



**Teignmouth**  
Primary School

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Adopted by the Governors of  
Teignmouth Primary School  
on 19 June 2024**

**To be reviewed and updated by:  
Date September 2024**

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Roles and Responsibilities

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## 1.0 Aim and Scope of Policy

We want your child to thrive at Teignmouth Primary School. We strive to build strong and enduring relationships because we believe this is the foundation pupils need to fully engage in our community, to feel a sense of belonging and succeed in both their education and in making the most of their future life opportunities. Every child has a legal right to access education, and EVERYONE is responsible for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality. Teignmouth Primary School is committed to providing the highest quality of education to our pupils.

The aim of this Attendance Policy is to enable Teignmouth Primary School to provide a consistent practice that actively encourages and supports the regular attendance of all pupils (wherever possible).

Teignmouth Primary School takes a whole-school approach to encouraging, supporting and maintaining the highest possible levels of attendance. We recognise that some barriers to education arise through the school environment and that others stem from the circumstances of families and the community. We will endeavour to develop a non-judgemental and supportive approach, working in partnership with families and other agencies (and organisations) to try to ensure that any problems or barriers to pupil attendance are identified early and that the right attention and support can be explored at the earliest opportunity.

This policy is supported by our policies on **Safeguarding, SEND, Anti-Bullying, Inclusion and Behaviour**.

Regular attendance is important for your child because:

- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and educationally.
- Regular attenders find school routines, schoolwork, and friendships easier to manage.
- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying and valuable.
- Regular attenders settle into school more easily.
- Regular attenders enjoy improved social, educational, and work opportunities later in life.

Research (DfE) supports common sense and reinforces that there is a strong link between regular attendance and good attainment. Recent research (UCL and Anna Freud, 2023) also highlights that regular absence (Persistent and Severe absence in particular) can make a pupil twice as likely to struggle with their wellbeing.

Regular attendance and good collaborative working between the family and school can help prevent unhelpful avoidance habits becoming entrenched and difficult to change later on. With this in mind, and in support of the new DfE Guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance

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(February 2024), Teignmouth Primary School will be working hard to improve early identification and to share attendance concerns with our families at the earliest opportunity so that together we can explore timely and early intervention.

### 1.1 Scope of Policy

This policy applies to all school leaders, staff, parents, and pupils.

- 1.1A For the purposes of this policy, references to ‘teachers’ include all paid staff responsible for the supervision of pupils.
- 1.1B For the purposes of this policy, references to ‘pupils’ include all learners in our school.
- 1.1C For the purposes of this policy, references to ‘school’ refers to all education settings, regardless of type.
- 1.1D For the purposes of this policy and the procedures, we refer to Section 576 of the Education Act which defines the ‘parent’ of a pupil or young person as:
- Both of their natural parents, whether they are married or not.
  - Any person who, although they are not the natural parent, has parental responsibility for the pupil or young person, as defined in the Children Act (1989).
  - Any person who, although not the natural parent, has the care of the pupil or person i.e., a person with whom the pupil lives, irrespective of their relationship to the pupil.

## 2.0 The Law requires 'regular' attendance. What is 'regular' attendance?

Attending 'regularly' has been defined by the Supreme Court (*Isle of Wight Council v Platt* [2017] UKSC 28) as attending in accordance with the rules of the school.

**This means that your child is expected to attend on all of the days that the school is open to them.**

TPS is dedicated to complying with the legal requirements of *The Education Act (1996)*.

## 2.1 The Attendance Legal framework

### *The Education Act (1996)*

#### **Section 7 - Duty to ensure Children receive a suitable education**

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable -

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

This means that if your child is registered at a school, then as parents/carers, you have a legal duty to ensure that your child attends punctually every day that the school is open to them (unless the absence is recognised as unavoidable).

## 3.0 Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

In the first instance, absences will be treated as authorised (where appropriate). There may be some instances where the school will authorise an absence under **exceptional circumstances**, such as for a family bereavement. An authorised absence is one that the school considers the circumstances to be avoidable and exceptional in nature. Only a Head Teacher can authorise an absence.

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If a child is not attending 'regularly' then the school will explore the reasons and barriers to attendance with the family further. If at this stage the school feels that the reasons given are avoidable (or are not a genuine reflection of the circumstances for the absence) then the school will make a decision as to whether it is appropriate (or not) to authorise the absence.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents/carers should inform the Attendance Team at the ***earliest opportunity on the morning of each day's absence (and certainly before 09:00)*** and let them know the reasons for the absence and the date that you expect the child to return to school. This call/email is a safeguarding requirement to protect your child. If this does not happen, the absence will be followed up with a call from school, asking why your child has not attended.

If prior school permission has been granted and a pupil has been authorised to leave the school grounds within the school day, for Safeguarding reasons the pupil must sign out with Student Services.

### **3.1 Illness**

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term. As previously mentioned, parents/carers will need to contact the school at the earliest opportunity on the morning of each day of absence.

