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Attendance Policy

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Introduction

Tapton School is committed to maximising the achievement of all students and we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. We expect every student to aim for 100% attendance during an academic year and to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their broader school community.

We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. We will work with families and refer to relevant services to give support where possible, to identify the reasons for poor attendance and to try to resolve any difficulties.

Tapton School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility between staff, governors, parents, students and the wider school community. As such, all stakeholders have a responsibility to support and promote outstanding attendance. In addition, key school staff i.e. Form Tutors, Year Leaders, Key Stage Leaders, Attendance Officers, will work in line with our Attendance strategy.

Roles and responsibilities

Headteacher/Legalities

Following Government guidelines introduced in September 2013, no leave of absence can be authorised by school for holidays during term time. School term dates are available on the school website. School expects all holidays to be arranged out of term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time. Where there are exceptional circumstances school may authorise leave but will consider each request on its own merits. Any requests for leave during term time should be made in writing, by the parent/carer, providing the reason for making the request and stating specific start and end dates. The request should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the intended leave - only very exceptional circumstances will be considered. Please note: family birthdays, and visits abroad are not exceptional, however, sporting activities such as competitions are usually approved. School will inform parents/carers in writing, advising whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised. Failure to return to school on the expected day after leave may result in a student being taken off roll at Tapton School and they will then need to reapply for a place. Parents should be aware that this process may not be successful because of the popularity of the school and our oversubscribed nature.

Please note: If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. Parents and carers need to be aware that in such cases the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice.

Tapton School acknowledges and rejoices in the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

We believe it to be reasonable that no more than two days absence be designated for a religious celebration and that a maximum of three days in any academic year will be granted for religious observance.

- Please remember that if you achieve 100% attendance (190 days) you still have 175 days holiday.
- If a student is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education that academic year.
- 90% attendance across the year equates to an absence of 4 weeks. Research regularly links irregular attendance to impaired GCSE examination performance.

Staff – Taking registers

All staff who are responsible for registering students must do so within the first 10 minutes of a lesson in silence and by roll call. Registers must be taken accurately and timely and failure to do so may lead to discussions with the Headteacher/ disciplinary action. Teachers will receive an orange reminder slip from the Attendance Officer if a register has not been completed for their lesson, if this fails a visit from the on-call team will be made.

If a student has been marked present in the previous lesson but fails to attend their next lesson, that member of staff must raise a safeguarding on call so that their whereabouts can be investigated and parents informed if they are not located. If a student is in school but not in their timetabled lesson for any reason, their attendance must be marked with a 'K' and an explanation left in the comments box by the member of staff who they are with. This will be for the reference of other staff and prevent unnecessary on calls being raised. If you have a student in your class whose name doesn't appear on your register, please raise an on call so that we can return them to their correct lesson or if appropriate make register changes.

Accurate registers are essential to ensure effective safeguarding.

Staff – Form Tutors

This is an important role within school. Form tutors can and should have a positive impact on their tutees and will monitor their attendance and punctuality daily/weekly/ongoing. They will monitor the attendance of individual tutees, be aware of any trends or patterns of absence and respond appropriately. Form tutors will liaise with Year Leaders over concerning attendance and punctuality issues and forward absence explanation letters to the Attendance Officer upon the return of the student.

Form Tutors will complete registers accurately and encourage full form attendance. Form tutors will engage students in regular discussions to promote good attendance and punctuality. They will be provided with weekly data by the Attendance Officer and will engage with students about the reasons for individual absences and poor punctuality.

Staff – Year Leaders /Assistant Heads

Form tutors will refer ongoing concerns to their Year Leaders who will discuss the students with poor attendance and punctuality in their weekly inclusion meeting with relevant Assistant Headteachers. Parents will be contacted, meetings arranged and where appropriate students may be referred to outside agencies for support in procuring improvement i.e. MAST

Should these steps fail to bring about positive change, Parents will be required to meet with the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher.

