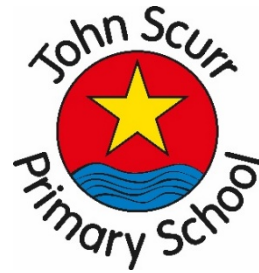



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Headteacher: Ms Maria Lewington



## Attendance Policy

Reviewed by:	General Governing Body
Date Implemented:	
Date Amended	2023
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Ratified by Governors:	2023
Governor Signature:	

Approved by: Helen Davies

Date: 19/7/23

Last reviewed on: July 2023

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

We work as part of Tower Hamlets attendance monitoring and support and their policy is included as an appendix to our policy. It is noted that both policies run together to ensure stakeholders are aware of the guiding principles and practices .

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

Responsible for attendance: Helen Davies – AHT, Syriah Khatun - Attendance Assistant Rofina Begum – Family Support Worker

### 3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 3.3 The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Helen Davies and can be contacted via [helen.davies@johnscurr.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:helen.davies@johnscurr.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

### 3.4 The Attendance Assistant and The Family Support Worker

The Attendance Assistant and Family Support Worker are responsible for:

- First day call for EYFS – Yr 6 conducted by Syriah- Attendance Assistant– Integris updated by midday.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- The Family Support Worker is Rofina Begum and can be contacted via [Rofina.begum@johnscurr.towerhamlets.sch.uk](mailto:Rofina.begum@johnscurr.towerhamlets.sch.uk)

### 3.5 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.00am every morning and 1.35 every afternoon.

The responsibility of teaching teams is to call absent families before 4pm to update them on **lost learning**. If phone lines are busy – please use mobile phones but ensure your phones are set to No Caller ID (please let SLT know if you are doing this regularly). If the parent does not pick up, then teachers must find the parent on the first day back to **update on lost learning**. This can be done after school.

### 3.6 School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system (Integris)
- If any calls are not answered, the office will call parents by 1pm and update Integris
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance assistant first, then the AHT for attendance and finally the family support worker in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

### 3.7 Parents/carers

- Parents/carers are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon learning. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- For pupils of compulsory school age, whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50 am and will be kept open until 9.00am The register for the second session will be taken at 12.35 in EYFS and KS1 and 1.35 in KS2 and will be kept open for 5 minutes

Maintain daily SLT contact with classes and update daily narrative.

#### **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

#### **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should inform the class teacher and the school admin team of any medical and dental appointments as soon as they have been confirmed. Parents provide the school admin team with proof of the appointment details that can be added to the pupil's attendance record.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- If a child is continually late, the class teacher will first meet with the parents/carers to find out possible reasons and inform them of the learning that the child is missing.
- If the lateness continues there will be a meeting with the family support worker or AHT with responsibility for attendance.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may call through to MASH or if extremely worried call the police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### 4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels with termly 1:1 parent meeting for parents with children whose attendance is below 95%.

Letters home to parents when their child's attendance falls below 95%.

An invite to an APM (Attendance Panel Meeting) is given via a phone call to attend in person and discuss the reasons for absence with the Family Support worker, AHT for Attendance and Attendance Welfare Officer (AWO). These meetings are held every two weeks, and are informed by the Fisher Family Trust (FFT) data.

Teaching teams to call absent families before 4pm to update them on **lost learning**. If phone lines are busy – please use mobile phones but ensure your phones are set to No Caller ID (please let SLT know if you are doing this regularly). If the parent does not pick up, then teachers must find the parent on the first day back to **update on lost learning**. This can be done after school.

## 5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as situations that are unavoidable or in the best interests of the child.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least three weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or Family Support Worker. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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.
- Other possible "exceptional circumstances" where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday.

### 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

- If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The school will promote and reward improved attendance, using a range of incentives, such as:

- Bowling Trip (best termly class attendance)
- 100% Attendance Certificates (given termly)
- Extra play for the class with the best attendance of the week
- Attendance display, with top three classes ranked
- Hot Chocolate challenges for targeted days throughout the year
- EYFS Celebration lunch table
- Assembly focuses
- Half-termly tea parties for parents and children with 100% attendance
- Walking bus
- Half Termly Attendance Tea Parties for children with 100% and their parents

## 7. Attendance monitoring

As a school, we rigorously use attendance data on Integris and FFT to identify patterns of poor attendance at individual and cohort level.

