



## Attendance Policy

### Tow Law Millennium Primary School

#### Document History Log:

Author of document:	Lisa Jackson	Job role:	Head Teacher
Date document create:	25 September 2020		
Document last reviewed:	July 2023	Approval by Governing Body:	11 July 2023

#### Annual Review History:

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review	25 September 2020	Lisa Jackson	<i>Lisa Jackson</i>
2 <sup>nd</sup> Review	14 July 2021	Lisa Jackson	<i>Lisa Jackson</i>
3 <sup>rd</sup> Review	4 October 2022	FGB	<i>Lisa Croft</i>
4 <sup>th</sup> Review	11 July 2023	FGB	

#### Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories
COVID guidance removed	6 June 2022	Policy updated to reflect 'Working together to improve School Attendance' May 2022	1	<i>Lisa Jackson</i>



## Information to parents

The Foundations of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.' I am confident that Tow Law Millennium Primary School provides this. All staff take responsibility for attendance and through training in Sims understand that 'Improving attendance is everyone's business'. Extracts taken from non-statutory guidance DfE May 2022 'Working together to improve school attendance'.

**The national Average for absence in 2021/22 was 7.2%.**

**Our 2021/22 full year attendance was 94% (July 22).**

**Our overall school target for this year is 96%. Currently 9/6/23 attendance is 93.5%**

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
50% Attendance	Half of all days in school missed	Severe Absence

**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.**

## **Tow Law Millennium Primary School- Attendance Policy**

Tow Law Millennium Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. "The foundations of securing a good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn" – Working together to improve school attendance, DfE May 2022. [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073616/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073616/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

At TLMPS we will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted, secure and above all safe.

We believe that all students benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular attendance. Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

At TLMPS, we understand that it is our responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance. The Governing Body recognises the importance of school attendance and promotes this, monitors this and ensures school leaders fulfil all expectations and statutory duties. They ensure high aspirations are maintained for all pupils but that processes and support are adapted to the individual needs of particular pupils such as long-term illnesses, SEND, pupils with SW, FSM. It is a parent's legal duty to ensure their children attend school regularly and on time. As a school we will work with pupils and their families to support parents to meet these legal duties and to ensure children can benefit from attending school regularly.

The school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of pupils to improve their attendance and timekeeping and will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the DfE "Working together to improve school attendance" – May 2022, "School Attendance" – May 2022 and summary table of "responsibilities for school attendance" – May 2022.

This policy is supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, respectful relationships and equal opportunity.

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## 1. Attendance and Attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our students is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to.