Staff – Attendance and Punctuality Officer

Students who have poor attendance/punctuality will be placed on a concerns list. If these students are not in school, our Attendance and Punctuality Officer will call at the family home to find out why. The APO and Year Leaders will also meet with students in school to discuss concerns and solutions. Parents and Carers may also be required to attend meetings to discuss the necessity and actions to positively influence change. Once a student has attended well for one half term (having a maximum of one day's absence), they will be removed from the Attendance Concerns List and any future absences will usually be authorised.

Staff – Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer is a pivotal member of staff and should be known to all students. The Attendance Officer shall be responsible for changing attendance codes early in the morning of the school day on Bromcom to reflect information received from parents in order for teachers to be advised of reasons for absence. The Attendance Officer is responsible for first day contact to establish the reason for an unauthorised absence.

Our Attendance Officer will ensure accurate and up to date records are kept. They will receive absence messages from parents, update student records, provide Form Tutors with the weekly data and amend it following their input. Any student who arrives late should sign in using the InVentry console before going to class. Any student who leaves early must hand in their green slip to the Attendance Officer before signing out on the InVentry console in student reception.

Parents/Carers

At Tapton we believe excellent attendance and punctuality are pivotal to success. Students who do not attend school significantly disadvantage themselves.

Every child has a right to access the education to which they are entitled. Parents and carers share the responsibility for ensuring that attendance rates are maximised and that rates of unjustified and unauthorised absenteeism are kept to a minimum.

Parents/Carers should use the telephone absence line on each day of absence. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer on the first day the student returns to school. Where students have an unacceptable level of attendance parents will be informed in writing that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided from that point onwards. Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received. Please be reminded that you can log into 'My Child at School' (MCAS) and view your child's attendance and punctuality.

Illness - In most cases a telephone call and a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Where a student's attendance level is at an unacceptable level Parents/Carers will be asked to provide medical evidence. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments – Parents are advised to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Students should attend school for part of the day. Medical letters or appointment cards will need to be provided to school. Form tutors or school reception staff will complete a green authorisation slip allowing students

to leave school. Students leaving school during the school day to attend a medical/dental appointment must hand in this green slip and sign out as they leave with the Attendance Officer/ Reception.

Other Authorised Circumstances - this relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, or for a short period a part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration arrangement.

Requests for term time leave of absences – Parents are strongly advised to avoid taking their children on leave during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year. The Headteacher will only authorise requests for leave during term time in very exceptional circumstances.

Please note: If the permission to take leave is not granted and the student still goes on holiday, the absence will be unauthorised. Parents and carers need to be aware that in such cases the Local Authority may issue a Penalty Notice.

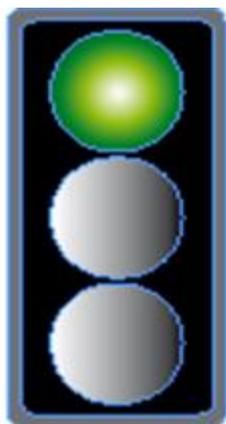
Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually. We will support you to ensure this occurs and refer to external agencies for their support should it be necessary. However, we are unable to accept poor attendance. Please be mindful that in Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, it states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered student at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

Students

Good attendance and punctuality are very important. Failing to apply yourself responsibly hinders your own chances and poor punctuality also hinders the progress of your peers as it disrupts the flow of lessons. You will be given an attendance target. 100% is the target for the vast majority of students. However, for some students, who have legitimate reasons, this isn't achievable and your target will be revised. It is important that you do your utmost to achieve this. Your attendance and punctuality records will always be requested by colleges, universities, apprenticeship providers, potential employers and other schools should you look to transfer. If students fail to achieve acceptable standards we will liaise with Parents/Carers and other agencies to bring about positive change. We cannot accept poor levels of attendance and punctuality.

