

# ATTENDANCE POLICY

## Tollgate Primary School Tollgate Lane Bury St Edmunds IP32 6DG

<b>Plan Owner / Author:</b>	Miss H Brookman
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### Document Change History

Version	Author	Date	Change Details
1	Mr G Sadler	March 2017	Complete review of policy
2	Mrs C Bates	March 2018	Family Support Co-ord replaced with Pastoral leads
3	Mrs C Bates	Sept 2018	Complete review of policy
4	Miss H Brookman	Sept 2019	1a) Acknowledge good attendance, not reward 2b) Head of School 2c/2d) Clarification of roles 3c) Clear criteria for FPN 5b) added in need for medical evidence 5d) Details of a new school must be provided 7) 8 unauthorised absences in a rolling 3 month period Appendices – removed late slip
5	Miss H Brookman	Sept 20	Updated in line with USP minimum expectations; 2d) fortnightly report Appendix A – action in Autumn 1
6	Miss H Brookman	Sept 21	Changed registration times Added section on Persistent absentees

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# 1. AIMS OF THIS POLICY

Tollgate Primary School works in partnership with parents, the local community and the local authority to support and promote good attendance and punctuality.

## 1a) To achieve our aims the school will:

- offer a safe and supportive environment that welcomes all children
- emphasise the importance of children attending school every day as an essential pre-requisite for achieving their individual potential
- make clear to teachers, children, parents/carers and governors the school's expectations about attendance with a letter at the beginning of the school year
- establish clear and effective procedures enabling early intervention for falling levels of attendance and punctuality
- acknowledge good and improved attendance and punctuality
- clarify the roles and responsibilities of all parties with respect to attendance
- communicate to all relevant parties the legal position in relation to attendance and the categories of absence which are deemed "authorised" and "unauthorised"
- stress the need for home and school to work in close partnership to achieve high attendance
- ensure our policy reflects the law, regulations and guidance produced by the Department for Education

## 1b) The importance of regular attendance

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect not only their learning but also their relationships with their peers.

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring their child's regular attendance at school. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## 1c) Promoting good attendance and punctuality

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child.

Information and guidance about attendance procedures is shared with all parents/carers at the start of each new school year and with new parents/carers.

## 1d) Promoting good attendance through the school:

- PSHE (Personal, Social and Health Education) lessons and assemblies
- articles and information included in school communications
- weekly award for the class with the best attendance and an attendance display (NIMO, Not In, Miss Out)

- NIMO Award announced in weekly Messenger, along with the school's attendance figure
- termly certificates for pupils with 100% attendance
- acknowledgement and celebration for 100% attendance throughout the year
- certificates for improved attendance throughout the year

## **2. THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE SCHOOL AND STAFF**

The attendance policy involves all school staff. Some members of school staff have particular roles to play within this. In this section we outline these roles.

### **2a) All staff**

All staff should support and promote good attendance. They will work to provide an environment in which all of our children are eager to learn, feel that they are a valued member of the school and the community, and look forward to coming to school every day.

Staff should set a good example in their own attendance and punctuality.

### **2b) The Headteacher**

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the running of the school; this includes attendance.

The Head will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure that the policy is consistently applied throughout the school.

### **2c) Pastoral Manager**

The Pastoral Manager will:

- support the Admin assistants in monitoring and reviewing the registers on a daily basis, ensuring the data is recorded electronically and any unexplained absences are followed up with a telephone call home where necessary or another action when required
- follow procedures detailed in the 'Absence Escalation Procedures' (Appendix A) in situations where a child's attendance causes concern or continues to fall
- Complete a fortnightly attendance report; analysing for patterns, declining attendance or other areas of concerns e.g. punctuality
- arrange to meet parents/carers where there is an emerging pattern of a child's absence or punctuality
- discuss key issues concerning attendance and punctuality along with the possible solutions and support needed
- agree action plans with the parents and child to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit

### **2d) Administration Assistant**

The Administration Assistant will:

- monitor and review the registers on a daily basis, ensure the data is recorded electronically and follow up on any unexplained absences by making a telephone call home where necessary or take any other action required

- keep a record of any action taken as a note on the individual's attendance certificate
- regularly run reports to identify vulnerable children e.g. persistently late or frequent, but sporadic illness (broken weeks)
- ensure attendance records and absence reports are filed in a child's Pupil Education Record file

## **2e) Classroom teachers**

Classroom teachers, or a cover supervisor in a teacher's absence, are responsible for completing the attendance registers twice a day.