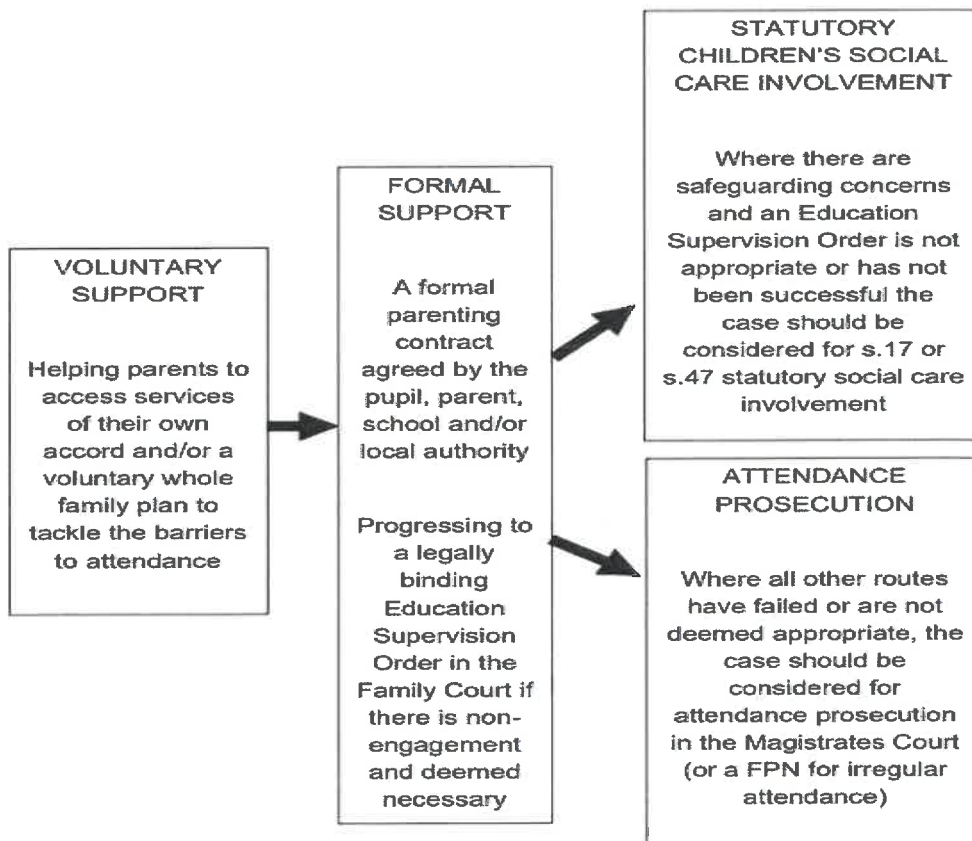


**School success starts  
with attendance**

### We will ensure that:

- All students have an equal right and access to an education in accordance with the national curriculum, or agreed alternative.
- Students will not be deprived of their education opportunities by either their own absence or lateness, or that of other students.
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

## 2. Attendance and Legal Intervention



**Parenting Contracts** - The purpose of parenting contracts and when they may be appropriate.

A parenting contract is a formal written agreement between a parent and either the school or local authority to address irregular attendance at school or alternative provision. A contract is not legally binding but allows a more formal route to secure engagement with support where a voluntary early help plan has not worked or is not deemed appropriate.

A parenting contract is not a punitive tool it is intended to provide support and offer an alternative to prosecution. Parents cannot be compelled to enter a contract, and they cannot be agreed in a parent's



absence. One parenting contract may be arranged with all parents, or in circumstances where it is desirable to have different requirements for each parent then separate parenting contracts for each parent should be arranged.

**Education Supervision Orders** – The purpose of ESOs and when they may be appropriate.

ESOs are made through the Family or High Court, rather than Magistrates Court. They give the local authority a formal role in advising, helping and directing the pupil and parent(s) to ensure the pupil receives an efficient, full-time, suitable education. The order initially lasts for one year, but extensions can be secured within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

**Attendance Prosecution** – The purpose of prosecution and when it may be appropriate.

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

Prosecution in the Magistrates Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. This may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) – Section 444(1) or Level 4 (£2,500) - Section 444(1A) and / or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months.

**Parenting orders**- These are an ancillary order than can be imposed by the Court following conviction for non-attendance alongside a fine and / or community order. Parents' agreement is not required before an order is made. They may be appropriate where the parent has not engaged in support to improve their child's attendance and where compulsion to do so would change parental behaviour. The order requires a parent to comply with the arrangements specified in the order by the Court which can include a requirement for parents to attend counselling or guidance sessions (e.g. parenting education or parenting support classes) where they will receive help and support to enable them to improve their child's attendance for up to 3 months. All parenting orders must specify a 'responsible officer' which will be named on the order. This should be the most appropriate lead practitioner working with the family.

**Fixed Penalty Notices** The purpose of fixed penalty notices and when they may be appropriate. Fixed penalty notices are served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. Fixed penalty notices can be used by all schools (with the exception of independent schools) where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence or offences, which should usually be the parent or parents with day to day responsibility for the pupil's attendance. Fixed penalty notices may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

**For more details on attendance and legal intervention please follow the link:**  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/1073616/Working\\_together\\_to\\_improve\\_school\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073616/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf)

### **3. Attendance Procedures**

#### **a) On the first day off**

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to phone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home, then school will phone home to inform parents that the child is not in school and enquire about a reason why.

Doctors and dentists' appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they need to.

#### **b) Periods of extended absence**

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days then parents are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received then the school will contact home to verify the absence.

If the school receives no reason for any absence then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

#### **c) Help & Support:**

If you need help with attendance, it is important that you contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker we know what the problem is, the quicker that we can work together to solve it, and put a plan together which will meet your child's needs and ensure your child can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed we can also involve other services to make sure that your child and your family gets the right support, at the right time from the right people.

#### **d) Communication:**

We are asking all parents to please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure your contact and emergency contact details are up to date.

It is vital that school can contact parents if their child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

The school will analyse absence across the school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to frequent hospital appointments and/or long term medical needs). If we have concerns regarding your child's attendance, then we may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

As a parent you may identify concerns about school attendance early on if you have seen a change in your child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, please share your concerns with us and we can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

The school will work with you to discuss ways that we can offer support in finding a way to improve attendance.