Registration	09.15 – 09.30
Period One	0930 – 10.30
Period Two	10.30 – 11.30
Break Time	11.30 – 11.50
Period Three	11.50 – 12.50
Lunch Time	12.50 – 13.30
Period Four	13.30 – 14.30
Period Five	14.30 – 15.30
End of the School Day	15.30

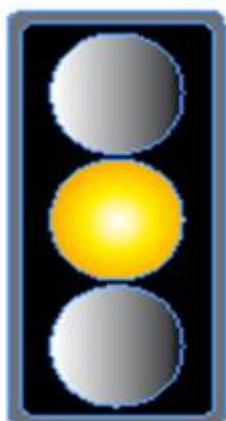
Attendance Traffic Light



Green – 0% - 4%

With this level of absence, you have given yourself the best possible chance of fulfilling your academic potential.

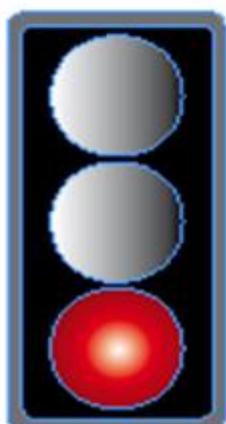
Good attendance also appeals to colleges, universities and employers as it shows you are dedicated and reliable.



Amber – 5% -7%

With this level of absence your grades will have already started to suffer. You will have missed some important information in lessons and need to catch up.

The school will be reviewing your absence level closely and may already be taking steps to ensure that it improves.



Red – Above 8%

With this level of absence your chances of success are definitely at risk. If you have been ill, the school will support you in doing the extra work needed to catch up.

It is likely that if you have patterns of absence or unexplained absences, the school will already be taking steps to ensure your attendance improves. This might include working with other agencies to support your family in helping you to improve your attendance or even taking court action.



Sanctions:

The school's sanctions for poor punctuality are detailed in our Behaviour Policy. However, our Attendance and Punctuality Officer will also be involved in cases that cause us concern. Parents and Carers will be asked to attend meetings to discuss poor performance and outside agencies asked to intervene if students are unable to bring about a positive change themselves. Good attendance and punctuality are life lessons and are needed to be successful in all aspects of life. If it wasn't important we wouldn't spend so much time focusing on it and supporting students to achieve.

Punctuality

The school day starts at 9.15am. **A warning bell sounds at 9.10am, however, students should be in school well before this warning bell in order to be fully prepared for an orderly start to their day.** Students who arrive late are greatly disadvantaged because they miss starting the day with their peers in form time which means that they are often missing essential messages. It is very important that young people establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are at school.

Members of SLT are assigned regular morning duties to support the arrival duty team. It is the job of the arrival duty team to move students from crossroad areas and social spaces and ensure they make their way to form time before 9.15. Students should fill up water bottles and visit the toilet at breaks and lunchtime not during form time or lessons. Students are allowed in the building at break times and therefore have ample time to use the toilet and get refreshments. Students who have identified medical needs will have a pass allowing them access to the toilets at all times.

Students who are late will sanctioned by same detentions as stated in our behaviour policy. A referral may also be made to the school's attendance and punctuality officer.

To be clear – students are late if they arrive after the 'ping'. This is an audible alert to prompt teachers to take registers at the same time throughout the school to maintain fairness and consistency.

School Term Time Leave Policy

Good attendance and punctuality are vital if pupils are to achieve their maximum potential. Tapton School is committed to working with parents/carers and pupils to ensure that each pupil benefits from the academic, personal and social opportunities available to them during their years with us.

The law states that all children must receive a suitable, full time education between the ages of 5 and 16. Parents/carers are responsible for this and may be fined or summonsed to attend Magistrates Court if their child does not attend regularly.

We are, therefore, committed to a whole school approach to attendance and a partnership relationship with parent/carers.

School expects all holidays to be arranged out of term time. Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time. Where there are exceptional circumstances school may authorise leave during term time and will consider each request on its own merits.

