

Townsend Primary School

Attendance Policy

Introduction:

Children's learning is at the heart of everything we do at Townsend, but children cannot learn if they are absent or regularly attending school late. We therefore aim to ensure that our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and raise standards by promoting the regular attendance and punctuality of pupils.

The Law relating to attendance:

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that 'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
 - (b) to any special educational needs he/she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

We aim to:

- Achieve attendance levels of 96% and above across the whole school
- Reduce unauthorised absence.
- Improve punctuality.
- Achieve minimum levels of pupils identified as persistent absentees.
- Reduce parental requests for pupil term time holidays.
- Create a culture in which good attendance and punctuality is accepted as the norm.
- Demonstrate that good attendance and punctuality is valued by the school.
- Maintain and develop effective communication regarding attendance and punctuality between home and school.
- Develop partnerships with families to improve attendance of those pupils with high levels of authorised absence and ensure full access to the curriculum.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause. These absences will be authorised on receipt of a medical letter stating the time and date of the appointment. This information needs to be given to the School Office before the appointment.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Children who arrive at school after 9.30am.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Registration Procedures:

The school day starts at 8.55am. The register is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session. Children will receive a late mark if they are not in class by 9.05am when the register officially closes.

For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the school site or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school. The decision to authorise is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Absence Procedures:

Parental responsibility:

- Inform the school office on the first day of absence (phone, text, email or in person) indicating the reason for absence and the expected return date.
- Inform the school office on each subsequent day of absence until the expected return date.
- If child is unable to return on expected date, parent to inform school office.
- Provide copies of medical appointment letters or cards. Parents must provide an explanation for all absences from school by telephone, email, text, in person or by a note sent through a third party e.g. sibling, etc. A covering letter must also be provided by the Parent or Legal Guardian only and handed into the office on the child's return to school. Pre-printed slips are available from the school office for this purpose.
All absence letters will be stored and kept until the child leaves this school.

School procedures:

- First day phone call for all unexplained absences.
- Fortnightly letter requesting reasons for any outstanding unexplained absences.
- Every week the Deputy Headteacher and the School Attendance Officer meet to undertake full school register check to identify any new attendance concerns and follow up those previously identified.

- Initial issues are raised by letters to parents.
- If absences persist parent is invited in to discuss the situation with the Deputy Headteacher
- If this fails to achieve required improvements, then the matter is referred to the Education Attendance and Welfare Service (EWAS) and the parent will meet with the EWO.
- There may be circumstances in which it is deemed necessary to omit one or more of these stages. Examples of this will be if attendance was previously referred to the EWAS or if the level of attendance is so poor that emergency action is required.
- In cases of high levels of authorised absence, we may invite parents to join a multi-agency meeting which might include any appropriate school staff, the Headteacher, School Nurse and the Education Attendance and Welfare Officer. The purpose of these meetings is to offer support and decide a plan in order to improve attendance or offer supplementary support to pupils.
- Supplementary to the register checks we analyse attendance data to identify and challenge persistent absence.
- Pupils who do not attend school for a period of ten days without explanation will be referred directly to the EWAS as 'Missing pupils'.
- Analyse registration data termly to identify any other factors that may be preventing the achievement of 96% attendance across the whole school.
- Annual meeting to review attendance and punctuality policy and procedures.

Holidays in Term Time:

- Any parent requiring an absence for the purpose of a holiday should make a 'Request for leave' application for the attention of the Headteacher.
- The school follows the government guidelines that no term time holidays will be authorised except for extenuating circumstances and this is at the discretion of the Headteacher.
- The school will invite parents in to discuss the reasons for the application with the Headteacher.
- The school will reply to all applications in writing stating whether or not the absence has been agreed by the school, within 5 days of receiving the application.
- The reason for not authorising a request will be clearly stated and evidence given. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed,

will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a referral to the EWAS.

- If leave is granted, the length of authorised absence will be clearly stated and dates included so that the parent is informed of what date the pupil should be back in school. If these times are not adhered to, it is possible that the parent may receive a referral to the EWAS.
- If the parent chooses to take the child out of school in term time without authorisation from the Headteacher then in the first instance a fixed penalty notice will be issued. If this occurs for a second time in the child's schooling at Townsend then the case will be referred to the EWO team for court action

Punctuality procedures:

Pupils that arrive late to school twice or more in a week will be identified and be spoken to by the School Attendance Officer.

For any pupils where punctuality continues to be a problem, parents are invited in to meet with the Deputy Headteacher and the School Attendance Officer. At this meeting, support will be offered and put in place to aide punctuality for the pupil.

If there is no improvement then a further meeting will be requested with the Headteacher and/or the Deputy Headteacher. The Education Welfare Officer may also be invited in extreme cases.

At the end of every half term the School Attendance Officer, Deputy Headteacher and the Learning Mentor will look at the lateness across the school. This will be an opportunity to look for areas of improvement where needed and put actions in place.

Collection of children at 3.30pm

Class teachers will bring their class down to the playground at 3.30pm. It is expected that parent/carers are waiting in the playground to collect their child.

Any children that have not been collected by 3.40pm or 4.40pm following After School Clubs will be taken to the office and their name recorded in the late collections book. Two or more late collections in one week will trigger a meeting with the School Attendance Officer or Learning Mentor to discuss and put in place procedures to encourage collections at 3.30pm.

If there is no improvement then parent/carer will be invited in to meet with the Headteacher.

Parents are encouraged to call the school before 3.25pm if they think they will be late.

Children not collected by 4pm will be referred to the Headteacher and could result in a referral to Social Services.

Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality:

- Attendance and punctuality is celebrated each week in whole school assembly, with praise given to the class with highest attendance and punctuality.
- Reporting details about attendance and punctuality awards in the school newsletter.
- Termly and half termly attendance and punctuality assembly where certificates, badges, pens and gift vouchers are handed out.
- Attendance and punctuality display in reception area and the playground promoting good attendance and punctuality and showing class achievements.
- Discussions at parent/teacher consultation days.
- Individual attendance and punctuality information detailed in parent/teacher meeting each term and in the pupils end of year report.
- Reporting progress about attendance and reiterating expectations in Headteacher's start of term letters.
- Attendance and punctuality leaflets included in every new starters welcome pack.
- Class with best attendance over the year has a picnic with the Headteacher in the Summer Term.
- Information is uploaded every week on the school website showing the percentages of attendance and punctuality for each class

Offices Procedures

Start of School Day Procedures

- School starts at 8.55am
- Any children coming through the office after this time should have their name recorded in the late and absent log with time of arrival
- Children will then receive a 'yellow late sticker', which informs the teacher that they have been registered
- Main playground gate will be closed at 9.05am
- After the register has closed at 9.05am the late and absent log and the register will be compared.
- Children that are consistently late will be sent a letter detailing the dates and times of lateness. If this continues then a meeting with the Deputy Headteacher will be arranged.
- The person in charge of monitoring this is Fatima Ruksana

End of School Day Procedures

- School day ends at 3.30pm
- Teachers will bring children to office from 3.35pm onwards (into side room)

- The adult in charge of the late gate will record the name of the children and the time collected.
- All the names recorded will receive a late letter detailing date and time of collection.
- Any child that is consistently collected late twice a week will be asked to come in for a meeting with the School Attendance Officer.
- The person in charge of monitoring this is Fatima Ruksana.