Cohorts identified will be monitored for patterns and trends. 1:1 meetings with class teachers will be priorities for these groups. Strategies for promoting attendance will be followed.

Children identified at an individual level are supported through a range of support mechanisms, depending on reasons for absence. These may include:

- Attendance Panel Meetings
- Early Help Support
- Meeting with Inclusion Lead
- School Nurse appointments
- Using the Walking Bus
- Where necessary, referrals to social care will be made, through MASH.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data, weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families



- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **7.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance
- Attendance Panel Meetings will be held
- Referrals to Early Help Support
- Meeting with Inclusion Lead
- School Nurse appointments
- Where necessary, referrals to social care will be made, through MASH.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum of two years by AHT for Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## Attendance Procedures

Actions and improvements for next year.

Any calls made to the office before 8.45, office staff to input reasons onto Integris.

Maintain daily SLT contact with classes and update daily narrative

First day call for EYFS – Yr 6 conducted by Syriah- Attendance Assistant– Integris updated by midday.

If any calls are not answered, the office will call parents by 1pm and update Integris. SK to let the office know if this is the case.

\*The responsibility of teaching teams is to call absent families before 4pm to update them on **lost learning**. If phone lines are busy – please use mobile phones but ensure your phones are set to No Caller ID (please let SLT know if you are doing this regularly). If the parent does not pick up, then teachers must find the parent on the first day back to **update on lost learning**. This can be done after school. We fully anticipate that this will be timely initially.

Year 1 and Reception to carry on coming in independently for the Garden Doors – this has had a very positive impact on punctuality and helps settle children to reading and phonics. Stay and Play and Stay and Read days – parents can come in. Nursery parents can drop off as normal.

Rofina will continue as late desk for KS2 (back stairs) and Syriah on the Front desk ( EYFS and KS1/Y3) with SLT supporting the lock up of the front of school and the ‘late bus’ from 8 50 am.

Syriah will meet with Helen daily to look at the attendance, start to identify patterns and update on any steps already in action.

Rofina will have time for Early Help forms and liaison for school nurse

Last pupil to arrive will get an email home in the autumn term- this had a significant positive impact.

SLT will meet monthly to carry out Attendance reviews using Integris

This will feed into Vulnerable Pupil Key Actions noted on VP minutes and Cpoms where appropriate.

AWA Ropna referrals will also lead on from the Attendance Reviews and VP meetings. Outcomes updated on CPOMS. Ropna will receive an Individual Absentee Report before the meeting. Helen will attend to give parents the child’s attendance ranking and have an impact report for these meetings. Syriah will lead on this.

This will be fed back to Governors

We will know that we are being successful if pupil’s attendance improves

Helen will reach out to THEP to take part in an Attendance Lead Network to quality assure our practice.

Integris training for all teachers and office in September (Helen)

We celebrate great attendance in class, with individuals and using systems in schools. We update our charts outside of the classes on a daily basis. We reward classes (bowling and Hot chocolate challenges), Termly attendance Tea Parties and Certificates. Walking Bus will continue and BF and TT Club for those children who benefit. 1:1 meetings for targeted family’s/year groups by teachers will continue.

Late pupils for afternoon Nursery will wait in the front office until staff are available. 12 30pm check on attendance for Nursery and follow up calls will be carried out by Syriah. Nursery Teaching teams will follow up for the ‘Lost Learning’ calls at the end of the session. \*

## Thresholds

Green- 97%- 100%	No risk of learning lost
Yellow- 95% - 96.9%	Risk of underachievement from lost learning
Amber- 93%- 94.9%	Serious Risk of underachievement from lost learning
Pink – 90%- 92.9%	Severe risk of underachievement from lost learning
Red- 0% - 89.9%	Extreme risk – potential court action

97% and above is attendance that is expected- we all ensure that this is maintained.

