



**The Telford Langley School**  
**ENSURING EXCELLENCE**

## **Attendance Policy**

Approved: Summer 2021

# Attendance Policy

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# 1. Introduction

For any student to meet their full potential academically, a high level of attendance is crucial. The school regards attendance and punctuality of pupils as a priority, with a view to encouraging high attendance rates and avoiding concerning levels of persistent or intermittent absenteeism. Our aim is to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance for all, in order to enable every student to take full advantage of the educational opportunities, both academic and social, which are available to them.

The Telford Langley School ensures a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communicate whenever there are any concerns about attendance. If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents/carers and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible.

In line with our ethos, The Telford Langley School is committed to providing the best possible education for our students, ensuring equal opportunities for all. Our intention is that each student feels valued and supported and our emphasis on building excellent working relationships with students is a key feature in the way in which we promote excellent attendance.

This policy outlines the various strategies we employ to promote outstanding attendance which includes creating a pleasant working environment, engaging and motivating students ensuring early intervention when attendance begins to raise concerns and instigating further intervention when attendance is poor, including working with external agencies where necessary. Furthermore, this policy outlines our procedures for monitoring attendance and addressing persistent non-attendance.

## Key Information

- Many students at The Telford Langley school achieve 100% attendance and the target for every student is 95% or above.
- Attendance of 95% means your child has missed 10 days of school
- Attendance of 90% means your child has missed 20 days of school
- Attendance of 85% means your child has missed 30 days of school
- Persistent absence is classed as 90% or below.
- The Education Welfare Officer will engage with parents/carers if your child's attendance is 95% or below.

## 2. Legal Requirements

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning and leaves them vulnerable to falling behind. Any student's absence disrupts teaching routines so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

This policy conforms to the legal requirements as detailed in The Education Act 1996, which states:

'The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her/them to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- to their age, ability and aptitude and
- to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.'

For educational purposes the term 'parent' is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The Act also contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school stating:

'If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered student at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, their parent is guilty of an offence.

If in the circumstances mentioned [above] the parent knows that his child is failing to attend regularly at the school and fails without reasonable justification to cause him/her/they to do so, they are guilty of an offence.'

This policy also addresses and conforms to the requirements outlined in the later document entitled 'School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'. (August 2020)

### 3. Roles and Responsibilities

Ensuring students attend school regularly is the responsibility of all members of our school community, including all staff, the students themselves and their parents/carers. At The Telford Langley School the specific responsibilities of staff are as follows:

**All staff members** are expected to lead by example, modeling excellent attendance and punctuality, thereby conveying a message about the importance we attach to this matter. In line with our 'Ensuring Excellence' remit all staff aim to create a positive atmosphere, developing excellent working relationships with students which are supportive and encouraging.

**All teachers** have high expectations of good attendance and punctuality which are praised and rewarded regularly. Non-attendance and lateness are both followed up rapidly through first day of absence automated text messages. Reasons for absence are established and recorded electronically on the school's computerised registration system. Students who arrive late into school after the official register is closed, sign in using inventory registration, before attending their lesson. After every recorded late, a student will receive an after-school detention and will spend time with pastoral staff focusing on ways to improve their attendance, including, where appropriate, setting short and longer term attendance targets.

For safeguarding and legal purposes, it is vital that the school has an accurate register of students which is completed promptly at the start of the day. Teaching staff are expected to prioritise this task at these times. Teachers are also asked to complete electronic registers for every lesson so that all students can be tracked from lesson to lesson.

The Telford Langley School maintains its attendance and admission records in accordance with The Education (Pupil Attendance Records) Regulation 2006 and The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulation 1995 (amended 1997).

All teachers regularly review their class registers for individual lessons and it is expected that class teachers report all attendance concerns to the Attendance Officer as soon as concerns arise.

**The Admissions Officer** maintains the school's Admission Register ensuring that students are on roll on their first day in school and that all leavers are taken off roll only when the school is certain of their destination. The Admissions Officer ensures that all relevant members of staff are informed of starters and leavers and that the official register, in terms of students on roll, is accurate.