Information obtained by the classroom teacher regarding the reason for an absence should be communicated to the school office at the earliest opportunity to ensure accurate recording.

In cases where there is a discrepancy or doubt about an explanation received regarding a child's absence, teachers will record this on CPOMS.

## **2f) Education Welfare Officer (EWO)**

Tollgate Primary school purchases the services of an Education Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the school's attendance and to help parents to meet their legal responsibilities regarding school attendance. The EWO comes into school regularly to review our attendance levels and discuss persistently absent pupils.

The EWO may request a meeting in school with parents to discuss any issues. Where attendance does not improve after an initial meeting, the case may be formally referred to the EWO for further action.

# **3. RECORDING ATTENDANCE**

## **3a) Registration**

By law all schools must mark the attendance register twice daily: once at the start of the day and once at the start of the afternoon session. Classroom teachers mark the registers using prescribed marks

Children are expected to arrive at school on time every day. Missing the start of the day means missed learning opportunities.

### *Calling of registers*

- registers will be called promptly at 9:00am and 1:00pm
- registers will be closed at 9:10am and 1:10pm

### *'Late' marks in the register*

- If a child arrives after 9:00am but before 9:10am they will be marked as late for the morning session

- If a child arrives after 1:00pm but before 1:10pm they will be marked as late for the afternoon session

#### *'Unauthorised Late' marks in the register*

- If a child arrives after 9:10am they will be marked as absent for the whole morning session
- If a child arrives after 1:10pm they will be marked absent for the whole afternoon session

### **3b) Late arrival procedures**

Children arriving late should come into school through the main school reception and parents must sign the child in using the electronic system. A reason to why the child is late must be given and recorded and this will be recorded on the electronic register. This may be followed up by the Pastoral Manager.

### **3c) Persistent Lateness**

When repeated unexpected or unexplained lateness occurs this will be classed as persistent lateness. This may take the form of:

- 'late': when the child arrives after the register is taken but before the register is closed; or
- 'unauthorised late': when the child arrives after the register has closed
- If a child is regularly late:
  - contact will be made with parents/carers outlining our concerns
  - a meeting will be arranged with the Pastoral Manager to find ways to improve punctuality and discuss support available
  - If your child has 8 unauthorised late marks in a rolling 3 month period, then you may receive a Fixed Penalty Notice.

## **4. SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN WHO HAVE DIFFICULTIES ATTENDING SCHOOL**

Where children are absent with good reason e.g. because of exclusion or long-term illness, a member of staff will arrange for appropriate work to be sent home for the child, and will ensure it is marked on a regular basis.

When children who have been absent for an extended period of time return, they will be welcomed back to school and a re-integration programme agreed. This applies irrespective of the reason for the absence, and whether it was authorised or unauthorised.

## **5. UNDERSTANDING THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF ABSENCE: AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCES**

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the school will always ask parents/carers for specific information about the reason for every absence.

### **5a) Authorised Absence**

Under the provisions of the Education Act 1996 only the school can authorise absence. Parents are not able to authorise absence.

An absence is classified as 'authorised' when:

- a child is away from school for a legitimate reason; and
- school has received notification from a parent or carer

The school can record a child's absence as authorised when he/she is unable to attend school for **the following reasons:**

- illness
- exclusion
- there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control e.g. extreme weather conditions
- a religious observance
- an emergency medical or dental appointment when evidence of the appointment is produced
- in exceptional circumstances for a very limited period (maximum two days) e.g. family bereavement, family wedding
- participation in an approved public performance

### **5b) Unauthorised Absence**

An absence is classified as 'unauthorised' when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are absences which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. These include:

- any unexplained absence
- oversleeping
- persistent non-specific illness e.g. feeling tired
- unexceptional situations like shopping trips, birthdays or "duvet days"
- holidays in term time without prior permission
- medical or dental appointments of more than a half day without good reasons and no appointment evidence produced
- children who arrive at school after 9:10am or 1:10pm i.e. after the register has closed
- a parent or sibling's illness

### **5c) Approved educational activity**

Where a child is engaged in approved educational activities that are taking place away from the school premises, the school will check their attendance at that off-site location as normal. This will allow the school to make the appropriate entries in the register as normal.

