



**Tenterden Infant School**

*'Together, we learn, grow and flourish'*



**Tenterden Church of England Junior School**

*'With God as our companion, we learn, grow and flourish'*

# Tenterden Primary Federation Attendance Policy

Updated: January 2025

Approved and Ratified: February 2025

Review due: January 2026

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance, aiming for 100%
- Reducing absence, including at risk (96.9% to 90%) persistent (89.9% to 50%) and severe absence (49.9% to 0%)
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place they need to be able to attend school
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance August 2024](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [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.

### **3. Roles and responsibilities**

#### **3.1 The governing board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance and punctuality figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the Executive Head Teacher to account for the implementation of this policy
- The Chair of Governors, Mrs Anne-Marie Martin, is the Governor responsible for attendance and safeguarding.

#### **3.2 The Executive Head Teacher**

The EHT is the Senior Attendance lead responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Leading attendance across the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors at each LGB and reporting to the Trust at each Curriculum Meeting
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Authorising the issue of fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data in discussion with Family Liaison Manager

- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Identifying declining and improving percentages for children within PA
  - Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
  - Analysing attendance and looking at reasons for PA
  - Meeting regularly with the attendance team consisting of the attendance assistant and the FLM
- The FLM is arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues in consultation with support that can be offered

### **3.4 The Attendance Assistant**

The school Administrative Assistant is the Attendance Assistant who is

- Advising the EHT of absence requests by families and issuing a fixed-penalty letter
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify children within each attendance band.
- Monitoring attendance data and highlighting concerns to the EHT
- Working with EHT to issue attendance letters

### **3.5 Class Teachers**

Class teachers are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis and submitting this information to the school office by 9am on the same day
- be vigilant of each child's attendance and raise any concerns on CPOMS

### **3.6 Office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it in the register and on the school CPOMS system if they are a child being monitored
- Record the correct codes on the attendance register
- Ensure that the correct code is marked within 1 day to show a reason for an authorised mark by asking parent/carer for clarification on the reason why their child was not in school.
- Make first day contact calls by 10am on the same day as an absence if there has not been any contact from the parent/carer.
- Make additional phone calls and messages to ensure a reason is provided for a child's absence through using the Emergency list noted by the parent/carer.

- Make a DSL aware of attendance concerns through CPOMS or face to face if it is an urgent concern or there has been no parental contact to explain why the child is absent

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9.00am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Call in every day of a school absence but be aware that their child will be off school for 48 hours if they have a Diarrhea and Vomiting bug so do not have to call in as this will be noted in the register.
- Provide the school with parent /carer contact information and at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day. Should an appointment be during the school day, evidence of the appointment is required. The child must attend school on either side of their appointment.

### **3.8 Pupils**

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time

## **4. Recording attendance**

### **4.1 Attendance register**

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

- The name and position of the person who made the amendment See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school, ready for lessons to begin at 8.45 (Infant school) and 8.50 (Junior school) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.45 (Infant school) and 8.50 (Junior school) and will be sent to the office for 9am. The register for the second session will be taken by 12.50 (Junior School) and 13.10 (Infant School). Child arriving 8:50 and 9:15 will receive an L code in the register, children arriving after 9:15 will receive a U code.

## **4.2 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school office of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by telephoning or an email to the school offices. (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 will ask the pupil's parent/carer 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/carers will be notified of this. A note will be made against the child's name as to the explanation for absence as given by parents/ carers.

## **4.3 Planned absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment and shows evidence of the appointment to the school office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

#### **4.4 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code L
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code U

Punctuality impacts on learning so is viewed as attendance at Tenterden Primary Federation.

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may undertake a home visit or contact the police if safeguarding is a concern.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 1 working day after the session, completed by office staff.
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. A home visit may take place with 2 SLT. If the absence continues, the school will gain external advice through contacting the local authority education welfare officer or area safeguarding.

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance at parent evenings and through twice yearly school reports.

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

The Executive Head Teacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Executive Head Teacher's discretion, in line with this policy.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the parent/carer will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent's or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.

- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family, including attendance at the funeral.
- Or where the school has evidence that there are other pressing personal circumstances for a family that would warrant a short break from school.

The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. The definition of 'unavoidable' is that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 3 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school office or school website. The Executive Head Teacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence and may have a conversation with the parent/carer. A letter agreeing to an exceptional leave will be accompanied with a reminder about lost learning and the child's attendance percentage.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The Headteacher, Local Authority or Police, can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £80 within 21 days or £160 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take in to account:

- The 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 pupil 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 or withdraw the notice.

## 6. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Letter acknowledging attendance in school reports
- Attendance shared with parent/carers during parent evenings
- Dojo message sent or a telephone call to families where child(ren) are at risk (90%-96%), offering school support.
- Notice to improve letter sent to families with persistent absence (51%-90%) or letter sent advising that school recognises that illness is reducing school attendance and to request medical evidence. Both letters come with the offer of a meeting with the FLM or EHT to consider support and create a plan to improve attendance.
- Families with severe absence (0%-50%) referral to KCC for advice and support. Parents/carers advised that a referral has been made.

## 7. Attendance monitoring

See appendices for letters.

### 7.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level (for example, some pupils are monitored daily or weekly).
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
  - Look for attendance patterns and where there are concerns around attendance falling the strategies for improving attendance will be implemented.

### 7.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### 7.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## **7.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold 3 times yearly targeted support meetings with Local Authority Attendance Service.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or are persistently or severely absent. This is to discuss the overall attendance percentage, reasons for absence and to look at any unauthorised sessions. The meeting seeks to improve attendance and develops strategies to achieve this in partnership with the family.
- Provide access to wider support services with the aim to remove the barriers identified to attendance.

Please see Appendices to explain how we further target unauthorised absence through letters, meetings and closer monitoring.

## **8. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated and will be reviewed annually by the attendance team. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## **9. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Positive Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance codes

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

	<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
	/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
	\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
	L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
	B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
	D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
	J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment

	P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
	V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
	W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement
	<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
	<b>Authorised absence</b>		
	C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
	E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made

<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school

<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil 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)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
<b>Code                      Definition                      Scenario</b>		
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>Y</b>	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 pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: Application of Leave form

Appendix 3 :

