TEAM
Multi-Academy Trust

Attendance Policy

This Procedure was adopted by the TEAM Multi-Academy Trust
Board of Trustees on

Date: June 2019

Signed (on behalf of the Board of Trustees)

Signed (Trust Chief Executive Officer (CEO))

Reviewed Date: Sept 2022

Review date: Autumn 2024

1. Aims

The Trust takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils, and all staff members to ensure that children are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances, which may lead or be leading to poor attendance, are given the right attention and appropriate support.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](#) 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 trust 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.

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

3. Recording attendance

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all trusts (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. 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 original entry

The amended entry

The reason for the amendment

The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

TEAM Multi-Academy Trust
Beaford Academy

Registration begins at 9 a.m. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked at late. **The registration period ends at 9.20 a.m.** *A register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session.* ***Registration opens at 1.30 p.m. and closes at 1.40 p.m***

Brayford & Umberleigh Academies

Registration begins at 9 a.m. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked at late. The registration period ends at 9.20 a.m. *A register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session. Registration opens at 1.10 p.m. and closes at 1.20 p.m.*

High Bickington C of E Academy

Registration begins at 9 a.m. (FSU 9.15 a.m.) Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked at late. The registration period ends at 9.20 am. (FSU 9.30 a.m.) *A register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session. Registration opens at 1.30 pm and closes at 1.40 p.m. (FSU 1:15 p.m. closing at 1.30 p.m.)*

Pilton Bluecoat C of E Academy

Registration begins at 8.45 am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked at late. The registration period ends at 9.00 am. *A register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session. Registration opens at 1.25 pm and closes at 1.30 p.m.*

Witheridge C of E Academy

Registration begins at 9 am. Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked at late. The registration period ends at 9.20 am. *A register is also taken at the start of the afternoon session. Registration opens at 1.30 pm and closes at 1.40 p.m.*

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify their child's school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 9:20am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the trust has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the trust may ask parents 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 trust is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, we encourage parents 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.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the trust can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action

3.5 Following up absence

The trust will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

The Trust operate a first day calling procedure for all absent pupils where an explanation for the absence has not been provided by a parent / carer. Where a response cannot be obtained from the responsible adult the absence will be escalated by either a home visit, report to the Educational Welfare Officer or police via the non-emergency telephone line: 101.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance data will be reported to parents on their child's half termly and end of year reports.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Heads of School may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' such as for a family bereavement.

The trust considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head of School's discretion.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3

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 trust will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the trust but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of school term time.

The school is unable to authorise any holiday during the SATs testing period in May, for Y2 or Y6, or the phonics screening test week in June for Y1 and some Y2 pupils under any circumstances. Dates for these testing periods are available at the beginning of each academic year from the school office.

Requests for absence may be considered by the Head of School where a child's attendance is at 90% or above. Where attendance is below 90%, absences cannot be authorised.

Retrospectively parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the Head of School in advance of the leave being taken and by using the required form.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice.

4.2 Legal sanctions

Trusts can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Trust CEO, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

A 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 trust hours without a justifiable reason

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

5. Children in Care

At TEAM Multi-academy Trust Children in Care are given the same opportunities as all children and their attendance is monitored in line with Trust Policy and the Devon Virtual School for Children in Care Attendance Policy (appendix 2)

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At the end of the academic year, individual certificates are issued for 100% attendance, but this is kept 'low key' as there is a recognition that some pupils may be absent due to circumstances beyond their control – eg family bereavement.

However, there are occasions where attendance is celebrated and rewarded with a small gift if attendance has been 100% over the child's time in school.

7. Attendance monitoring

The Head of School monitors pupil absence on a half termly basis, alongside the EWO

Parents are expected to call their child's school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above **2** days we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. At this point, the EWO becomes involved and a letter is sent to parents informing them that attendance has dropped below 90%.

TEAM Multi-Academy Trust

Pupil-level absence data is collected in October and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's trust absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is stored on SIMS and can be readily accessed by the admin team when necessary.

8. Roles and responsibilities

8.1 The Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole trust on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Trust CEO to account for the implementation of this policy.

8.2 The Trust CEO

The Trust CEO is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the trust, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees.

The Trust CEO also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Trust CEO is also the designated senior leader 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 Ian Thomas and can be contacted via email : ceo@team-mat.org.uk

8.3 The Head of School

The Head of School:

Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level

Reports concerns about attendance to the Trust CEO

Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence

Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Advises the Trust CEO when to issue fixed-penalty notices

8.4 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.

8.5 Administration staff

Administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the trust's system.

9. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed bi-annually by the Local Governing Bodies. Following every review, the policy will be shared with the Board of Trustees.

10. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our:

Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

Devon Virtual School for Children in Care attendance Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on trust 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 trust
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 trust
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the trust
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
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	Trust has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the trust
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the trust
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	Trust is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at trust after the register closed

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

Appendix 2 : Children in Care

Devon Virtual School

Devon County Council

Devon Virtual School for Children in Care
Attendance Policy

Parents and Carers of children of compulsory school age (aged between 5 and 15 years at the start of the academic year) are, by law, required to ensure that their children receive a suitable education through regular attendance at school or otherwise. Official research by the DfE shows, in general, the higher the percentage of sessions missed across the Key Stage, the lower the likely level of attainment at the end of Key Stage 2.

In particular, pupils with no absence are 1.6 times more likely to achieve Age Related Expectations or above, and 4.7 times more likely to achieve above Age Related Expectations than pupils that missed 15-20% of all sessions.

