



ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

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At TFS (Turner Free School), our mission is to create scholars. Our scholars will obtain the education and social skills they need to be successful at university, in professional employment and in their home lives. We are ambitious for all our scholars and have the highest expectations for achievement and conduct. Working as a team, we aim to create a calm and purposeful environment for our community in which all are welcome and able to learn. We also aim to deliver exceptional teaching and learning in order to ensure that all scholars, regardless of their starting point, make excellent progress.

TFS is committed to ensuring that scholars and parents/carers understand the absolute importance of full attendance at school.

- Absence has a detrimental effect on a student's academic progress; indeed, it is the greatest determinant of under-achievement at all phases.
- Studies have shown that pupils who attend less than 95% of the time fail to achieve 5 grade 4 and above at GCSE and therefore are denied the chance to fulfil their ambitions.
- Poor attendance or sporadic absences may also be an indicator of underlying issues that need resolving, either inside or outside of school.
- Absence from school may also mean that a young person is more vulnerable to safeguarding risks, such as sexual and criminal exploitation, including County Lines activity. As such, TFS invests time in working with families to make student attendance a top priority.

At TFS, we take our duty to safeguard children and our mission to challenge educational and social disadvantage seriously. Securing great attendance for all students is at the heart of our work. We work tirelessly to create a culture in our school where students want to attend and we see great attendance as a benchmark of our climate.

It is very important therefore that parents and carers recognise their responsibility and obligation to make sure that scholars attend regularly. This Policy sets out how the school, its partners and parents/carers can work together to achieve this.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance: [The Education Act 1996](#), [The Education Act 2002](#), [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#), [The Education \(Scholar Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#), [The Education \(Scholar Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#), [The Education \(Scholar Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#), [The Education \(Scholar Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations](#)

[2013](#), [The Education \(Scholar Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#), [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#).

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Aims:

- To highlight to parents/carers and scholars the importance of good attendance
- To monitor attendance patterns with vigilance and hold parents to account where necessary
- It is our expectation that all scholars will attain at least 97% attendance in each academic year of their school career.
- To promote regular attendance
- To support scholars and their parents/carers to improve attendance where necessary

Approach:

To maintain a focus on ensuring excellent attendance at TFS, we will:

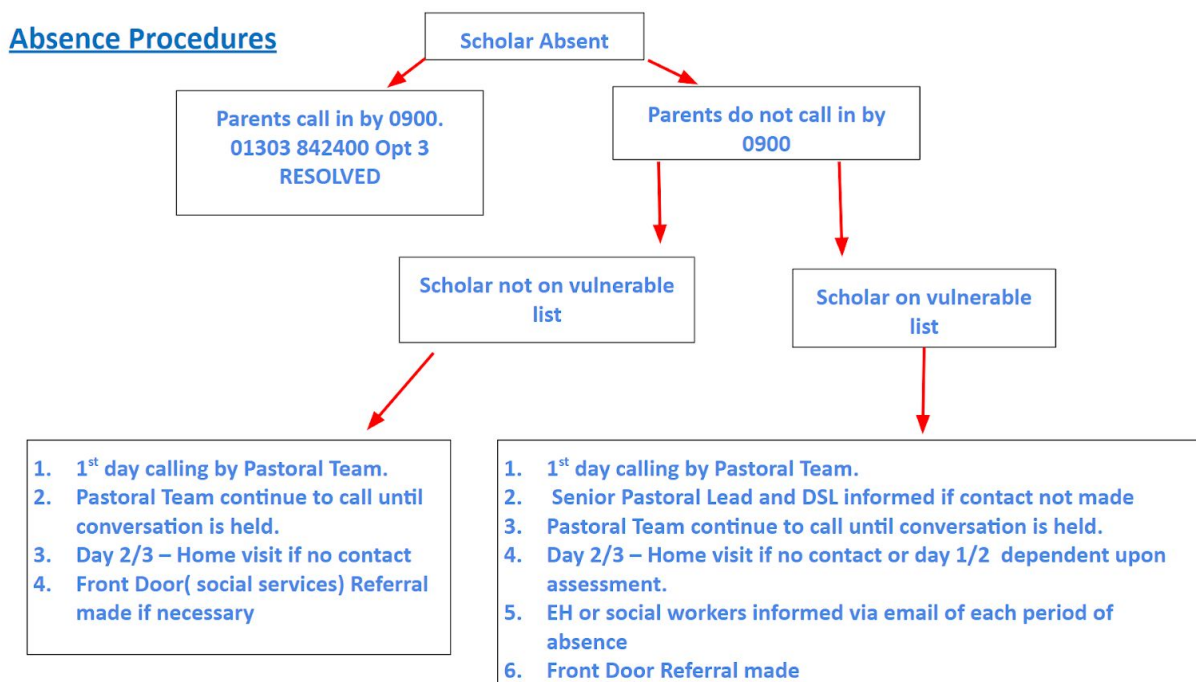
- work with parents and carers to secure excellent attendance for all scholars
- use data to guide us and inform our approach
- regularly report attendance information to parents

