 90% attendance students to be sent every term – liaise with Attendance Engagement Officer/ DOL/ SLT Link and attendance for those who do not need a letter. • Oversee and monitor electronic signing in and out app.

Attendance engagement officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focusing on improving attendance of students between 50-90% working with SLT link, DOLs and form tutors to do so • Pupil premium, SEND and EHCP students are a focus – work with SENDCO/ SEN department to liaise about these students • Look for patterns of days off – along with reasons on attendance certificates • Speak to students on daily/ weekly basis to talk about attendance • Speak to parent to say you will be working with the student on attendance and we want to support on how we can make attendance better • Find out the barriers to not coming to school and we can try and resolve them • Meet regularly with students – rewards for good attendance/ positive phone calls home – liaise with DOL about rewards and certificates • Return to school meeting after a period of absence • Log actions on CPOMS – meetings/ phone calls etc. • Monitor lesson attendance of students who you are working with • Update attendance monitoring lists (google sheet) so DOL are aware of work you are doing with different students • Meet with DOLs half termly to update actions, work collaboratively and involve form tutors where necessary. • Liaise with form tutors on any actions they need to take with certain students to improve attendance • Collect medical evidence where necessary • Be responsible for attendance action week actions and spreadsheet
SLT attendance lead	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have an overview of attendance in the school and coordinate work to improve whole school attendance and the attendance of individuals • Support all other staff responsible for attendance, where necessary in improving attendance of students • Deliver priority briefings to update staff on whole school attendance • Meet termly with the Herts County Council Attendance Officer and gather information from DOL and attendance engagement officer to be able to do so • Update SLT and governors with regards to school attendance and actions

Monitoring attendance procedure

Absence	Procedure	Actions
Day 1	<p>Attendance administrator to make contact with home to ascertain a reason for absence if the parent/carers does not call/ email into the school office.</p> <p>Vulnerable students should be contacted as first priority by phone call.</p> <p>Attendance administrator to email out daily students where no contact has been made, with a tally of number of days of no contact</p>	<p>Attendance administrator to ensure that there is a note on Arbor with the reason for absence.</p> <p>If no response from parent/s this should also be noted on the register.</p> <p>Clear N codes for AM and PM registration when reasons are ascertained (see codes table for changing codes)</p>
Day 2	<p>Attendance administrator to make contact with home to ascertain a reason for absence if the parent/carers does not call/ email into the school office.</p> <p>Vulnerable students should be contacted as first priority by phone call.</p> <p>Attendance administrator to email out daily students where no contact has been made, with a tally of number of days of no contact</p>	<p>Follow up with vulnerable students (historical attendance concerns, PP, safeguarding concerns) where no reason for absence has been recorded or N code has not been cleared from day 1.</p>

Days 3-6	<p>Attendance administrator continuously tries to call all contacts for students who have not been in for 3 days or more.</p> <p>Attendance administrator to email out daily students where no contact has been made, with a tally of number of days of no contact - after 3 days no contact safeguarding lead and DOL to agree on next steps.</p>	<p>When absence has been for 3 or more days:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attendance engagement officer should speak to the child about reasons for absence and record these on year group spreadsheet Consider the contextual information about the student (historical and current attendance concerns, PP, safeguarding concerns) and put a plan in place, along with the DOL. Please refer to the attendance interventions sheet to decide on whose responsibility this is and what actions may be put into place.
Day 7	<p>If no contact from parent for 7 days one of the following must happen:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> There must be contact by a member of staff from school to an emergency contact If an emergency contact is spoken to, they must confirm they have seen/ spoken to the child within the last week Home visit to be completed by a member of staff 	<p>Liaison with the Director of Learning about continuous periods of absence for this child.</p> <p>Attendance administrator should be keeping a list of actions (through Arbor) of attempts to contact different emergency contacts during the 7 day period.</p>
Day 10	<p>The Local Authority must be informed of the child's absence. Call the attendance duty west line on 01442 454778, the 10 day absence forms do not need to be filled out if you make the call.</p> <p>Form must be sent via Herts FX through the admin team.</p> <p>The Local Authority must be informed when the child returns to school if the form is sent/ telephone call made.</p>	<p>Liaison between the form tutor and DoL to decide on who will be calling/ completing and sending the form.</p> <p>Attendance administer or attendance engagement officer to record on CPOMS as an attendance and a safeguarding concern under 10 days consecutive absence - with all actions that have been taken and a copy of the form (if sent) or a record of time and person spoken to on the phone at the Attendance Duty West Team.</p>

