

TOW LAW MILLENNIUM PRIMARY SCHOOL

Autumn 2017
Information to parents



Every school day counts and, with this in mind, we have recently reviewed our Attendance Policy. Every single day a child is absent from school equates to a day of lost learning.

Our current level of attendance is 96.9%. The National Average is 96.1%.

Our overall school target for this year is 97.5%.

100% Attendance	0 days missed	Excellent
95% Attendance	Up to 9 days of absence Potentially 1 week and 4 days of learning missed	Requires Improvement
90% Attendance	19 days of absence 3 weeks and 4 days of learning missed	Poor – defined as “Persistent Absence”
85% Attendance	28 days of absence 5 weeks and 3 days of learning missed	Unsatisfactory
75% Attendance	46 days of Absence 9 weeks and 1 day of learning missed	Unacceptable

For some parents, 90% may seem like an acceptable level of attendance, but the reality is that 90% attendance means that your child will miss half a school day each week or 19 days of school during the school year – that’s nearly 4 school weeks.

Give your child the best start in life – every school day counts.

Don’t be afraid to ask for help if a problem arises.



Attendance Policy

Introduction

Tow Law Millennium Primary School places great emphasis on a pupil's attendance. **Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children receive full time education and they must ensure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Holidays in term time will not be authorised.**

At Tow Law Millennium Primary School, we actively reward those pupils who have a termly attendance of 100%. This has been a highly successful initiative. Pupils look forward to receiving their £5.00 gift voucher which is presented by the Headteacher/Chair of Governors at our termly Celebrations Assembly.

Attendance procedures

- The school operates a computerised attendance system.
- The school rings the parent/carer on the first day of absence if notification has not been received.
- The system automatically totals daily, weekly and termly attendance figures.
- Reports can be easily accessed for monitoring purposes and to target particular families/children who may need support.

Lateness

- School doors open at 8.55 am and close at 9.00 am.
- Any child coming in after 9.00 am will have to come in via the main Office **with their parent.**
- Parents will then be required to sign the Late Register. This has reduced the number of children coming in between 9.00 - 9.05 am which would not normally show on the register but would disrupt their education.
- The registration period ends at 9.05 am. Any child coming in after 9.05 am will be marked late in the register.
- At 9.15 am, a member of the office staff collects the registers from the classes.
- Any child coming in after 9.30 am is not entitled to a mark for that session and should be entered in the register as a 'U' (red circle, black letter, meaning 'late after registers closed').
- If there is a reason for being late, such as a medical appointment, then the new symbol should be inserted showing the reason for late arrival and the absence should then be classed as authorised. Reasons such as "slept in" are not acceptable and the absence will remain as unauthorised lateness.

Authorised absence

The High Court has confirmed that **schools**, not parents, authorise absence from school. The final decision lies with the Headteacher.

- Essentially, authorised absences are all those absences which are not attributed to truancy.

Unauthorised absence

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act gives powers to Local Authorities and other designated bodies to **issue penalty notices** to parents or carers for their children's non-attendance at school. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution; receiving a notice means that you have to pay a fixed amount of money (fine) for your child's non-attendance at school.

- An absence is unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is given.
- If no explanation is given, the absence will be coded as "N" on the system pending a reason.

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- In accordance with our procedures, the school will have rung the parent/carer on the first day of absence if notification has not been received.
- If no explanation is given after 2 weeks, a computerised letter is sent to parents as a reminder, requesting a reason for the absence.
- A final code for either a valid reason, i.e. 'M' for a medical appointment or 'O' for unauthorised should be confirmed as soon as possible but in any event not later than 2 weeks after the start of the term following the absence.
- If a child has accrued **7 days or more** of unauthorised absence in a maximum of a 12 school week rolling period, parents could receive a warning requiring them to ensure no further unauthorised absence occurs in a 15 school day monitoring period; otherwise a fine could be issued. The warning period **DOES NOT** apply to notices issued due to holidays in term time taken without permission.
- What constitutes 'regular' attendance has not been defined in law but current government policy and guidelines on what is deemed to be absence that is persistent from September 2015 is **14** unauthorised sessions in a maximum 12 week period (**7 days**) = **below 90%** attendance.

Leave of absence in term time

The law states that Headteacher's should not grant any leave of absence in term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. **If parents take a holiday and this absence amounts to 7 days or more, parents will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Team who will pursue fining parents.**

Please note that both parents of each child taken out of school may receive a fine so, if there are 3 children in a family, that amounts to 6x fines.

- All requests for leave of absence must be made in advance of the leave of absence and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant the leave.
- Leave of absence requests for reasons other than holiday will be looked at on an individual basis and if granted will be coded 'C' - 'other authorised circumstances'. If not approved but the child is still taken out of school, the absence will be classed as unauthorised.
- The regulations DO NOT allow Headteacher's to give retrospective approval.
- All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing by the Headteacher, Lisa Jackson.
- **During 2016 – 2017, one family was referred to the Enforcement Team for taking their child out of school for a term time holiday.**

Completing registers

- Staff must retain all letters from parents in the Attendance File.
- Any telephone messages will be 'red flagged' and recorded on computerised system.
- Any messages received verbally should be recorded by the teacher and returned to the Office with the register.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Reports are analysed by the Headteacher and fed back to the Governing Body.
- When attendance falls below the threshold then procedures will be put in place to work with the family to improve attendance.



Key Points of the Policy

- The school will ring the parent/carer on the first day of absence if notification has not been received.
- Reports will be monitored to identify particular families/children who may need support.
- Any child coming in after 9.30 am is not entitled to a mark for that session.
- If there is a reason for being late, such as a medical appointment, then the absence should then be classed as authorised. Reasons such as "slept in" are not acceptable and the absence will remain as unauthorised lateness.
- Remember **schools**, not parents, authorise absence from school. The final decision lies with the Headteacher.
- An absence is unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation is given.
- From September 2015 **14** unauthorised sessions in a maximum 12 week period (**7 days**) = **below 90%** attendance is unacceptable.
- The law states that Headteacher's should not grant any leave of absence in term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. **If parents take a holiday and this absence amounts to 7 days or more, parents will be referred to the Attendance Improvement Team who will pursue fining parents.**
- Leave of absence requests for reasons other than holiday will be looked at on an individual basis. If not approved but the child is still taken out of school, the absence will be classed as unauthorised. All requests for leave of absence will be responded to in writing by the Headteacher, Lisa Jackson.
- Please note that both parents of each child taken out of school may receive a fine so, if there are 3 children in a family, that amounts to 6x fines.
- All requests for leave of absence must be made **in advance** of the leave of absence and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances that warrant the leave.
- When attendance falls below the threshold then procedures will be put in place to work with the family to improve attendance.

Policy revised:

Autumn 2017

Next to be reviewed:

Autumn 2019

Signed: *L Jackson*
Headteacher

Signed: *R Bell*
Chair of Governors



School success starts
with attendance