Absence Procedures

If a scholar is absent, parents/carers should:

- Contact the school (01303 842400 Option 3) by 9am on the first day of absence
- Send a note in on the first day that the scholar returns with an explanation of the absence – **you must do this even if you have already telephoned us**
- Parent/carers may also call into the school and report to reception staff, who will arrange for a member of staff to speak with them
- For absences that extend to a week (5 school days) some form of medical evidence is required; this can be in the form of a doctor's note or proof of visit to G.P. (please note, a child cannot be signed off school by a doctor) /copy prescription/sight of prescribed medication etc..

If a scholar is absent, the school will follow the following procedures:



How we manage lateness

- Scholars can access the building from 8:00am. At **8.45 am** the school day starts and scholars are expected to be in **Morning Meeting** at that time.
- At **8.55 am** the registers are closed.

In accordance with the Regulations, if scholars arrive after **8.55am** they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site but this will **not** count as a present mark towards their attendance. The U code will be applied to the scholar's attendance record which means they have an **unauthorised absence**. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists (see Penalty Notice Proceedings).

If a scholar has a persistent late record, parents/carers will be asked to meet with a member of the Pastoral Team to resolve the problem.

Understanding types of absence

Every half-day absence has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Registers are taken twice a day by staff to record attendance marks for class. Registers are legal documents so the school staff are obliged to complete them accurately. Attendance marks are also recorded at every lesson to monitor scholar punctuality and guard against truancy.

Authorised

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Absence due to illness will be authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance. Evidence will be requested for absences to be authorised. Parents must notify the school of any absences for appointments in advance.

Missing lessons for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the scholar should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary. Except for very rare occasions there is no need for any scholar to take a whole day off school for an appointment.

Unauthorised

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings (See Penalty Notice Proceedings).

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best addressed with communication between the school, the parents and the child.

Granting approval for term-time absence

Principals may not grant any leave of absence to scholars during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

The Principal, or Vice Principal responsible for Attendance may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to such a request is at the discretion of the Principal, or Vice Principal responsible for Attendance, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Scholar Registration (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Principal, or Vice Principal responsible for Attendance's decision is final. Such a request must be put in writing at least 2 weeks prior to the proposed absence.

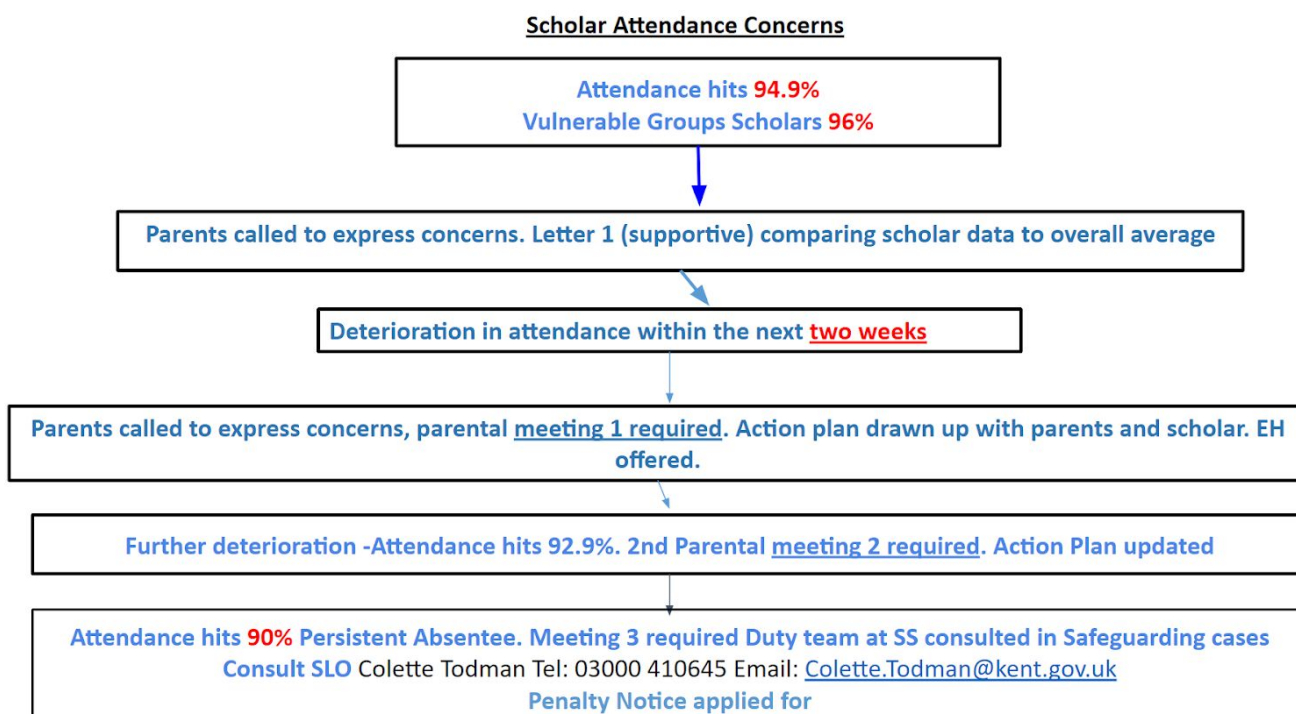
Exceptional Circumstances – Family holidays cannot be approved, even if the parent is unable to take time off work at any other time. An "exceptional circumstance" is defined as an unavoidable cause e.g. a one-off emergency situation which prevents the child from attending school.

