

# Toner Avenue School



## Attendance Policy

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1 **Toner Avenue School** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. At Toner Avenue we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality.
- 1.2 This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.
- 1.3 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.
- 1.4 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

## 2. A Parent/Carers Responsibility

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child).

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that their child/children attend the school at which they are registered.

Should a parent/carer fail to ensure that his/her child/children attend that school then the parent/carer is guilty of an unlawful offence.

When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised. An appropriate register code is used to indicate this.

School Registers are a legal document.

Should parents/carers of a persistent non – attender (attendance of less than 90%) be prosecuted by the Local Authority under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court.

**Toner Avenue Primary School** expects parents / carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly and promptly;
- collect their children at the designated close of school time and not before except in exceptional circumstances or for a notified medical appointment
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify **Toner Avenue Primary School** on the first day of absence through a phone call to **0191 4202588** or through Contact Us on the school's website [www.toneravenue.uk](http://www.toneravenue.uk)
- ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations, signing reading cards when asked to do so, taking an interest in their children's work and activities;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. **Toner Avenue Primary School** will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

### 3. School's roles and responsibilities

Schools are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily once at the start of the morning session and again at the start of the afternoon session. It is a class teacher's legal responsibility to do this. It is the Headteacher and Attendance Lead's responsibility to make sure this registration is carried out.

The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of attendance registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006

#### 3.1 All staff (teaching and support)

All Staff at **Toner Avenue School** have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

#### 3.2 Attendance Leadership, Management and Monitoring

**The Headteacher** will oversee the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout school.

**An Attendance Lead**, Mr T Scott, has been nominated by the Headteacher from the Senior Leadership Team to direct and co-ordinate Attendance in school and make sure that the Headteacher is informed of all relevant attendance matters.

The Headteacher and Attendance Lead will ensure that, when appropriate and relevant up-to-date attendance data and issues:

- are shared with the Senior Leadership Team,
- made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance)
- are shared with the Governing Body along with attendance data and targets.

This will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

#### 3.3 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

## 4 Governors' responsibilities

Section 175 (2)

The Governing Body set Attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance performance.

The governing body shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school. Our link Governors for attendance are currently Mrs Wendy Stead and Mrs Lisa Cryer

## 5 Registration

5.1 The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session.

This is done electronically through the school's RM Integris Administration Software.

Office staff will complete any late additional registration details after the close of registration using the prescribed codes (shown above).

- i) The electronic register, using RM Integris, will be taken promptly by each class teacher at the beginning of each school session.

In the morning, at **8.55am**

In the afternoon, at **12.30pm** in **Reception** and **KS1** and **1.15pm** in **KS2**.

A registration code/mark will be assigned during the registration period in respect of each child.

- ii) The registers will close for the morning session for **Reception, KS1** and **KS2** after assembly at **9.20am**

The registers will close for the afternoon session at **12.45pm** for **Reception** and **KS1** and **1.30pm** for **KS2**.

Any child arriving late after registration but before the closing of the register will be marked as **late**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **absent**.

- iii) Although Nursery provision is non-statutory, registration is still necessary for children whose parents have enrolled them at Nursery.

Registration for Nursery follows the same procedure as school but reflects the 2.5 day session attendance pattern as follows:

- For Nursery 1, registration occurs at 9.00am at the start of the Nursery day on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday mornings. Registers close at 9.15am

- For Nursery 2 registration takes place at 12.45pm on Wednesday and at 9.00am on Thursdays and Fridays. Registers close at 1.00pm on Wednesday and at 9.15am on Thursdays and Fridays.

## **Registration Codes**

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
<b>/</b>	Present (AM)	Present
<b>\</b>	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>F</b>	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed <u>or</u> days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
<b>H</b>	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Non-compulsory school age absence	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## 5.2 Applying Registration Codes

A registration code/mark will be assigned to each child during the registration period, this can be amended/added to following the close of the registers.

Only school can make an absence authorised.

Parents do not have this authority.

Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Any child who is not present will be marked **unauthorised absence** unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate.

Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable.

Toner Avenue Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at **Toner Avenue Primary School** will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note/phone call explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised.

The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head Teacher. Where a child's attendance is a cause for concern and or a child's attendance has or is reaching an attendance level of below 90% the school may decide that medical evidence is now required for medical absence. If this is not provided the absence may be recorded as unauthorised. A Medical Card may be used to record visits to the GP. Parents will be notified of this decision. At the point of concern about a child's attendance the level of monitoring will increase and a log of absences and their reasons kept. This will be discussed with the School's LA Monitoring of Attendance Officer

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 1 week**, the absence will remain unauthorised.

