



## **Attendance Policy**

**Date: March 2018**

**Review Date: March 2019**

# **Tinsley Meadows Primary Academy**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Rationale**

The school will make every effort to encourage good attendance and punctuality in order to achieve our aims of meeting the needs of all pupils - to help them develop academically, socially, physically and spiritually in a stimulating, supportive environment.

The curriculum is planned to ensure continuity and progression. Absence from school inevitably has an adverse effect on a child's progress.

### **Aims**

- To ensure every child has good attendance, enabling full and equal access to educational opportunities, whilst taking into account medical needs.
- To ensure punctuality, and an uninterrupted start to the school day for all pupils.
- To ensure an accurate record of attendance and punctuality is maintained, and reasons for absence and lack of punctuality are recorded.

### **Statutory Duties**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient full-time education, either by regular attendance at a school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupils' attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

### **Implementation**

#### **School will ensure that:**

- Pupils are registered accurately;
- Attendance targets are set for individual pupils and year groups;
- Parents or guardians are contacted on the first day of absence when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised;
- Pupil attendance and lateness are monitored regularly and tackled using appropriate strategies e.g Attendance Panels, referrals to MAST;
- School attendance statistics are reported.

### **Pupils will be encouraged to:**

- Attend school regularly;
- Arrive on time.

### **Parents or guardians will:**

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality;
- Inform the school on the first day of non-attendance,
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

The LEA is responsible for ensuring that parents meet their responsibilities. A MAST worker who provides an important link between schools and families, carries out attendance enforcement locally.

The Executive Head of school is responsible for informing the LA if a pupil fails to attend regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of 10 days and the absence is treated as unauthorised. The school will notify the MAST Team earlier if there are areas of concern.

Staff responsibilities:

- Class teachers / Teaching Assistants will mark the register.
- The Learning Mentor will carry out all daily attendance work and referrals to the MAST Team.
- The Head of school will monitor attendance weekly.

## **Pupil Registration**

Attendance registers for all pupils on roll will be taken twice a day on SIMs – promptly, at the beginning of each session, using only those codes agreed. These registers will be saved every day by 8.45am and by 1.15pm in order for Learning Mentors and Pupil Support Officer to check who is not in school and chase non-attendance.

For each pupil, the register will be marked as present or absent. If a pupil is marked absent, the register must indicate whether or not the absence has been authorised by the school.

Afternoon absences that may be a cause for concern are passed on to the school office as soon as possible by the class teacher, so that an attempt can be made to resolve the situation as soon as possible.

Codes used by Pupil Support Officer or Learning Mentor once reasons for absence have been established are:

- B- Educated off site (NOT Dual registration).
- C- Other Authorised Circumstances.
- E- Excluded (No alternative provision made).
- G- Family Holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement).
- H- Family Holiday (Agreed) exceptional circumstances only.
- I- Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments).

M-Medical/Dental appointments.

N- No reason yet provided for absence.

O-Unauthorised absence.

P-Approved sporting activity (Attending approved educational activity).

R-Religious observance.

V-Educational visit or trip (Attending approved educational activity).

D-Dual registration i.e. pupil attending another establishment – indicates dual registration not attendance.

## **Punctuality**

The school recognises that no child enjoys or desires the trauma and attention that surrounds regular lateness. Whilst being sympathetic, it is felt that punctuality is a very important habit to develop, and school will try its best to find ways to foster this and to solve the problems of persistent lateness. Punctuality and attendance often go hand in hand, and they are addressed in school in similar ways.

- Punctuality is monitored regularly by the school's Pupil Support Officer/Learning Mentor.
- Records are kept of the children who are late and of their times of arrival.
- If a child is late on more than two occasions in one week, a letter is sent home informing his / her parents of this.
- Repetition of this, results in a home visit or the invitation to discuss the problem in school.
- At this meeting, parents are reminded of the school's views on punctuality and of the timings of school sessions. They are encouraged to address the issue with their child and to be involved in monitoring the situation over an agreed period.