At Key Stage 4, 78.7% of pupils with full attendance achieved the equivalent of 5+ GCSEs grades 4-9 including Maths and English. For pupils with attendance between 95% and 99.9% this dropped to 69.1% and by the time a pupil became a persistent absentee (ie. attendance of 90% or below) the rate of pupils still achieving 5+ GCSEs at the top grades decreases to just 35.6%.

Attendance

As a general rule, Children in Care should be given the same opportunities as all children. They will attend school from the beginning of their entitlement in Reception to the end of the summer term in Year 11. Their school place will be based on their need and, in the majority of cases, this will be a mainstream school unless they have an Education, Health & Care Plan (EHCP) which names specialist provision.

Children are expected to attend school and should only be absent:

➢ If they are ill. For absence up to 7 days including Saturday and Sunday, the Carer should contact the school on the first day by phone and confirm in writing when they return to school. Longer absences should include a letter from a GP;

➢ Circumstances where absence can be authorized by the school such as:
  • Religious observance
  • Interviews
  • Study Leave
  • Approved Educational activities
  • Family bereavement
  • Family contact that cannot be arranged outside the school day
  • Medical appointments
  • CAMHS appointments
  • CiC Review.

The Virtual School will not support holidays in school time for Children in Care unless there are clearly exceptional circumstances, which are outlined by the Social Worker to the Area Learning Advocate, and which show that

the benefits outweigh the disadvantages. This will never be agreed where attendance is below 98% for the school year in question.

Should the **leave of absence** be refused and Carers still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent, per child. This fine will increase to £120 if not paid within 28 days. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 21 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings.

Where no school place has been identified for the child the Virtual School will arrange temporary education. This may be alternative provision, online learning or tutoring.

Where the child has an EHCP, the 0-25 SEN Team is responsible for ensuring that an appropriate school place is found without delay.

Children in care are expected to attend school on time, and where required, will need to be brought and collected by Carers or another authorised adult to ensure that this happens.

Non-attendance that has not been authorised will be treated as a serious matter by all agencies concerned. Any actions to support children's attendance will be taken in their best interests and will be included in their Personal Education Plan. Early intervention must be taken as soon as attendance falls below 98% or there is a concern.

Schools will contact Carers on the first day of absence to ask for a reason and will pass this information to the Virtual School lAdministrator(kate.clarke@devon.gov.uk) when attendance falls below 98%.

Actions taken to improve attendance will be agreed by the Area Learning Advocate, school, Social Worker and Carers. Where there are entrenched problems of non- attendance and there is no resolution, there will need to be an escalation to senior managers of agencies involved to consider the best course of action. Children and young people must be involved in the discussions and their views taken into account.

Roles and Responsibilities

Children & Young People:

➢ Are expected to attend school regularly and on time, except where absence has been authorised. They are expected to register morning and afternoon and attend all lessons.

Carers:

➢ Are responsible for Children in Care receiving education;

➢ Are expected to be a 'good parent' and promote the child's education and attendance;

➢ Are expected to be positive about the value of education and have high expectations for Children in Care;

➢ Are responsible for ensuring that children in their care attend school with all

appropriate equipment, lunch and uniform. Carers support the children's learning which includes the travel to and from school;

➢ Are expected to contact the school, Social Worker and Area Learning Advocate if there are any attendance problems and to work with the school and other professionals to resolve them;

➢ Are expected to arrange any medical and other appointments outside school hours wherever possible and to take family holidays outside of school term time;

➢ Are expected to listen to the child to find out why they are not attending (for example bullying,

problems with learning);

➢ Are expected to raise any concerns at the Personal Education Plan (PEP) meeting and CiC review;

➢ Are expected to refuse permission for a child not to attend school unless there are good reasons such as illness.

Social Workers:

➢ Have primary responsibility for ensuring the child has an up-to-date care plan including the education and health arrangements.

➢ Attend Personal Education Plan meetings.

➢ Wherever possible, ensure that placement moves do not impact on school stability. Inform the Virtual School and where necessary the 0-25 SEN team of any placement instability.

➢ Listen to the child to find out why they are not attending.

➢ Help carers to support the child's education.

➢ Work closely with the Area Learning Advocate to better understand the issues affecting the education of children in care.

Education Welfare Officers:

➢ Work in partnership with the Virtual School, Carers, Social Worker and schools in matters related to school attendance;

➢ Support work to raise educational attainment and progress for Children in Care through improved attendance;

➢ Attend PEP Review meetings where there are issues of poor attendance;

➢ Monitor trends in relation to school attendance for Children in Care and report to the Virtual School.

Schools:

➢ Ensure that there is a system of first day calling for Children in Care so that Carers are telephoned when the child fails to attend;

➢ Avoid the use of exclusion for a Child in Care. Work with the Virtual School to ensure early intervention;

➢ Listen to Children in Care to find out why attendance is a problem and to find out the reasons;

➢ Inform the Virtual School Administrator as soon as attendance becomes a problem (kate.clarke@devon.gov.uk).

Virtual School:

➢ Will arrange a 'Planning for Success' meeting when a Child in Care starts at a school;

➢ Complete the Relational Support Plan with the young person and other professionals;

➢ Work with children, schools, Carers and Social Workers to improve attendance;

➢ Attend PEP meetings and quality assure the process ensuring that attendance has a high profile;

➢ Monitor attendance and take action with other agencies where necessary.