- Any requests for leave during term time should be made in writing, by the parent/carer, providing the reason for making the request and stating specific start and end dates. The request should be submitted at least two weeks in advance of the intended leave.
- The actual date that the child will return to school should always be provided by the parent/carer.
- School will inform parents in writing advising whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised, clearly stating why a decision has been taken.
- Parents/carers should contact school if any delays occur.
- Failure to return to school on the expected day after leave may result in a student being taken off roll at Tapton School and they will need to reapply for a place. Parents should be aware that this process may not be successful because of the popularity of the school and our oversubscribed nature.

If you achieve 100% attendance (190 days) you still have 175 days holiday.

Leave for religious observance

Tapton School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

- Leave may be granted for any day of religious observance if recognised by the parents'/carers' religious body.
- Parents'/carers' are requested wherever possible to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.
- However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than two days be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in any academic year.

Addendum in respect to Covid19 and the Department for Education updated guidelines issued August 2020.

Attendance expectations

The expectation of Tipton School is that all students will return to school in September and maintain the highest levels of attendance.

Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct

Returning to school is vital for children's education and for their wellbeing. Time out of school is detrimental for children's cognitive and academic development. This impact can affect both current levels of learning and children's future ability to learn, and therefore we need to ensure all pupils can return to school sooner rather than later.

The risk to children themselves of becoming severely ill from coronavirus (COVID-19) is very low and there are negative health impacts of being out of school. We know that school is a vital point of contact for public health and safeguarding services that are critical to the wellbeing of children and families.

Given the improved position, the balance of risk is now overwhelmingly in favour of children returning to school. For the vast majority of children, the benefits of being back in school far outweigh the very low risk from coronavirus (COVID-19)

This will be an important move back towards normal life for many children and families.

Pupils and families who are anxious about return to school

We are aware that some families may be reluctant or anxious about returning. This may include pupils who have themselves been shielding previously but have been advised that this is no longer necessary, those living in households where someone is clinically vulnerable, or those concerned about the comparatively increased risk from coronavirus (COVID-19), including those from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) backgrounds or who have certain conditions such as obesity and diabetes.

If parents of students with significant risk factors are concerned, please contact us and discuss your concerns. We can then make available further details regarding the measures that have been put in place thus providing reassurance.

Measures for arriving at and leaving school

We know that travel to school patterns differ greatly for different students. However, families have a responsibility to consider, forward plan and discuss with their child the most practical way to manage this journey. Students need to be aware of this travel plan well before the day of their return in order to reach school safely and punctually. Walking and cycling are ideal options but where this isn't viable arranging a lift or public transport planning will be necessary.

Families using public transport should refer to the [safer travel guidance for passengers](#)

A punctual start is essential to ensure learning can flow effectively and our usual expectations regarding punctuality remain unchanged.

In order to be compliant with the DfE guidelines regarding minimising contact between students, we are adopting a staggered start and end to our school day.

If you have a genuine reason to not attend

Where a student is unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice, we expect parents to notify us immediately.

You will also need to provide us with written evidence in support of any absence from your GP, Hospital or Public Health Service. We ask parents to keep us informed immediately regarding the result of any Covid 19 test that a student or their family have undertaken.

Some pupils no longer required to shield but who generally remain under the care of a specialist health professional may need to discuss their care with their health professional before returning to school (usually at their next planned clinical appointment). You can find more advice from the Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health at [COVID-19 - 'shielding' guidance for children and young people](#)

Where children are not able to attend school as parents are following clinical and/or public health advice, absence will not be penalised.

Attending an Alternative Provision

Where a child routinely attends more than one setting on a part time basis, for example because they are dual registered at a mainstream school and an alternative provision setting or special school, schools should work through the system of controls collaboratively, enabling them to address any risks identified and allowing them to jointly deliver a broad and balanced curriculum for the child.

Tapton School will work closely with all of our AP providers and with Sheffield City Council, who are liaising over risk assessments and the delivery of AP education.

Due to the smaller size of many AP settings, and because APs are not typically organised by year groups, APs may wish to adopt whole school bubbles as part of their system of control and in order to best meet the needs of their students. This will be shared by AP providers or by us when we receive this information from them.

This addendum is subject to change and is dependent upon DfE guidelines. August 2020.