## **Authorised or Unauthorised Absence?**

Authorised absence is absence with the permission of the Executive Head of school, or her representative. Absence is only authorised when a satisfactory explanation has been provided. e.g. for illness, medical appointments, assessments, days of religious observance that fall on a school day.

Unauthorised absence is absence without the permission of the Executive Head of school, or her representative. This includes all unexplained or unjustified absences. e.g. to go shopping; to celebrate a birthday; sleeping in; one child is off, so all are kept off; to look after siblings; minor ailments; to visit family etc.

## **Notifying School of Absence**

Parents are expected to contact school by 9.00 am on the first day of their child's absence to inform us of the reason for absence so that this can be recorded in the register. A record of incoming telephone calls is kept. If a child has been seen by a doctor and is considered to be not fit to attend school, then a signed note by the doctor must be provided. The local doctor's surgeries are working with the school and will happily complete these forms. In the interest of best practice a safe and well check is completed on the third day of absence if medical evidence is not provided.

If a pupil is absent without explanation, a member of the school staff will contact the parents on the first morning of absence. Records are kept of all calls and home visits are

recorded on CPOM's. First day contact makes it clear to pupils and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will always be followed up, by referral to the MAST Team if deemed necessary.

### **Absence passes**

As part of the drive to raise standards, improve attendance, and reduce truancy and unauthorised absence, the LEA and Police organise regular truancy sweeps across the city.

If a pupil has an appointment during the school day, parents must present their appointment card at the school office.

### **Holidays in Term Time**

As stated by the Department for Education:

'The current law does not give any entitlement to parents to take their child on a holiday during term time. Any application for leave must be in **exceptional circumstances** and the Executive Head of school must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.'

The Executive Head of school will only consider giving permission for a pupil to be absent from school in term time in '**very exceptional circumstances**' and proof will be requested by the Executive Head of school. Parents must complete a '**holiday request form**' (obtained from reception) and return it promptly to Julie Mason- Pupil Support Officer, Craig Swift- Learning Mentor or Lindsey Wills- Senior Learning Mentor. The holiday request form must be completed and returned at least 20 days prior to your intended holiday. The parents/guardians will be invited to attend a meeting with Mrs D Sanderson, of school, Mrs T Macpherson, Deputy Head or Miss L Wills, Senior Learning Mentor to discuss the holiday request in further detail.

If parents choose to disregard the decision of the Executive Head of school where the request is not considered to be exceptional circumstances, the Local Authority may take legal action under section 444 of the 1996 Education Act. The Act states that parents have a legal obligation to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

Taking unauthorised term time holidays may make parents liable for a Penalty Notice (fine).

This policy is in line with the Sheffield policy 'Exceptional Leave During Term Time' which is contained in Appendix A.

### **Penalty Notices**

Provisions were made within the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to tackle the issue of truancy and irregular school attendance. These include the use of Penalty Notices and Parenting Contacts.

The school will inform all parents and carers about the use of Penalty Notices when the child is admitted. Reminders will be issued on a regular basis through the school newsletter. Parents and carers will be kept well informed of their own child's attendance record.

*The Code of Conduct for the Administering of Penalty Notices and guidance for schools, issued by the Attendance and Inclusion Service, are appended to this policy.*

## **Promoting and Celebrating Attendance**

Parents are informed about the need for good attendance at the New Starters' meetings, through DfES and LEA leaflets, in the prospectus, on the website, in the home school agreement, in regular newsletters, and through the attendance display board.

Key stage 1 and 2 children have an attendance passport which is stamped once daily to show full attendance and punctuality. A child is given a token for a full week's attendance and can exchange five of these for a small prize – kept in the classroom. Prizes are given for attendance by the pastoral team based in the main office for 10 and 20 tokens. Pupils must be bought to the office by a TA or an apprentice. This is for children who decide to keep their tokens and claim a bigger prize.