**Personal Tutors** are the members of staff who see their tutees every day of the week. As such, the Personal Tutor is responsible, along with the Head of Year, for monitoring the attendance of all the students in their group. Personal Tutor should address attendance and/or punctuality concerns directly with students during mentoring sessions and should liaise closely with Heads of Year in sharing their concerns.

**Heads of Year** are the lead members of pastoral staff responsible for ensuring that attendance in their Year is monitored and that intervention takes place wherever necessary when attendance is low or in decline. Heads of Year are responsible for following up unauthorised absences, lateness, planning interventions, including liaising with parents, students and the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

**The Attendance Officer** is responsible for monitoring whole school attendance on a daily basis, ensuring all registers are completed accurately and on time for periods 1 to 5. The Attendance Officer also ensures that the parents of non-attenders are notified by text message on the first day and any subsequent days of absence and that reasons for absences are provided by parents after each period of absence. The daily attendance figure will be shown on screens around the school and will be updated by the Attendance Officer.

The Attendance Officer ensures the official register is accurate and provides regular printouts of data and updates the attendance tracker to support Heads of Year and the Leadership Team in their analysis of attendance trends.

**The Education Welfare Officer** meets regularly with each Head of Year to plan intervention strategies for persistent non-attenders; these strategies may include parental meetings, home visits, involvement of key students in intervention groups or target setting or ultimately prosecution, where necessary. The Education Welfare Officer will liaise with the Local Authority service where necessary, to help address attendance concerns.

**Deputy Head (Relationships)** – The Deputy Head maintains overall responsibility for attendance, ensuring compliance with the procedures outlined in this document. Non-compliance is followed up and rectified as appropriate. The Deputy Head regularly analyses attendance patterns, ensuring that in circumstances where attendance continues to be a concern, the EWO is informed and pre-legal targets are set. The Deputy Head regularly analyses attendance data, keeping parents, students, school leaders and governors informed of issues relating to attendance and punctuality, either via newsletters, Assemblies, verbal feedback or written reports.

**Head of School** – The Head of School ensures that the school complies with the attendance procedures outlined in this policy. Regular meetings between the Head of School and the Deputy Head responsible for attendance ensure high standards of attendance and punctuality are expected and maintained.

**Parents and Carers** have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school or receives an appropriate education. The school regularly clarifies, via the website and the newsletter, the timings of the school day, as well as term dates and dates of planned closures, such as training days.

Parents/carers should inform the school (before 9.00am on each day of absence) by letter, telephone or in person when their child is absent from school. A student's absence will be viewed as unauthorised until a satisfactory explanation is provided by parents/carers. In cases of persistent absence, parental support will be expected and where attendance levels do not improve, the EWO will engage the LA to set attendance targets, for which parents/carers will be held responsible.

**All Students** are expected to attend school regularly and punctually. Students whose attendance is a concern will be supported initially by their tutor and where necessary, their Head of Year, Assistant Head of Year, Student Support Officer and the EWO.

Students are expected to take responsibility for catching up on all work missed due to absence.

## 4. Monitoring and Evaluation

The Deputy Head (Relationships) is responsible for attendance reports termly to Governors on attendance, comparing data with that of previous years for the same period and annually with national data. Personal Tutors, Assistant Heads of Year, Heads of Year, the Attendance Officer, EWO, SLT pastoral links and the Deputy Head, all monitor the attendance and punctuality of students under their remit.

## 5. Registration Procedures

The school uses a computerised system called Bromcom to monitor and record absences. Morning registers are taken at the start of period 1 at 8.25am every day. Students who are late to period 1 are expected to sign in using the schools Inentry system located in reception, these students will receive a late mark (L). Students who arrive after the registers have closed will be marked with an unauthorised late mark (U) which will adversely affect a student's attendance.