In order to make informed decisions about their child's fitness to attend school, parents/carers are encouraged to refer to the NHS guidance 'is my child too ill for school?'

For prolonged absence due to illness, it is suggested that parents/carers provide the school with evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription. Providing this evidence will help the Head Teacher, or delegated member of the Senior Leadership Team to make an informed decision as to whether it is appropriate to authorise the absence or not. It can also support the school in exploring options for further support. If the reason given for the absence or the evidence provided is not considered genuine or appropriate, then the Head Teacher will not authorise the absence.

### **3.2 Medical or dental appointments**

Parents should make every effort to ensure that these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible. DfE Guidance advises that schools can only authorise such an absence if the absence was agreed in advance and the time out of school is the minimum amount of term necessary.

To help the Head Teacher decide if it is appropriate to authorise the absence, it is recommended that an appointment card (or similar) is passed to the school.

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### 3.4 Exclusions and suspensions

Absences for exclusions and suspensions will be authorised.

### 3.5 Requesting Term Time Absence

#### ***The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024***

##### **Regulation 11 - Leave of absence**

11. (1) Leave of absence from a school maintained by a local authority or a special school not maintained by a local authority may only be given by a person who the school's proprietor has authorised to do so (an "authorised person").

11. (11) This paragraph applies if -

- (a) an appropriate person has asked for the leave in advance; and
- (b) the authorised person thinks that leave should be given because of the exceptional circumstances of the request.

11. (12) In this regulation, in relation to leave of absence for a pupil, "appropriate person" means—

- (a) a parent who the pupil normally lives with; and
- (b) if the pupil will be over compulsory school age when the absence begins, the pupil.

***This means that for a request to be authorised, it must evidence that the request meets the criteria of Exceptional Circumstances. The Law does not grant parents/carers a right to take their children out of school during term time. The Law only allows Head Teachers, or delegated staff, to authorise the request when they have evidence of the Exceptional Circumstance. The Government is very clear that a family holiday is NOT an Exceptional Circumstance.***

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This School has adopted the [Local Authority Code of Conduct \(March 2023\)](#) in respect of leave of absence in term time. All parents who wish to take their child out of school for any reason (other than medical reasons) should complete a leave of absence request form (S2). This can be obtained from the school Office or the Website.

If the S2 request is refused and the parents/carers proceed with the leave of absence, the school will have no choice but to refer the absence to the Local Authority. The Local Authority could then (in line with the Local Authority Code of Conduct) issue a Penalty Notice to both parents/carers for each child who is absent. Failing to pay a Penalty Notice can lead to a Court Summons. Retrospective applications will not be considered. These periods of absence will be marked as unauthorised.

If an S2 request has not been completed by parents/carers and the school have been given a reason for an absence that it feels is not genuine (example – the school was advised that the absence was down to illness when a family holiday is suspected) then the Head Teacher will unauthorise the absence and escalate (**see section 4.2**).

### **3.6 Religious observance**

Teignmouth Primary School recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends. Absence will be authorised when a pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to. According to the DfE Guidance, Working Together to improve school attendance (February 2024), the general rule is ‘a day exclusively set apart for religious observance’ is a day when the pupil’s parents would be expected by the religious body to which they belong to stay away from their employment in order to mark the occasion.

If there is doubt, schools are expected to seek advice from the parent’s religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

### **3.7 Parent/carer travelling for occupational purposes**

In line with DfE Guidance, Working Together to improve school attendance (February 2024) where a pupil is a mobile child and their parent(s) is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them, the school can choose to authorise the absence.



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A mobile child is a child of compulsory school age who has no fixed abode and whose parent(s) is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature as to require them to travel from place to place. When their parent(s) is travelling for occupational purposes in England, it is expected that the pupil should attend a school where their parent(s) is travelling and be dual registered at that school and their main school. If a pupil's attendance was to fall below an acceptable level consideration may be given to attendance enforcement.

### **3.8 The School Day and Late arrival**

#### **Morning Registration starts at 8:45**

Pupils who arrive after this time but within the registration period will be marked as late (L Code).

Reminder: The school gates will close at 9.00am and late arriving pupils will need to be signed in through the office.

#### **Morning registration ends at 9:00am**

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. In line with DfE guidance, pupils arriving after the register closes will be marked as excessively late and the absence will be recorded as unauthorised (U Code) for the whole of the session. Persistent excessive lateness may result in a referral to the Local Authority for attendance enforcement.

#### **The school day ends at 3:15pm**

### **4.0 School Action: following up absences**

Class registers are taken electronically. Where there are unexplained absences, the school will contact the parents or carers (or on occasions emergency contacts) to establish the reason. If after a reasonable time, no contact with the school is made or where it is not possible to establish the reason, the absence will be unauthorised.

If the school has grounds to believe that the reasons for an absence are not genuine, then the Head Teacher may choose to unauthorise the absence.

Where there has been no contact and where there is concern over the wellbeing of the pupil, the school may make a welfare visit to the home (or where necessary request a welfare visit from the Social Care or the Police).