In our weekly assembly, children with 100% attendance are put into a draw and one child is selected for a prize. Their photograph is taken which is displayed on the attendance board in reception.

A class attendance award is presented each week. The class with the best attendance receives the Attendance Trophy and a prize. This is reflected on the whole school attendance board situated in reception.

At the end of the Summer term, children with 100% attendance will go on a trip in recognition of their accomplishment.

## Appendix A

### Sheffield City Council

#### Exceptional Leave during Term Time Guidance

August 2017 v3

##### Introduction

1.1 This guidance document has been developed to ensure that Sheffield City Council's People portfolio provides a clear statement of intent, expectation and consistent guidance in relation to the management of ALL term time leave of pupils who attend a school in Sheffield. It has been produced to ensure all decisions are within the national legislation. Legally there is no entitlement for parents to take their child out of school during term time. Any application for leave must be in exceptional circumstances and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

1.2 Parents can be fined for taking unauthorized leave during term time without consent from the school.

1.3 This document also responds to the updated guidance issued by Department for Education (DfE) which states:-

Term-time holiday- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Head teachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents can be fined for taking unauthorised leave during term time without consent from the school.

1.4 There are a number of documents and templates to be used alongside this guidance, to support schools in managing Exceptional Leave in Term Time and Children Missing from Education.

## 2. Rationale

2.1 This guidance is provided for parents/carers, schools, and governing bodies, on the process with regard to requesting, considering and the authorising of exceptional term time leave.

2.2 This guidance is provided for schools to manage and respond to situations where leave is not authorised or agreed and the procedures for the removal from school roll. This would include parents/carers who prevent their child from attending school regularly without a valid reason for the absence. Examples include: parents/carers who regularly take the extended weekend (Monday or Friday), advantage of last minute deals, or repeated visits abroad.

2.3 There may be exceptional circumstances where leave in school term time may be granted. This would be decided by the Head teacher on an individual basis for each request. There is strong evidence to indicate that significant absence from school during term time can have a negative impact upon a child's attainment and learning.

2.4 Research has shown that poor attendance impacts negatively on children's attainment. Children have to attend school for 190 days per year, this leaves 175 days (including weekends) free for families to take holidays.

## 3. Term time leave

Children Young People and Families (CYPF) recognise the important link between regular attendance at school and the educational attainment of children. Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

3.1 Action may be taken by CYPF against parents/carers who fail to ensure that their child is properly educated. The action may result in a formal warning, a fine, or an appearance at court.

3.2 Parents and carers who regularly take their child out of school in term time may be prosecuted via the Magistrates Court.

3.3 Parents/carers are legally required to request exceptional term time leave from the Head teacher of the school at which their child is registered.

3.4 Head teachers of schools will consider all term time leave requests. Each request must be considered on its own merit and the impact upon the child's learning and wellbeing must be central to the decision made. However, a Head teacher may take into account previous leave requests and other factors related to the child when making their decision.

3.5 Parents/carers who do not request term time leave and take their child on 'unauthorised leave', or fail to keep the school informed of changes to leave arrangements, may receive a fine, be prosecuted and/or the children may lose their place at their school.

## 4. Requesting of term time leave in exceptional circumstances

4.1 Requests for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 school days in advance of any arrangement being made. This will allow sufficient time for the request to be considered by the school. The request will be made in writing (letter or email) by the parent/carer using Appendix 1: Request for Exceptional Leave form. One form per child per request should be completed.

4.2 Schools should make arrangements to support parents/carers who have low literacy skills or for whom English is not their first language.

4.3 Exceptional Term time leave requests must include specific start and end dates, as this will formally constitute the leave period. Where no specific dates are provided, then the request cannot be considered or granted.

4.4 Parents/carers who are intending to travel abroad with their children during term time should not book travel prior to securing approval from the school.