Afternoon registration takes place at the start of period 4 at 12.05pm. Students who are late to period 4 should go straight to their lesson where their teacher will amend the register to a late mark (L).

**Punctuality** - The school wants all students to appreciate the importance of punctuality and as such, every student who is late receives an after school SLT detention. During their detention, students will discuss the reasons for their lateness with a member of the pastoral team and support will be put in place as appropriate. All late detentions are logged and the parents of persistent offenders will be contacted to discuss the issues behind the lateness. Parents are informed that further lateness, after registers have closed and for which an acceptable reason is not forthcoming, will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and if ongoing, may result in prosecution.

The school emphasises its expectations regarding attendance and punctuality to parents/carers via newsletters and the school website. Patterns of absence and lateness are closely monitored to assess the impact on learning and where attendance concerns become critical, outside agencies are engaged to ensure the students concerned have the best possible chance of achieving and continue to have access to an appropriate curriculum.

## 6. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

The school decides how attendance and absence should be recorded using national codes which comply with the regulations as outlined in 'School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities'. (August 2020)

Code	Description
/ or \	Present am or pm
L	Late arrival before registration is closed
B	Educated off-site
C	Leave of absence authorised by the school (exceptional circumstances only)
D	Dual registered at another educational establishment
E	Excluded without alternative provision
F	Extended family holiday (authorised)
G	Unauthorised family holiday
H	Holiday authorised by the School (exceptional circumstances only)
I	Illness
J	The student is on an interview for a job or a place at another school
M	Medical or dental appointments
N	The reason for absence not yet provided
O	Absent without authorisation/the School is dissatisfied with explanation
P	Participating in a supervised sporting activity
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave (this must be 'used sparingly')
T	Gypsy, Traveller and Roma absence
U	Arrived into school after registration closed
V	Participating in an approved educational trip or visit

W	Attending approved Work Experience
Y	Forced and partial school closure
X	COVID related absence

**Unauthorised (Codes: U and O), absence includes the following circumstances:**

- The student stays at home to mind the house or to look after siblings (the guidance suggests that absence in such cases should only be granted in exceptional circumstances)
- The student is shopping during school hours
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- The student is absent for unexceptional special occasions (e.g. a birthday)
- Truancy before or during the school day
- The student is away from the School on a family holiday during term times without authorisation from the school
- Without medical evidence, absence relating to a child's menstrual cycle will be unauthorised.

A full list of codes and definitions can be found in '**School attendance - Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities**'. (August 2020).

**Leave for Medical Appointments** – Every effort should be made by parents/carers to arrange medical appointments outside of the school day to minimise disruption to a child's education and to maintain high levels of attendance. Where this is not possible, appointments should be made towards the end of the school day so that students can receive their AM and PM attendance marks. The school will not automatically authorise a whole school day for routine medical and dentist appointments. Where possible, parents/carers are asked to provide medical evidence if your child is attending an appointment during school hours.

**Persistent Absenteeism (PA)** – A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% of more of schooling across the academic year for any reason. Absence at this level will result in considerable damage to any child's education prospects and the school will require parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

**Leave of absence** - The Government issued the following regulations in September 2006 regarding Leave of Absence: The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Coronavirus) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These regulations stipulate the following:

- Head of Schools shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances, and the Head of School must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.
- Head of Schools will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.



- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being unauthorised.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being unauthorised which may result in legal action against the parent, by Fixed Penalty Notice issued by Telford and Wrekin, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- A Fixed Penalty Notice fine of £60 per child per parent will be issued. The fine will increase to £120 per child per parent if not paid within 21 days. Failure to pay the £120 within the period of 22 to 28 days may lead to court proceedings.
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the time frame set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Telford and Wrekin Attendance Support Team to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.
- Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case-by-case basis and on its own merits.