#### **5d) Children missing in education**

If families move away from the area, or wish to transfer their child to another school the Headteacher must be informed in writing. Details of the new school must be provided.

Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place for that child has been offered and accepted.

Children who stop attending and who cannot be traced cannot be removed from the school roll. They are reported to the Local Authority Attendance Service.

Local Authority guidance will be followed when a child is missing in education.

#### **5e) Persistent Absence**

A child is classed as a persistent absentee when their attendance is 90% or less.

For example, an average term is 62 days, so a child would need to miss 6 days in a term to be classed as persistently absent.

In most cases, school will follow the attendance escalation ladder in Appendix A. However, if a child's attendance has decreased rapidly, or is of a significant concern to the school, then they will refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer immediately.

## **6. RESPONSIBILITIES OF PARENTS AND CARERS**

It is the responsibility of parents and carers to ensure that their child receives an appropriate education. 'Parents and carers' are defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child.

#### **6a) Tollgate Primary School expects parents/carers to:**

- ensure their children attend school regularly and avoid unjustified absence from school
- understand that the school cannot automatically agree to any requests for absence
- make routine doctors and dentist appointments outside school hours; where this is not possible, provide the school with evidence of the appointment

#### **6b) Informing the school of absences**

Parents will also be expected to:

- notify school by 9:00 am on **each day** of any absence unless otherwise agreed with the Administration Assistants, Pastoral Manager, or Headteacher. Parents/carers can either phone the school to leave a message on the absence line or speak to a member of staff. The message should state the full name of the absent child, their class and the **specific** reason for their absence. This may be followed up with a telephone call from the Pastoral Manager.
- provide a reason for absence on a daily basis. If this is not received the absence will not be authorised.
- work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents' meetings and consultations.

- contact school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their child's school life. Tollgate Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns

*Welfare checks may be carried out by members of staff at the home address if no telephone call has been received and contact cannot be made by 10:30 am.*

### **6c) Holidays**

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time. Holidays should be taken outside of term time.

Any application for leave of absence must be made in advance using a 'request for leave of absence form' which is available from the school office.

Tollgate Primary School will consider every application individually.

*Tollgate Primary School will ONLY consider authorising holidays during term time for:*

- service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays during the normal school holidays
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- parents who are subject to strict and non-negotiable holiday rotas, and robust evidence for this is provided

*Leave of absence in term-time will not be authorised:*

- during the first term, that is when a child is just starting at school, as it is very important for them to settle into their new class
- during an assessment/test period
- when a child's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence
- When parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation the issue of a penalty notice will be considered.

### **6d) Extended Leave of Absence**

In considering absence for extended trips overseas, Tollgate Primary School will take account of the following:

- that a visit to family overseas can have a very different significance from a normal "holiday"
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up
- that parents/carers may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school; although parents will be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip

If extended leave of absence is granted, schoolwork for the child will be set during this period.

## **7. INFORMATION REGARDING PENALTY NOTICES**

Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school can have an effect on a child's attainment levels. It can also disrupt school routines and the learning of others.

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.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly 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. However, if their payment is not received within 21 days the cost is increased.

If you do not pay the penalty in full within 28 days of the issue, the county council is required to start legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court for the original offence of failing to ensure your child attends school regularly. This may lead to a fine up to £1000.

Before a penalty notice is considered, a child must have had a minimum of 4 school days (8 sessions) lost to unauthorised absence in a rolling 3 month period.

In cases of unauthorised holidays, and where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given, parents/carers will be informed of the intention to issue a penalty notice. However, this means that in some cases, penalty notices may be issued without a warning.

## **ABSENCE ESCALATION LADDER**

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously.

However, each case is different and Tollgate School acknowledges that a standard response will not be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply.

In every case, early intervention is essential to prevent the problem from deteriorating. It is essential that parents/carers keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

The Pastoral team will closely monitor pupils' attendance and discuss this with parents before it reaches a level of concern and having an impact on their learning. In some circumstances, an EWO referral will be made immediately.

### **If a child's attendance falls below 95%**

The school measures attendance throughout the school year. If a child's non-attendance as recorded in the attendance registers falls below 95%, the school will take the following action:

- send a letter home (Letter 1, appendix A1) to the parents/carers raising the concern. This may be followed up by a phone call from the Pastoral Manager if an improvement is not seen within 10 school days.
- continue to monitor the child's attendance until it reaches the required level so as not to cause concern
- In Autumn 1, parents may receive letter 1 if 4 sessions are missed in the first 4 weeks of term. This will not happen if the absence is due to holiday.