4.5 Any changes to dates agreed by the school will require a re-submission for authorisation prior to departure.

4.6 The Head teacher's decision is final.

#### 5. Family Emergency - where no leave has been requested

5.1 There will be some occasions where it has not been possible for the parent/carer to make a request for exceptional term time leave. Whilst emergency situations are often difficult, parents/carers are still required to contact the school at the earliest possible opportunity and submit a written request for exceptional term time leave. This written request can be made on behalf of the parent/carer by someone nominated by the parent/carer. The request must include a specific leave period including a return date.

5.2 Parents/carers taking their children out of school due to a family emergency are encouraged to consider:

That they have considered the impact and appropriateness for their child ;  Whether or not alternative care arrangements could be made for the child to remain in school, e.g. stay with an extended family member;  That they have looked at limiting the amount of time absent from school.

5.3 Where parents/carers have not requested leave from the school which their child attends, the child is at risk of losing their place at the current school in accordance with Section 8(h)1 .

#### 6. Considering the exceptional term time leave request

6.1 The school should consider the exceptional term time leave request and in accordance with their own school policy will either send a written response only if leave is to be authorised or some schools may respond to each request submitted, the response should be given in a timely manner.

6.2 The school will consider all requests for exceptional term time leave in accordance with the current legislation and this guidance. Schools may refer or seek the advice of Children and Families Attendance and Inclusion Officers (A&IOs), prior to making a decision but the final decision remains with the Headteacher.

6.3 It is good practice for schools to meet with parents/carers (wherever possible) to discuss the leave request prior to making the decision.

The school will need to consider each request on its own merits and whether there are exceptional circumstances for authorising the absence.

6.4 When schools are considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional Term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose

- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.

## 7. The decision and informing the parent/carer by the School

7.1 The school will reach a decision and in accordance with their own school policy will either send a written response if leave is to be authorised or some schools may respond to each request submitted, the response should be given in a timely manner.

7.2 Schools must ensure that appropriate arrangements are made to communicate the decision to families who have low levels of literacy or where English is not the first language.

A decision may result in the term time leave request being (a) Authorised<sup>2</sup>, (b) Unauthorised<sup>3</sup> or (c) part Authorised and Unauthorised. For example, Mr X has requested 3 weeks term time leave for his child. The school acknowledges that the reason given is important but feels that 3 weeks is excessive and authorise 1 weeks leave, with the remaining 2 weeks being unauthorised.

## 8. Penalty Notice Holiday Fine

8.1 If parents/carers take their children on holiday during term time for 5 or more consecutive school days (spanning over holiday periods or weekends, would constitute consecutive school days) and this is not authorised by the School, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice of £60 (if paid in 21 days) or £120 (if paid between 21 and 28 days). Each parent/carer can be issued with a notice, one per parent per family, i.e. one fine per parent/carer per family, regardless of the number of children in the family.

8.2 The responsibility for requesting Penalty Notice Holiday Fines is with the school and will be issued when requested by the Head Teacher, unless it would not be in the public interest to do so, child is under statutory school age or incomplete/missing information on requests.

The School should provide the paperwork for pupils identified and this should include:

- Completed Request for Support Form – stating a holiday fine
- Parents request for holiday absence plus the school's response
- Up to date attendance certificate – showing unauthorised absence
- BLUE Head teachers certificate – covering holiday period

## 9. Recording of Leave by the School

9.1 School attendance registers are legal documents and the information recorded in them can be used as evidence in legal proceedings. It is therefore important that the information contained is accurate and the correct absence code is used. All absences must be coded in accordance with *Absence and Attendance Codes: Guidance for Schools and Local Authorities* (DCSF, Jan 2009).

CODE Description Category:

- B- Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)
- C- Other Authorised Circumstances
- E- Excluded (No alternative provision made)
- G- Family Holiday (NOT Agreed or days in excess of agreement)
- H- Family Holiday (Agreed) exceptional circumstances only

I- Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)  
M- Medical/Dental appointments  
N- No reason yet provided for absence  
O- Unauthorised absence - not covered by any other code/description)  
P- Approved sporting activity (Attending approved educational activity)  
R- Religious observance  
V- Educational visit or trip  
D- Dual registration i.e. pupil attending another establishment – indicates dual registration not attendance

9.2 Schools may use the code 'D' (dual registered) where they are able to demonstrate that a child will receive suitable education in another education establishment (in the UK or abroad) for a temporary basis. For example, a parent is required to travel abroad due to the nature of their work and they get their child registered at another school for the duration of their visit. The main school is required to ensure that it accurately monitors and records the attendance of the child at the dual registered base.