95%- 90% is below and 'of concern' attendance – meetings, letters and reminders this a Persistent Absenteeism trigger. In school action to support and track

90% or below – Attendance Panel with Ropna / Early Help

**The name and contact details of the senior leaders responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school are: Helen Davies and Maria Lewington**

**The name and contact details of the school staff members pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis are: Syrihah Khatun (02077903647)**

## **Pupil Attendance Policy**

### **Introduction and Background**

Tower Hamlets Primary School recognises that positive behaviour and good attendance are essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every child/young person the best educational experience possible.

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a 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 the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

This policy is written with the above guidance in mind and underpins our school ethos to:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding
- Ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school
- Ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities at school, and when they leave school

It seeks to ensure that all parties involved in the practicalities of school attendance are aware and informed of attendance matters in school and to outline the school's commitment to attendance matters. It details the responsibilities of individuals and groups involved and the procedures in place to promote and monitor pupil attendance.

Our policy aims to raise and maintain levels of attendance by:

- Promoting a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued
- Working closely with families and our partner agencies, including community organisations, to overcome any barriers to good attendance and provide support where required.
- Raising awareness of the importance of good attendance and punctuality and the relationship that poor attendance may have to safeguarding concerns.
- Ensuring that attendance is monitored effectively and reasons for absences are recorded promptly and consistently.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. **It is a rule of this school that pupils must attend every day, unless there are exceptional circumstances and it is the *headteacher*, not the parent, who can authorise the absence.**

### **Promoting Regular Attendance**

At Tower Hamlets Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance on our website, in person and in written communication
- Celebrate excellent attendance by displaying and reporting individual and class achievements
  - Reward good or improving attendance
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below the school's target (**insert LA target of 96% or school specific target**) for attendance or if any concerns emerge.

### **Understanding Types of Absence**

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and allowing absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parent), as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required. Each half-day is known as a 'session'.

**Authorised absences** are morning or afternoon sessions away from school for a genuine reason such as illness (although you may be asked to provide medical evidence for your child before this can be authorised), medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been granted. This type of absence can lead to the school referring to the Local Authority for penalty notices and/or legal proceedings.

Unauthorised absence includes, however is not exhaustive:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily e.g. because they had a late night or for non-infectious illness or injury that would not affect their ability to learn
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school after the close of registration are marked using a 'U'. This indicates that they are in school for safeguarding purposes, however is counted as an absence for the session
- Shopping trips
- Looking after other children or children accompanying siblings or parents to medical appointments
- Their own or family birthdays
- Holidays taken during term time without leave, not deemed 'for exceptional purposes' by the headteacher
- Day trips
- Other leave of absence in term time which has not been agreed

### **Persistent and Severe Absenteeism (PA and SA)**

A pupil is defined by the Government as a '**persistently absent**' when their attendance is 90% or below and '**severely absent**' when attendance is 50% or below, this can be authorised or unauthorised absence.

Absence at these levels will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this. For children who are **severely absent** we are likely to involve outside agencies to support the school and family to overcome barriers to attendance and each child will have an individual support plan.

### **Absence Procedures**

**If a child is absent from school the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:**

- Contact the school on the first day of absence before the beginning of the school day, or as soon as possible thereafter. Tower Hamlets Primary School – please report your child's absence using:
- Contact the school on every further day of absence.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.



**If your child is absent we will:**

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you however it is your responsibility to contact us
- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%
- Invite you in to school to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer or Headteacher if absences persist
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority if attendance does not improve.

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

**If absence continues we will:**

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 95%, or where punctuality is a concern
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with Headteacher if absences persist
- Create a personalised action/support plan to address any barriers to attendance
- Offer signposting support to other agencies or services if appropriate
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority if attendance does not improve.

**Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

**Tower Hamlets Primary School**

The school day starts at:

Your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time. Children arriving after **this time (insert time registers close)** the parent/carer should: **(insert school procedure for lateness)**

Lateness is monitored closely and reasons for absence are recorded.

