



Pear Tree Community Junior School

Attendance Policy

(October 2017)

Mission Statement

Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At Pear Tree Community Junior School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.

Our school attendance target 2017-18 is 96%.

Legal Responsibility

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments; as long as evidence is provided
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis);

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).



Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Punctuality

Once the gate is closed pupils must enter school via the main entrance to school and speak to the office. School staff will operate a "late gate". Any pupil who comes into school late will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school late, before the session has closed will receive a late mark and a comment entered. If they don't return before the end of the session the absence will be recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will be advised of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.



It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality. Transform Trust, in conjunction with the Pear Tree Junior's Headteacher, set attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance figures.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where School accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'. Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence will be asked to make an appointment to see the Learning Mentor or Attendance Officer to explain the circumstances. Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation legal action may be taken.

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation.

Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60.

Absence for religious reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, this will be marked as 'R' in the register.



Attendance incentives

Good attendance is rewarded in a variety of ways:

Each half term the children that have attended school 100% will be awarded a certificate and a piece stationery. Each child who has 100% attendance for the term will be presented a certificate and a book. If a child has 100% for the whole year they will be placed in the raffle draw to win a larger prize (kindly donated by Aquinas)

In Recognition Assembly, the weekly class attendance percentages are announced and then displayed in the entrance hall. There are class trophies for the top two classes each week (Year 3&4 and Year 5&6). Each class can earn rewards through the space race and earn rewards for the whole class. The better the attendance the more space they move.

Monitoring Attendance

All pupils' attendance will be monitored regularly and at least half termly (see Appendices 1 and 2). The Trust attendance monitoring form will be completed and submitted to the Trust representative i.e. Tom Buckmaster by the first Friday following any holiday and the contents discussed with the Headteacher the following week. Actions to improve the attendance of pupils whose attendance is of concern must be planned and recorded. Letters that may be useful to send to parents are available in the Attendance Toolkit.

The principles of this policy will also be applied to all nursery and foundation pupils.

Reviewed October 2017



Appendix 1

Transform Trust

Attendance – Expectations

Transform Trust schools will:

- Achieve 96+% total school attendance, apart for those children with chronic health issues as identified by a specialist (0.6% unauthorised and 3.4% authorised) Schools over 96% to agree a specific target
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and valued by the whole school community
- Work in partnership so that all children realise their potential unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Implement the Transform procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing attendance and persistent lateness
- Implement the Transform protocols for following up on non- attendance
- Report half termly, termly and annual attendance data
- Have a Trust appointed Attendance Officer if whole school annual return is below 95%

Responsibilities:

All members of school staff have a responsibility for attendance. The following includes a more specific list of responsibilities, which role specific (attendance) individuals have:

Class Teacher:

- Maintain a daily register as per the law
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and / or unusual explanations for attendance offered.
- Pass on all relevant information shared by parents / carers ensuring logged according to policy
- Report on attendance at half termly Pupil Progress meetings.
- Provide background information for referrals
- Emphasise with the children the importance of good attendance
- To role model good attendance and punctuality
- Follow up absences and lates with immediate requests for explanation where none is recorded
- Discuss attendance at parent's evenings / consultations

Headteacher:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Responsible for ensuring data is submitted on time (Friday after any holiday)
- Observance of trends in authorised / unauthorised absence
- Contact families where concerns are raised, meeting as appropriate



- Monitoring individual children where concern is raised
- Liaising with other professionals
- Making referral to EWO (final sign off)
- Process any applications for any holiday / special leave
- Identify and implement strategies to address poor attendance and celebrate excellent attendance
- Ensures the attendance policy is followed by staff, taking relevant and appropriate action where it is not.
- Ensure the governor responsible for attendance complete a termly monitoring

Attendance Administration Staff:

- Collate and record attendance information using Sims / Integris by completion of daily registers using appropriate codes
- Take and record messages from parents related to absence
- Make first point of contact by phone by 9.30am to parents / carers of absent children, recording as per policy
- Follow-up text by 10.30am for absent children, as per policy
- Record details of children who arrive late or leave the premises
- Send out standard Transform letters regarding attendance at various trigger points as per policy
- Ensure all registers are complete and no missing marks or unexplained absence remain
- To ensure records prior to census are complete so that attendance is accurately reported
- To collate, maintain and update attendance data on relevant information management system
- To provide regular updates to staff on attendance
- Complete a report on attendance of any children below 95% for action by Head / Attendance lead
- Any school below 95% to send weekly report to Attendance Co-ordinator
- Prepare and submit online referral form to EWO regarding families identified for legal action, assisted by AL / AO
- Order and prepare relevant certificates / rewards etc.
- Contact AO (if working) with details of home visits as a result of no reason for absence from parents / carers or if named on the monitoring list.
- Notify the AO of other safeguarding reasons which may be applicable and may result in a home visit

Attendance Lead (Al): *(the person employed directly by the school, who works alongside key staff to promote excellent attendance, reduce levels of absence and works directly with children and families to promote high levels of attendance)*

- Assist in the identification of children / parents who will receive support in improving their attendance
- Work with parents / carers / other organisations in improving children's attendance
- Review attendance data
- Undertake home visits, where appropriate / suitable for role
- Liaise with designated persons for safeguarding
- Keep up-to-date with sims training and all relevant policy / government announcements



- Meet parents on admission or at other events such as assemblies to promote good attendance
- Prepare evidence / case files for EWO to support further action
- Attend half termly meetings where actions / decisions are made regarding attendance / monitoring list
- Complete half termly data (with vulnerable groups) with the assistance of attendance administrative staff

Attendance Officer (AO): *(appointed / employed by Transform Trust and deployed directly to schools)*

Daily:

- Contact individual schools to ascertain caseload i.e. home visits required
- Late gate for each designated school
- Details of all home visits to be recorded as per policy
- Home visits to be considered where no reason for absence has been received
- Arrange meetings with all parents requesting absence from school for their children
- Wear appropriate identification

Weekly:

- Early intervention in the Foundation Unit, visits with incentives and rewards
- Attend an assembly for each designated school
- Prepare evidence / case files for EWO to support further action

Half termly:

- Evaluate the impact of incentives /rewards for attendance
- Attend all attendance meetings as arranged by the attendance improvement co-ordinator
- Attend meetings where actions / decisions are made regarding attendance and prepare parent contracts
- Together with the attendance administration staff, complete the monitoring list for the upcoming term



Appendix 2

Unexplained Absence Guidelines

Throughout any unexplained absences the school may take any appropriate measures to establish the whereabouts of the child. The following steps are to act as a checklist of the minimum level of actions to be taken.

1st Day of Unexplained Absence

- Phone call made and text message sent to parents/carers.
- In addition to this a home visit by the Learning Mentor or Attendance Officer may be requested. Priority factors to consider:
 - Any children for whom there are safeguarding concerns.
 - Any children on the Low Attendance list.
 - Any instance where the absence seems suspect – i.e. it seems possible/likely that the absence is not illness related (e.g. birthdays, possible holiday etc.).
 - Any instance where the absence may have an additional impact on the child, (e.g. child has an exam/ is on a trip in the afternoon etc.).
 - Any child where there is a history of unexplained absences.
- If AO is unavailable it should be considered whether a visit from other school staff may be necessary.

3rd Day of Unexplained Absence

- Ensure that all contact numbers have been tried.
- Ensure that somebody has visited the property (visit card left if no one is present).
- Email sent to all appropriate staff including Headteacher, reporting absence.
- Memo given to Class Teacher asking that they report any relevant information to the office.

7th Day of Unexplained Absence

- Re-check that all contact numbers have been tried.
- A second visit to the property to be made (visit card left if no one is present)
- Email sent to all appropriate staff and Headteacher reporting that child remains absent
- A letter to be sent (copy to be retained), requesting contact from the parents/carers and informing them of imminent referral to Education Welfare and possibility of removing the child(ren) from roll

10th Day of Unexplained Absence

- Senior Management Team to be informed.
- 'Missing Pupil' referral to be submitted to Education Welfare (copy retained). **Ensure this is done much earlier if there are safeguarding concerns (see first day of absence)**



20th Day of Unexplained Absence

- Senior Management Team to determine whether to remove child from roll. If so:
 - letter issued to parents/carers
 - Education Welfare to be informed
 - Admissions to be informed
 - Child to be removed from roll on SIMS

