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Attendance Policy

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Governor Committee: Attendance and Personal Development

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Member of staff responsible: Designated Safeguarding Lead

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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 capitalise on the educational opportunities available to them. We expect every student to aim for 100% attendance during an academic year and to become 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 to identify the reasons and barriers for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties, referring to relevant agencies where appropriate.

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. The Inclusion Team, Form Tutors, Year Leaders, Key Stage Leaders, Attendance Officers, will work in line with our Attendance strategy.

Why is regular attendance so important?

Learning

Absences can be detrimental to a child's understanding and academic progress and regular absences will seriously affect their learning. In addition, student absence disrupts teaching routines and affects the learning of other students in the same class. It is a parent's legal responsibility to ensure that their child attends school regularly. Permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

Safeguarding

Regular attendance at school is necessary if we are to fulfil our safeguarding responsibilities and suitably assess a child's risk of experiences of harm. Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and Tapton School are dedicated to promoting the safety, welfare and life opportunities for all children. This encompasses: -

- Attendance
- Behaviour management
- Health and safety
- Access to the curriculum
- Anti-bullying

Failure to attend this school on a regular basis will be considered as a safeguarding issue.

Aims of the Policy

- Clear procedures encouraging pupils to achieve their maximum potential by maintaining excellent attendance and punctuality
- Clear escalation and support measures use for pupils with persistent absence
- Ensuring parent/carers and pupils are informed about the procedures for attendance and encouraging them to take an active role in promoting excellent attendance and punctuality
- Ensuring all teaching staff, non-teaching staff and governors understand attendance procedures

- To recognise and reward pupils who achieve attendance and punctuality targets throughout the academic year

The Law

The 1996 Education Act requires that:

- All pupils of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school.
- The Local Authority must provide school places to parents who wish their child to be educated at school.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- The school must report to the Local Authority pupils who are absent for more than 10 days without explanation.
- The Local Authority has a duty to ensure that parents fulfil their legal responsibilities
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offense punishable by law.

Partnership

What parents/carers and pupils can expect from the school

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. Red flags in Bromcom alert staff to students who are on the Child Protection register, have an allocated social worker or who are in receipt of Early Help involvement from MAST. 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 to their classroom.

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 /student missing on call so that their whereabouts can be investigated by the on-call team 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 teachers have a student in their class whose name doesn't appear on their register, they will raise an on call so that staff can return students 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 and evidence to the Attendance Officer upon the return of the previously absent student. Form tutors may contact parents/carers to discuss attendance concerns and absences.

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 Headteachers

Form tutors will refer ongoing concerns to their Year Leaders who will discuss the students who have concerning attendance and punctuality in their weekly inclusion meeting with the Inclusion Team. Furthermore, once every half term, each year groups inclusion meeting has a dedicated, strategic focus on attendance. During this time, attendance data for each year group is analysed by the Inclusion team and interventions discussed in order to bring about a positive change. This may include holding meetings, sending letters, referring to other agencies ie, The Attendance and Inclusion Service or others. If more specific and targeted action is necessary and interventions are needed to be put in place to support students and families we will agree this in these meetings.

Should these steps fail to bring about positive change, parents will be required to meet with members of the Inclusion team as we cannot leave school absence unaddressed. If absences are due to ill health, we need to be provided with evidence of medical appointments etc to support this. We will always highlight concerning levels of low attendance and be clear about the need for improvement, however, we will support this process where possible.

Staff – Attendance and Punctuality Officer

Students who continue have poor attendance/punctuality, despite this having been highlighted to parents/carers by letter, 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 need 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 responsible for changing attendance codes early in the morning of the school day on Bromcom to reflect information received from parents for teachers to be advised about the reasons for the 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 and provide Form Tutors and the wider Inclusion Team with weekly data. Students who arrive 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.

If registers are not completed in a timely manner, our Attendance Officer will send reminder slips to the relevant teacher to prompt them and should this fail the On Call team will visit the classroom.

What Tapton school expects of 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. At this point 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 still 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 refers to the very rare occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example an immediate 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. 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. 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 that family birthdays, and visits abroad are not exceptional, however, sporting activities such as competitions are usually approved if evidence is provided. School will inform parents/carers in writing, advising whether the leave is authorised or unauthorised.

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. 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.

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 externally 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.

Religious Holidays - 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.

What Taptan school expects of our 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 a student's attendance falls below 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

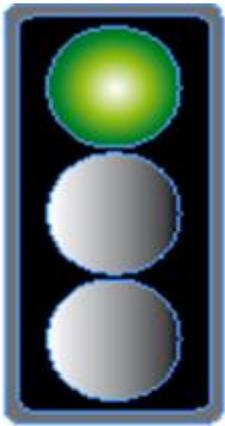
Registration	09.15 – 09.30
Period One	0930 – 10.30
Period Two	10.30 – 11.30
Break Time	11.30 – 11.50
Period Three	11.50 – 12.50
Lunch Time	12.50 – 13.30
Period Four	13.30 – 14.30
Period Five	14.30 – 15.30
End of the School Day	15.30

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. Students are expected to routinely attend the school that they are on roll with.

- 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.

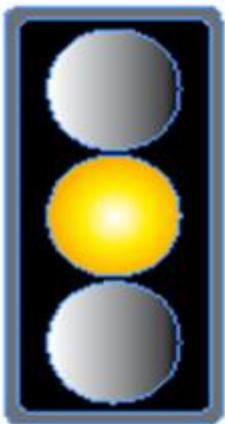
Attendance Traffic Light



Green – 0% - 4%

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

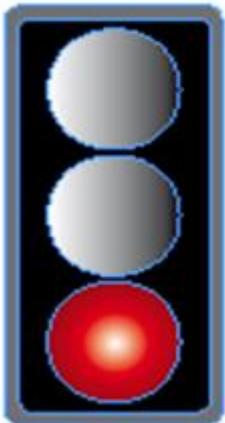
Good attendance also appeals to colleges, universities and employers as it shows you are dedicated and reliable.



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.

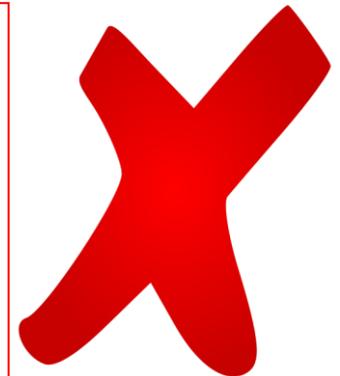
The school will be reviewing your absence level closely and may already be taking steps to ensure that it improves.



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.



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.**

The school has a perimeter fence, and the gate will be locked at 9.10 when the warning bell sounds. Students arriving after this will need to sign in late at reception. 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 our Senior Leadership Team are assigned regular morning duties to support the arrival duty team. 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 day detentions as stated in our behaviour policy. A referral may also be made to the school's Attendance and Punctuality Officer, or you may be seen by your Year Leader.

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. Punctuality is the first step towards success.