#### **4.1 Attendance Data and Monitoring.**

We monitor attendance and punctuality throughout the year. We recognise that certain groups of pupils may be more at risk of poor attendance and will strive to provide support and assistance wherever possible. Pupil-level absence data is collected regularly and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. We compare our attendance data to the national average.

Specific measures are taken to monitor attendance. These processes are embedded and regularly checked to ensure the effective safeguarding of all pupils through specific tailored interventions. Data on attendance is collected and regularly analysed. Key analysis is made of:

1. Patterns of absence
2. Patterns of lateness
3. Patterns of medical appointments
4. Correct and consistent use of absence codes
5. Trends in reasons for absence.
6. Trends with in particular groups of pupils. Examples include pupils with;
  - Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND).
  - Pupil Premium
  - Social Care involvement
  - English as an Additional Language
  - and any others, as considered appropriate.

Attendance data informs action planning and supports the identification of key priorities in our school development plan and future revisions of this policy. The attendance data will be reported

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to the Headteacher / Principal and all other relevant staff, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. Data will also be used by the school to monitor the impact of any interventions put in place to modify them and inform future strategies.

#### **4.2 School Action: Managing pupil absence and concerns**

The school has in place rigorous systems for monitoring pupil safety and absence. These systems are designed to pick up on early signs or patterns of absence. If the school considers your child's absence levels to be of concern, then the following actions may be taken by the school.

- To support Early Identification, Teignmouth Primary School will contact parents/carers by phone, text, email or letter to bring attendance concerns to the attention of parents/carers at the earliest opportunity.
- To support raising attendance awareness (and in line with DfE Guidance), families will receive an email every half term advising them of their child's attendance and punctuality data.
- Parents/carers may be invited into the school to meet with the Attendance Team to discuss concerns, explore barriers to attendance and to agree an action plan to resolve the situation.
- Parents/carers may be encouraged to sign up to a Parenting Agreement to commit to making the changes necessary to bring about the regular attendance of their child.
- School may make referrals to Early Help or other agencies that might be able to provide support.
- Where there are Safeguarding concerns, ALL schools have a legal requirement to share information with their Local Authority Safeguarding and Social Care Team.
- School may make a Home Visit to perform a Welfare Check to the family.

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- Where the attendance drops below 90% (the Government Persistent Absence threshold), the school is expected to inform the Local Authority.
  - Where there are UNAUTHORISED absences, the school is expected to inform the Local Authority.
  - Where the school has exhausted its processes for supporting attendance and there has not been satisfactory improvement, the school will have no choice but to refer the pupil to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Team.
  - Where the attendance drops below 50% (the DfE Severe Absence threshold), the school is expected to consider whether there is Educational Neglect and a referral to the Local Authority Social Care Team is appropriate.

#### **4.3 Who to contact with attendance concerns**

The first port of call for parents/carers when looking to discuss pupil absence is to phone the school office on 01626 772320.

Should this prove unsuccessful then matters can be escalated to your child's class teacher or a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

#### **4.4 Local Authority Action: Potential Legal Penalties for Absence**

Unauthorised Absences could result in the referral to the Local Authority for attendance enforcement. These could include a Notice to Improve, Attendance Contract, Penalty Notice, an Education Supervision Order (ESO) or a summons from the Magistrates Court.

**Penalty Notice.** Penalty Notices can only be issued in line with the **Local Authority Code of Conduct (March 2023)**. If a Penalty Notice is issued, each Penalty Notice will be for £80 and should be paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice increases to £160 if paid from day 21 through to day 28. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid after 28 days a Magistrates summons will be issued.

**Education Supervision Order.** This is where the Local Authority applies to the Family Court for a Court Order to support and manage improved regular attendance.

**Magistrates Summons.** For a first offence the maximum fine issued by the Court could be £1000 per parent/carer. If the matter returns to the Magistrates Court on a subsequent occasion the fines can extend to a maximum of £2500 per parent/carer and/or a custodial sentence of up to 3 Month.



### Amendment Record

VERSION	DATE	AMENDED BY	NATURE OF CHANGE	DATE OF NEXT REVIEW
1	June 2024	Annabelle Thomas and Luke Marchant	Policy version 1	September 2024

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## **Appendix 1. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **School Governing body**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and pupils to implement the policy effectively
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, pupils, and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year
- take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for pupils who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data, including for vulnerable groups, and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future
- ensure that data is used within the school to measure the impact of strategies used to improve attendance.

## School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness.
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior leader to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- ensure that families are referred to appropriate support and Early Help
- document all specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings
- ensure that the local authority is informed in a timely manner if pupils struggle to regularly attend or accrue more than 10 unauthorised absences.

## Teachers and support staff

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

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken in line with legal expectations
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.



## Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- 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
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 3.0**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, mobile devices etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher (**see section 3.5**)

## Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through school communications, staff, and their school timetable
- speak to their teacher or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 3.8**). This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation and to generally keep pupils safe.