## **7. Procedures for Following-up Absences**

- The school uses an automated text message service to inform parents/carers of their child's absence from school on the morning of that absence. The message requests that parents contact the school immediately to provide a reason for absence.
- Schools have a duty to safeguard students, so it is vital contact is made with someone you have identified on the emergency contacts list. If we are concerned about your child's welfare, a home visit will be carried out by the Education Welfare Officer if we cannot make contact via telephone. This will be recorded and where concerns persist, referrals will be made to other agencies such as police and social services.
- Once a parent contacts school with a reason for absence this is logged on to the Bromcom system, which authorises the absence. If the school is not satisfied with the reason provided for absence, an unauthorised absence is recorded.
- If a student is persistently (or intermittently) absent, the Education Welfare Officer or Head of Year will make contact with parents/carers to discuss these concerns. Parents may be invited into school to meet with relevant members of the pastoral team to resolve any issues which are resulting in poor attendance. Pupils with attendance which continues to be a concern will be placed on an attendance support plan. The Deputy Headteacher (Relationships) may be involved in cases considered to be of serious concern.
- If a student is persistently absent or late and the school's efforts to affect an improvement have been unsuccessful, the situation will be referred to the Attendance Support Team, who will consider whether prosecution is necessary.
- Notes from parents/carers are forwarded to the Attendance Officer for inclusion on the computerised registers and students' records. Similarly, all telephone message and emails regarding absence and emails regarding absence/lateness are logged on the computerised registers as part of the student's records.
- If a student is absent for ten days without the school being able to ascertain the reason for that absence, the case will immediately be referred to the Telford and Wrekin's Children Missing from Education (CME) team by the Education Welfare Officer, following liaison with the Head of Year.
- If a student is ill for two consecutive weeks, then a referral to Telford and Wrekin Attendance Support Team must be made by the Education Welfare Officer. A medical note must have been provided for this absence.

## 8. Promoting Excellent Attendance

At our school all staff work hard to create a positive working environment for our students in which they feel safe and supported. The school believes that students have the best opportunity to achieve if they feel happy and valued. This approach is at the heart of our pastoral care. In order for a student to meet their potential, they need to have full access to their lessons and the school aims to encourage students to have the highest levels of attendance through a range of strategies including the following:

- Providing a varied and flexible curriculum to meet the needs of all students, challenging the most able and supporting the students who struggle with their learning.
- Regularly collecting and analysing attendance data by identifying patterns, correlating attendance with achievement and setting short, medium and longer term targets to support and inform policy/practice.
- Setting personal targets for students whose attendance is a cause for concern. The Personal Tutor or Head of Year will monitor and review these targets. It may be that assistance with this matter is required from the EWO.
- Providing individually tailored re-integration programmes, when appropriate, for students who have been absent for an extended period.
- Reporting termly to the School's Local Governing Body on attendance matters.
- Liaising, when appropriate, with other agencies including the Children's Services, CAMHS, Early help and support when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Making regular visits to feeder Primary Schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible Secondary transition. Discussions with Primary School teachers will seek to identify those students who may require extra support during this process.
- Holding regular Celebration Assemblies which reward students who have excellent attendance each term.
- Ensuring, in partnership with the Local Authority, that regular pre-legal meetings are held to support parents and students in raising their attendance levels in order to avoid prosecution.

### **The Legal Attendance Process (Pre-Legal Meetings & Sanctions)**

If a student's attendance falls below 95%, the Education Welfare Officer will contact parents/carers by phone or letter to highlight the schools concerns and/or discuss any mitigating factors. A first letter of concern will be sent to parents/carers (SAL 1).

If there is no improvement within a two-week period, parents/carers will be sent a second letter of concern (SAL 2). At this point, the parent/carer must provide medical evidence for further absences. If this cannot be provided then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

The Education Welfare Officer will complete visits to the homes of students whose attendance is not improving or if school have not been provided with a reason for absence or the reason provided is not deemed satisfactory.

If there is no improvement within a two-week period after the second letter (SAL 2), a meeting will be arranged with parents/carers and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss strategies for improving attendance and potentially to set an internal target (Attendance Concern Meeting).