### **If a child's attendance continues to fall**

If a child's attendance as recorded in the school's attendance registers continues to fall and reaches 92% because of illness or unauthorised absences, the school will:

- Ask for medical evidence for every absence due to illness. If no medical evidence is provided then the absence will be unauthorised.
- Issue Letter 2 (Appendix A2) inviting parents/carers to a meeting with our Pastoral Manager to:
  - discuss any underlying problems
  - work together to seek solutions that improve attendance
  - share our expectation that the following 10 days will show 100% attendance

If a child's attendance falls below 90%, the government classify it as 'persistent absence'. If that happens, the school will take the following action:

- make a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- agree an attendance action plan with the EWO, parents and the child

- set targets to improve attendance which will continue to be monitored over a specified time period
- only authorise further absences if appropriate evidence is provided

The Education Welfare Officer may be in contact with you to discuss any issues regarding attendance or punctuality.



Tollgate Primary School, Tollgate Lane

Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6DG

Telephone (01284) 752742

Website: <https://www.tollgateprimary.org/>

Email: [office@tollgateprimary.org](mailto:office@tollgateprimary.org)

Headteacher: Miss H Brookman

Dear

During a recent attendance review, it noted that **<child's name>** attendance is currently \_\_ %; this equals \_\_ days of absence since September 2019. These absences occurred on:

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

I am sure you are aware it is important that **<child's name>** maintain regular attendance as any absence may interrupt **his/her** academic progress and may have an effect on friendships.

If there are any particular, circumstances that we may not be aware of which are having an influence on **<child's name>** attending school regularly or if you any questions or queries please do not hesitate to speak to the class teacher, Mrs. Winn or myself.

We will continue to monitor **<child's name>** attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs K Winn  
Pastoral Manager



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Bury St Edmunds, Suffolk IP32 6DG

Telephone (01284) 752742

Website: <https://www.tollgateprimary.org/>

Email: [office@tollgateprimary.org](mailto:office@tollgateprimary.org)

Headteacher: Miss H Brookman

Dear

During a recent attendance review, it noted that \_\_\_\_\_ attendance is now \_\_%.

We are very concerned that \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance has not improved since we wrote to you on XXXXXXXXXX. If \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance continue to fall then they will be classed as a persistent absentee and we will make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

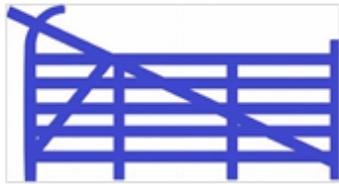
We acknowledge that each family has different circumstances and we aim to work with you to ensure is in school and can make progress.

Due to \_\_\_\_\_'s attendance, we will not authorise any further absences without evidence. If your child is ill, then this could be a note from the doctor, an appointment slip from the surgery with your child's name on it, a copy of a prescription, or the label on a prescription.

We would like to invite you in for a meeting with Mrs Winn, our Pastoral Manager, to discuss steps that can be taken to improve your child's attendance, or talk through any concerns you may have. Mrs Winn will make contact with you to arrange a convenient date and time.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs K Winn  
Pastoral Manager



## Tollgate Primary School

Tollgate Lane Bury St Edmunds Suffolk IP32 6DG

Telephone (01284) 752742 Fax (01284) 777197

Website [burytrust.org/tollgate](http://burytrust.org/tollgate)

Head of School: Miss H Brookman

Email: [tollgate@burytrust.org](mailto:tollgate@burytrust.org)

Dear

As **<child's name>** is approaching the statutory school age of five, it is important for you to think about his current attendance. **<child's name>** attendance is currently 00% this equals 0 days missed since September 2020.

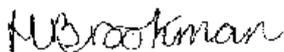
We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

I am sure you are aware it is important **<child's name>** maintain regular attendance as any absence may interrupt **his/her** academic progress and may have an effect on friendships.

If there are any particular circumstances that we may not be aware of which are having an influence on **<child's name>** attending school regularly or if you any questions or queries please do not hesitate to speak to myself, the class teacher or Mrs Winn.

We will continue to monitor **<child's name>** attendance and look forward to seeing an improvement.

Yours Sincerely



Miss H Brookman  
Head of School