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the class teacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Head Teacher.

## 5.3 Authorised absence

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:

- *a pupil is to participate in an approved performance, for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,*
- *a student is engaged in off-site educational activities and a daily check can be made on his/her attendance*
- *a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered,*
- *in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see appendix for the school's term-time holiday form);*

- (b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;
- (c) **Parents should, where at all possible, make medical appointments out of school hours.** When this is not possible, evidence of the appointment must be provided showing school the appointment card and or text from a hospital, GP, dentist or optician. Parents are expected to send their child to school prior to their appointment and return their child to school immediately afterwards;
- (d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, e.g. extreme weather conditions;
- (e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- (f) the pupil lives more than two miles (if he/she is under eight) or three miles (if he/she has reached eight) and no suitable transport arrangements have been made by the Local Authority;
- (g) the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;
- (h) in other **exceptional circumstances** (e.g. a family bereavement)

#### 5.4 Unauthorised absence

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised.

Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent/carer;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;
- except in a hospital emergency, the parent/carer is unwell and unable to bring the child/children to school
- the pupil or parent/carers are shopping during school hours;
- the pupil is absent for **unacceptable** reasons, e.g. a birthday, going to buy new shoes;
- the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;
- the pupil has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable (or the parent is unable) to give a satisfactory reason for the absence.

## **6 Collection and analysis of data**

- 6.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

- 6.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.
- 6.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and RM Integris) within the stipulated time frame.

## 7 Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance

7.1 Attendance has a very high profile at **Toner Avenue Primary School**. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

### 7.2 First-day calling

**Toner Avenue Primary School** has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge.

Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence then the second named person held on our files will be contacted. If there has been no contact made within 3 days, communication may begin with the attendance and monitoring team. If a child is missing in education appropriate procedures will be followed.

### 7.3 Sharing attendance concerns with parents/carers

The school regularly communicates with parents about attendance, generally, in Newsletters and specifically with individual parents in attendance categories as follows:

- Pupils with 100%
- Pupils between 100% and 95%
- Pupils causing some concern with attendance between 95% and 90%
- Pupils who are persistent absentees with below 90%

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence over a 6 week period (or sooner if staff are particularly concerned), with or without explanation, the school may :

- Invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences
- Phone parents to discuss concerns
- Write to parents to keep them informed about school's concerns and give details of their child's attendance in an Attendance Summary.

Usually at this stage, parents are notified that future absence will no longer be authorised without medical evidence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Attendance and Monitoring Team

### 7.4 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. Such a reason will not include things such as missing the bus, clothes in the washing machine or lost shoes. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging



pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Attendance and Monitoring Team.

- 7.5 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the close of register will be recorded in the "Attendance Log". They will then be marked as late.
- 7.6 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure.**
- 7.7 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (e.g. for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

## 8 Term-time Leave of Absence for Holidays

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 OF Absence Request form. Any requests can only be authorised if where school accepts there are exceptional circumstances. Where parents or careers take children out of school for 5 or more days without authorisation Penalty Notices will be issued

- 8.1 **Toner Avenue Primary School** will consider every application individually. The school policy is **NOT** to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in the most exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix 1 Leave of Absence for Holiday Request Form), with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.
- 8.2 **Toner Avenue Primary School** will consider authorising holidays for:
- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during school holiday periods;
  - when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a serious crisis;

Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;
- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods;
- overlap with beginning or end of term.
- a proven record of good attendance

- 8.3 From January 2020, **Toner Avenue School has responded** to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix 2 School's Response to Leave of Absence Request) giving the reasons for the decision. Attached to the school's response to a Leave of Absence request will be a copy of the Local Authority 'Penalty Notices to address unauthorised absences from school'.
- 8.4 **Toner Avenue School** will **NOT** authorise a holiday during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS examinations these are usually in the month of May.

## 9 Pupils' responsibilities

- 10.1 All pupils are made are made aware of the importance of regular school attendance in two ways firstly, the **weekly school Attendance Assembly** and secondly by achieving an attendance star for each week that they attend school and using these stars to make purchases in the **Attendance Shop** at the end of each term. If a pupil is having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.
- 10.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school they should give their class teacher a note from their parents to explain the absence. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.