If the absence is not authorised and the holiday is taken anyway, the case will be referred to KCC PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service (PRIAS) who will issue a Penalty Notice to each parent for each child taken out of school.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A scholar becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level will do considerable damage to any child's educational prospects. TFS expects parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

Where poor attendance occurs the school will follow this procedure:



Penalty Notice Proceedings

TFS will work hard to engage with all our families to ensure that, where attendance of a student is a concern, appropriate support is identified and implemented, where appropriate and where possible. We expect that all parents/carers will engage positively with support and that attendance will improve as a result. However, as a last resort, the school will request a penalty notice for unauthorised absence of their child from school (where the child is of compulsory school age).

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Principal, following the Local Authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- a number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- one-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

A penalty notice may be issued under the following circumstances:

- Overt truancy (including scholars caught on truancy sweeps)
- Parentally-condoned absences
- Unauthorised leave for the purposes of a family holiday in term-time*
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the school register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of exclusion.

Parents/carers will be issued with a Warning Penalty Notice Letter from the Local Authority when attendance is less than 90% over a specific 12 month period. This letter sets out 15 school days (3 weeks) during which time **no unauthorised absence should be recorded**. If an unauthorised absence is recorded during this period a Penalty Notice and fine will be issued (one per parent/carer per child).

The only exception to this is for holidays taken during term time that exceed 5 days or more over a 100 day period (*) ie end of a term and beginning of a new term. A Penalty Notice letter is issued by KCC advising of a fine instantly without the 15 day watching period. The fine is issued to parents/carers with Parental Responsibility who took or agreed for the scholar to be absent from school for a holiday during term time. If attendance is greater than 90% over the 12 month period ending with the last day of the holiday, no fine will be requested.

Where a Penalty Notice has been served regulations state that the penalty of £120 must be paid by the parents/carers. This figure reduces to £60 if paid within 21 days. Where a Penalty Notice is not paid within 21 days of issue the Local Authority may instigate court proceedings.

The Role of the School Liaison Officer

Parents are expected to contact the school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may refer the child to the School Liaison Officer (SLO) from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, a SLO may instigate prosecution in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the SLO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

Children Missing in Education

No child will be removed from roll without consultation between the Principal **and the KCC PRU, Inclusion & Attendance Service**. Where a child is missing from education with prolonged absences that are unexplained or if a family moves away from the area, but does not register with another school, the school will alert the local authority who will then take action according to the child missing in education policy and procedures. Movement of children between local authorities and schools is tracked nationally.

Publication of Attendance Figures

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and scholars as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Scholar is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Scholar is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Scholar arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Scholar is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Scholar is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Scholar has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Scholar is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Scholar is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Scholar is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Scholar has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Scholar has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Scholar has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a scholar will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Scholar is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Scholar is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 scholar is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Scholar from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Scholar is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Scholar is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for scholar's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Scholar arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Scholar of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or scholar is in custody
Z	Scholar not on admission register	Register set up but scholar has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day