If your child has a persistent late record (**insert school actions for addressing lateness**), but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good class and individual punctuality. Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may mean that you could face the possibility of being issued with a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

### **Understanding barriers to attendance**

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing support services, a Child and Family Support Worker or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. An individualised attendance plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have specific special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), or other vulnerabilities which may impact attendance. High expectations of attendance remain however, we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

See Annex A for summary tables of responsibilities for school attendance.

### **Tower Hamlets Attendance Welfare service**

Local Authority Attendance Welfare Advisors (AWAs) work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent and severe absence and improve overall attendance for all pupils.

Parents are expected to work with the school and Local Authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local

Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice (see Annex B for the Tower Hamlets Penalty Notice Scheme) prosecution in the Magistrates Court. Legal proceedings are designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

### **School Attendance and the Law**

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice for £120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £1000. Repeated or 'aggravated offences' could result in a fine of £2500 or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

### **Holidays in Term time**

**There is no entitlement in law for pupils to take time off during the term to go on holiday.**

In addition, the Supreme Court has ruled that the definition of regular school attendance is "in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school". In LBTH the LA considers 96% attendance or above as regular school attendance.

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances".

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (**not the local authority**) may authorise such a request. All applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, a penalty notice may be requested by this school to the Local Authority.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 6 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday.

### **At Tower Hamlets Infant School and Tower Hamlets Junior School 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:**

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time. The headteacher will take into account the child's overall attendance figure when making a decision regarding the application for leave of absence.

- If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence. Parents are however advised to read with their children and encourage them to write a diary while they are away.

### **Deletion from Roll**

Parents of pupils leaving Tower Hamlets Primary School or other than at the end of Year 2/6 are required to complete a 'In-year Admission/School transfer' form which can be obtained from the school office or Pupil Services. This provides school and the LA with the following

information: Child's name, class, current address, date of leaving, new home address, name of new school, address of new school. The school will need to complete a 'School History' section and sign the form before this can be submitted to Local Authority. This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

**Every removal** from the school register must be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for removal has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.

### **Absence data**

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently and severely absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We combine this with attainment data as good attendance leads to good attendance **(insert school procedures with regards to monitoring absence data)**

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

### **Summary**

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance.

Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend school, on time, every day. All school staff and the Governing Body/Trust Board are committed to working with parents and pupils to promote good attendance as this is the best way to ensure the best outcomes for all our pupils.

# Appendix:



Department  
for Education

## **Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance**

**Guidance for maintained schools,  
academies, independent schools, and  
local authorities**

**Published: May 2022**

**Applies from: September 2022**

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**Children and Culture Services Directorate**



**BEHAVIOUR & ATTENDANCE  
SUPPORT SERVICE**

**Penalty Notice Scheme  
Protocol**

**July 2023**

## Part-Time/Reduced Timetables

### Guidance

The primary and most recent guidance is from Working together to improve school attendance (May 2022). Schools **must** adhere to this guidance if putting in place a part-time timetable, which must only be in **very exceptional circumstances** and can only be **temporary** and **must be in the pupil's best interests** and schools

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- “All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In **very exceptional circumstances**, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a **temporary** part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. **A part-time timetable should not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour.**”
- “A part-time timetable must only be in place for the shortest time necessary and not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement should have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, either at school or alternative provision. There should also be formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing it with the pupil and their parents. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must treat absence as authorised.”

### Other Relevant Guidance and Law

- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2022
- Equality Act 2010
- Suspensions and Permanent Exclusions Guidance 2022
- Behaviour in Schools Guidance 2022
- SEND Code of Practice 2014 (updated 2020)

### Defining part-time timetables

“Full-Time” is not defined in law but for recording purposes, is defined as the time that a pupil would normally have in their school. For a full-time KS4 pupil this would normally be expected to be 25 teaching hours.

- A pupil who spends part of their week in school and part in alternative provision is not on a part-time timetable
- A pupil who is attending individual tuition only (approved by the Social Inclusion Panel or Fair Access Panel) but dual registered with school is not on a part-time timetable