#### **e) Enforcement Action:**

If, following the school's attempts to intervene, there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or you have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation, the school are required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. If your child misses school a lot because of illness, or if school do not know of any serious health issue that would mean your child could miss school a lot, the school may ask to you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

At Tow Law Millennium Primary School we are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

**f) Punctuality:**

Registration time is at **8.55am** and **1.00pm** for pupils. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 9.30am (or up to 30 minutes after their scheduled staggered start time) then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving after that will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

**If your child is late for school:**

All children / parents bringing children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance data base (SIMs).

**1. If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;**

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with the Head will be offered to discuss ways that the school can offer support in finding a way improve this. Currently these appointments will be over the telephone.

**2. If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason –**

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with the Head Teacher for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

**3. If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality;**

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

**g) Leave of Absence in Term Time**

Head teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. The school will consider each request of absence individually; taking into account the circumstances, such as; the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.



An application for leave of absence must be made well in advance via a form which is available from the school office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

**Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations, SAT's or internal assessments.**

## **5. Promoting good attendance and punctuality**



Our current attendance target is 96%. In order to promote attendance and punctuality, the school will give out a weekly reward for the class with the best attendance. Further to this, any children who achieve 96%+ attendance over each term will receive a certificate and an invitation to an end of year party hosted by the winning class teacher. Attendance percentages will be shared with parents through the school newsletter, at termly parents' meetings and also annual reports to parents will contain a record of individual pupils' attendance.

## **6. Children Missing from Education:**

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that you keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter** and all necessary steps will be taken to ensure the safety of the child/ren.

## **7. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **Governing Body:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body at Tow Law Millennium Primary School will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Ensure regular meetings of the Governing Body/ behaviour and attendance sub-committee take place and they will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance. The governor's meetings will

review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year.

- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off site.

#### **Senior Management Team:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the senior management team will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of full policy.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and keep up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- Liaise with the Head Teacher who takes responsibility for overseeing and monitoring attendance provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

#### **Teachers and support staff:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, the teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with students and their parents.
- Ensure the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- Ensure the Senior Management Team and Head Teacher are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to students that may impact on their attendance.
- Ensure compliance with regulation and guidance on attendance.
- Work professionally with parents, carers, students and relevant agencies to secure improvements in attendance via appropriate support or enforcement measures.
- Ensure understanding and are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken each session (a.m. & p.m.)

#### **Parents / Carers:**

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents / carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school.

- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences.
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

### The Law

You need to make sure your child attends school regularly and on time. You will be **breaking the law** if you do not do this and there are no good reasons for your child missing school.

### Help and Support

If you need help with attendance you must **talk to the school about it as soon as possible**.

Sometimes, school may need to involve other services to help. The School and Local Authority **want to help you if you have a problem**. If attendance does not get better or you do not accept help and support offered, the Council may have to begin enforcement action.

# Attendance Policy

Essential information for parents

2023/2024



Please ask us if you would like this document summarised in another language or format.

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### **Attending school is very important**

Your child must attend school every day. Children who are regularly absent from school miss out on opportunities which can affect their life-long chances. If you have any concerns about your child's attendance contact school, so we can work together to improve the situation.

#### **Lateness**

School starts at 8.55 a.m.

Your child will receive a late mark if they arrive after this time. The register closes at 9.30 a.m. If your child arrives after this time, they will receive an unauthorised absence mark.

### **If Your Child Is Absent You Must:**

- Contact school on each day of absence and provide reasons for absence.
- Keep school informed on a regular basis if your child is absent for a long period.
- Follow Coronavirus procedures – to ensure students, staff and our school community can stay safe.

### **Failure to do these things may result in your child's absences being unauthorised**

Unauthorised absences can be recorded on the register when there is no valid reason given for absences, a holiday not approved by the school, lateness after the register closes or illness without medical evidence.



### **Medical Appointments**

If it is possible, any appointment should be made out of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If your child is

well enough to go back to school following the appointment they should do so.

#### **Holidays / Leave of**

##### **Absence**

Please request an **application form** from school. Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel. Unauthorised leave may result in a Fixed Penalty Notice (fine) or court prosecution.

#### **Medical Evidence**

If you are asked for medical evidence you will need to provide copies of G.P appointment cards or letters, medication details or other relevant information.

### **Persistent Absence**

If your child's attendance falls to 90% or below, this is considered, by Government to be persistent absence.

Where attendance falls below 90% and there are unauthorised absences, this may result in a referral to the Local Authority for enforcement Action



**Please remember to contact us if your address or contact or emergency contact details change!**