Attendance Interventions

Stage	Percentage Attendance	Action
1 Form teacher	<95%	<p>If attendance falls below 95% at any time in the year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Form teachers should discuss attendance with the student, highlighting the importance of being in school. Form tutors can use the attendance certificate of the student to discuss this in terms of days missed/ number of lessons missed rather than % 2. Parent/carer to be informed of drop in attendance either by phone or email to highlight under 95% attendance - record on Arbor. 3. Raise any concerns with the DOL year 4. Monitor attendance of the pupil to highlight any further decrease in attendance and to avoid becoming persistently absent.
2 DOL Year	<90% (persistent absence)	<p>If attendance falls below 90% at any point in the year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. One to one meeting with the student by attendance engagement officer. 2. Attendance engagement officer to identify any patterns/ trends and discuss any barriers with the student. 3. Meeting or phone call by the DOL to the parent to discuss under 90% attendance.
3 DOL Year	<85%	<p>If attendance falls below 85% at any point in the year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DOL to contact parent/carer for a face-to-face meeting regarding attendance. 2. Attendance improvement plan to be implemented and main points recorded on the year spreadsheet. 3. Attendance engagement officer to monitor weekly and liaise with DOL for contact home.
4 DOL with support from SLT Link	80%	<p>If attendance falls below 80% at any point in the year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Meeting with DOL and SLT link to put an attendance action plan together/ attendance contract or any other additional support needed. 2. Seek advice from SLT attendance about possible next steps. 3. DOL to contact HFL attendance team to gain advice if necessary.
5 DOL with SLT Link and SLT attendance	<50% (severe absence)	<p>AHT i/c attendance to be involved with interventions at this stage. Interventions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FPN warning letter • Liaison with HFL attendance team and referral to HFL • Referral for Early Help

Appendix 3

Townsend School Attendance Improvement Plan (SAIP)

Student: _____

Date: _____

Registration Group: _____

DOB: _____

Parent/ Carer Name/s: _____

Address/ phone number _____

Current attendance data

Attendance % _____ (current academic year)

Authorised absence % _____ Unauthorised absence % _____

Contextual information/notes:

School support/ external agency support

Notes/ comments on school support given and use of external agencies:

Possible causes

Notes/ comments on possible causes/barriers:

Student and parent view

Notes on student and parent explanations and what support has been tried at home:

Action Plan

Student Information
Strengths:
Motivators/ likes:
Teachers/ mentor:
Student actions
Agreed actions from student:
Family actions
Please tick as relevant: <div style="list-style-type: none; padding-left: 20px;"><input type="checkbox"/> Make sure the student attends school on time everyday <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer to notify the school to report any absence by 8.45am on each day of absence <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer to notify the school in advance of any planned absences <input type="checkbox"/> Parent/carer to provide medical evidence when required <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the student is seen by the GP/medical care as needed <input type="checkbox"/> Attend future meetings that may be called by school staff <input type="checkbox"/> Notify the school of any barriers that may impact attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Enforce rewards/consequences <input type="checkbox"/> Make sure student goes to bed earlier <input type="checkbox"/> Identify back up plan for transportation <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____</div>
School actions (different from those already applied)
Agreed actions from school:

As parents/ carers, we understand that while school has demonstrated support and assistance, by law, it is our responsibility to ensure school attendance. This plan was created collectively to assist the student in improving attendance, to enlist the support of parents/ carers and to document the schools' attempt to provide resources to promote student success. This document, along with the student profile (attendance, grades and behaviour record etc.) may be shared with the Local Authority attendance team if attendance continues to be low.

Student: _____ Date: _____

Parent: _____ Date: _____

School: _____ Date: _____

Date of follow up meeting to discuss outcomes and actions:

Appendix 4

Late to School Procedure

Number of times late per week	Sanction	Responsibility
1	Student is given a warning by form tutor / Attendance Officer when next seen (PM registration)	Form tutor / Attendance Officer
2 +	30-minute centralised SLT detention on Wednesday or Friday (next closest day)	Attendance officer will issue detentions and inform form tutor

- If a pupil is late once in a week, this will be recorded on Arbor but no sanction will be issued.
- If a pupil is late on more than one occasion per week, they will be issued a centralised 30-minute senior leadership lunchtime detention for each time they are late.
- Detentions will be recorded and monitored by the attendance improvement officer, who will inform the form tutor of the child.
- If parents/ carers provide a reason that the school deems acceptable for the lateness, it will be recorded as a late, but no sanction will be issued.

Appendix 5

Illness Absence Guidance

<https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/626669cb8fa8f523b7221b98/UKHSA-should-I-keep-my-child-off-school-guidance-A3-poster.pdf>

<https://assets.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/wpuploads/2022/12/aaa-guide-for-parents-on-school-attendance.pdf>

<https://www.gov.uk/illness-child-education>

<https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>