## 10. Process for removing a child's details from the school roll

10.1 A child's name can only be removed from school roll if one of the conditions prescribed in the Education (Pupil Registration Regulations) (England) 2006; Section 8(1) is satisfied.

10.1 Section 8(1)(f)4 would apply if the child has failed to attend school within 10 school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which leave was granted ('authorised absence'). Section 8(1)(h)5 would apply if the child had been continuously absent from school for a period not less than 20 school days and at no time was that period authorised by the school (unauthorised absence).

10.2 In addition to the above 8(1) f/h, the school and CYPF must also demonstrate that they have satisfied the following two conditions:

- That the Head teacher does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the child is unable to attend the school by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause.
- Both the Head teacher and the local authority have failed, after reasonable enquiry, to ascertain where the pupil is.

10.3 Schools should not wait for the expiry of the periods specified above, prior to making enquiries. Enquiries should start on the first day of absence or first day immediately commencing the period for which the child was expected to return to school.

10.4 Schools must forward a completed Children Missing from Education (CME) Checklist (Appendix 5) and Pupil Deregistration Request (Appendix 6) to the CME team for all children, who they feel meet one of the legal requirements for deregistration.

10.5 The CME team will provide written confirmation (within 10 school days) to the school confirming the date the child can be removed. If a child cannot be removed the CME team will provide the school with an explanation.

10.6 The responsibility for the child transfers from the school to the CME Team from the date of the deregistration letter.

10.7 Schools must send an electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) to the School to Schools website for all children who have left their school. The electronic transfer of data is a legal requirement under the Education (Pupil Information) Regulations 2005, as amended.

10.8 Exceptions to the normal rules regarding deregistration include:

- Children at a Special School who cannot be removed without the approval of the Special Educational Needs Department.
- Children who are detained as part of a Court Order who cannot be removed if the period of the Order is less than 4 months.

10.9 Legal action can still be pursued against a parent/carer following deregistration from a school. This is because the period of complaint would be taken from the time the child was on roll at the school.

10.10 Parents/carers of a child who has legally been removed from the school register will be required to reapply for a school place. There is no guarantee that a child will be able to secure a place at the school from which they have been removed.

## 11. CYPF and Schools process for dealing with unauthorised absence

11.1 When a Head teacher does not authorise a leave request on legitimate grounds, it sends a clear message to the parent/carer that the school does not agree with the reasons provided by the parent/carer for the request for term time leave. If the parent/carer still takes their child on holiday in school term time the following may apply:

- Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice
- Prosecution for non-payment of the fixed penalty

11.2 If Parents/Carers are found guilty of an offence, when prosecuted by magistrates Court, they can be sentenced to a fine, or a community penalty.

## 12. Communicating the policy to Parents/Carers

12.1 The exceptional leave during term time leave policy should be communicated to parents/carers regularly. It is considered good practice for schools to:

- Refer to the policy in the schools attendance and behaviour policy
- Promote the policy on the attendance board and in the school newsletter
- Provide a leaflet on exceptional leave during term time for parents/carer of key points. The leaflet may be translated into community languages where possible
- Promote the policy at parents evening and school events for new starters
- Make reference to the policy in home/school agreements.

## 13. Return to the UK, where a child does not have a school place

13.1 If a child and their family return to the UK the parent/carer will need to re-apply for a school place. Parents/carers requiring a school place must contact the Children Missing Education (CME) team on 0114 2736462.

13.2 The CME team can provide support to parents/carers to secure school places and other forms of education provision.