If, after the Attendance Concern Meeting there is no sustained improvement in attendance, the Education Welfare Officer will refer to the Attendance Support Team to begin prosecutions. All parties with Parental Responsibility can be prosecuted, even if the student does not reside with them as the main residence.

The Attendance Support Team will issue Warning Notices and Court Action will be considered. The penalty, if found guilty, can be up to £2,500 or a maximum of 3 months imprisonment for a subsequent offence.

An alternative sanction also available for persistent non-attendance is the Penalty Warning Notice. These can be issued in cases of 20 unauthorised absences. A Penalty Notice can be issued where there have been further unauthorised absences after the warning notice has been served during a 3 week period.

### **Contact Details**

It is a parent/carers sole responsibility to ensure you provide school with up to date contact details, as soon as anything changes, in case of emergency and to ensure all correspondence reaches you. We require up to date home addresses for anyone with parental responsibility, contact phone numbers and email addresses.

## **9. Data Collection**

Attendance data is collected, collated, analysed, published and used to focus and motivate teachers, students and parents/carers. It is used to show attendance improvements for individuals and groups of people as well as to identify trends.

Data is used to:

- Monitor absence or lateness of students so that appropriate action can be taken
- Monitor patterns of absence and lateness across the school to identify trends in relation to:
  - o Houses/Year groups
  - o Individual students

This information is made available within School and to the Local Authority in order to plan effective responses and to set targets for improvement.

- Inform future schools of previous attendance levels for students in order for them to work effectively with their students from the beginning
- Inform parents/carers of their own children's attendance details
- Enable the school to publish data in relation to levels of absenteeism for Governors and parents
- Assist the school in setting challenging but realistic attendance targets for the future.

## 10. Re-Integration Strategies

Where students have been absent through sickness for three school days or more, a member of the pastoral team will discuss with student and/or parent the most appropriate way to re-integrate their child back into school. For some students it may be appropriate to have work sent home to them to work on, with the understanding that appropriate support will be given by the school upon their return. In these circumstances, upon returning to the school, teachers will normally focus on work in the core subjects, identifying the priority needs of the student so as not to hinder future learning. Special needs support will also be available, as appropriate.

For other students, a re-integration package may be necessary, whereby students return to school on a reduced timetable, building up to a full timetable, wherever possible over the space of a fortnight.

In all of these circumstances, the focus is on supporting students to re-engage in their learning at the earliest possible opportunity.

## 11. Rewards and Sanctions

Good attendance is often closely linked to good behaviour. Effective approaches to promoting and maintaining good rates of attendance are characterised by good behaviour management systems with clear boundaries and a balance between sanctions and rewards. This policy should be seen alongside our whole school Behaviour Policy.

Schools which are effective in promoting good attendance are also likely to have excellent special needs provision and high-quality pastoral support.

Tackling attendance is the responsibility of all of our school community and is influenced by the whole curriculum and by teachers' awareness of students' response to it.

The following are examples of rewards and sanctions that the School uses with regard to attendance:

**REWARDS** - Certificates, Celebration Assemblies, class rewards, letters and postcards home, attendance prizes.

**SANCTIONS** - Detentions, late marks and attendance percentages recorded on permanent school records which may affect references for the future, meetings with Head of Year, parental interviews, potentially leading to prosecution.

Additionally, students who do not attend regularly invariably fall behind with work and may have difficulties catching up, often resulting in incomplete work and misbehaviour, which carry their own sanctions.

## 12. Concluding Points

All of our attendance procedures are intended to ensure that:

- we have a consistent recording system of student attendance which enables us to meet legal requirements
- the security and safety of our students is a priority

- trends of lateness and absenteeism are identified and addressed

### **13. Links with other School Policies**

Our Attendance Policy is part of a wider set of policies and documents all aimed at ensuring that all of our students receive a broad, balanced education in a safe, caring environment. This ethos is reflected in the following related documents:

- Behaviour and Discipline Policy (including Anti-Bullying Policy)
- Child Protection Policy
- Ensuring Excellence document
- Education Act 1996