



TAMESIDE PUPIL  
REFERRAL SERVICE

Engaged. Happy. Successful.

Working together to inspire, nurture and  
motivate everyone to fulfil their potential.

## Attendance Policy

Policy updated: October 2023  
Policy review: October 2024

**Member of staff with overall responsibility:** Executive Headteacher  
**Management Committee with reviewing responsibility:** Full Committee.

### 1 Aim

The aim of Tameside Student Referral Service's attendance Policy is to provide consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all students.

Tameside Student Referral Service (TPRS) takes believes that it is the joint responsibility of parents, carers, students and all staff members to ensure that students are attending school or an alternative placement or receiving a bespoke education package every school day. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support. As TPRS consists of two school containing very diverse needs there is some variability in practice on each site re registration and timings of the school day and this is highlighted in this policy when this occurs.

The law requires parents to make sure students attend full-time education. As a last resort, schools and the Local Education Authority (LEA) have legal powers to deal with poor attendance and we work closely with the authority in our support of their systems.

Attending school regularly is important for every student's future. Student who miss school frequently can fall behind with their work and do less well in exams. Good attendance shows potential employers that a student is reliable. Research suggests that students who attend school regularly could also be at less risk of getting involved in antisocial behaviour or crime. All schools are required to record details of students' attendance and absence at school. At EBS this is done at the beginning of morning and afternoon sessions. At White Bridge College the registers remain open to enable us to adapt to the needs of our students and make reasonable adjustments for their specific needs. In all cases, parents and carers must inform the school about any reason for any absence as soon as is possible.

At TPRS we believe that promoting positive school attendance is everyone's responsibility. In recognition of some potential barriers to getting to school regularly and on time we have developed the following strategies:

- Free Breakfast Club from 8.45am in collaboration with the Greggs Trust
- Bus pass provision
- Attendance mentoring programme
- Individual attendance plans
- Home visits
- In Reach Tutoring Programme
- Out reach tutoring programme
- Access to the School Counsellor
- Collection in the Attendance Minibus from home or designated pickup and drop-off locations

## **2. Legal framework.**

Tameside Student Referral Service is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework in the 1996 Education Act and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

## **3. Roles and responsibilities**

### **Management Committee**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the Management Committee will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff.
- Review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and students to implement the policy effectively.
- Nominate or identify a member of the Management Committee to take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance.
- Ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, students and staff.
- Work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets and incorporate these within TPRS Improvement Plan.
- Regularly review and discuss attendance issues to stay informed of expected attendance targets for the year.
- Ensure that TPRS is recording and monitoring attendance effectively with accurate, meaningful data which includes students who are educated off-site.
- Analyse attendance data competently and communicate effectively to parents and staff. This includes attending training events as required.
- Use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and set future targets.

### TPRS leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Promote good attendance to students and parents and carers, within positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of full attendance.
- Alongside the Management Committee, monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness.
- Ensure that all staff are familiar with the Attendance Policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.
- Ensure compliance with most recent legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with.
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to oversee and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job.
- Report to the Management Committee **termly** and the lead governor for attendance **half-termly** on progress against Improvement plan attendance targets, attendance records, data and provision.
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.
- Support the **Attendance Officer** in developing multi-agency relationships to tackle poor attendance and support families with attendance difficulties.
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken with families to improve their child's attendance in case of possible legal proceedings.

### Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, including forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance.
- Read the latest attendance SOP, legislation and government guidance.
- Speak to another member of staff or seek support from the Attendance Team if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue.
- Follow the correct systems for recording attendance daily. Registers should be completed on SIMS within 10 minutes of the start of every lesson and this is a statutory requirement of teachers.
- Contribute to attend meetings and interventions where necessary.
- Work with external agencies to support students and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their student's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

**Alternative Provision**

All Alternative Providers should adhere to TPRS Attendance Policy and this should be clearly stated in the Service Level Agreement. Attendance for students attending AP should be recorded and reported daily to TPRS.

Consequences of any poor behaviour must follow TPRS Behaviour Policy and Safeguarding procedures. Any fixed term exclusion must be recorded and reported appropriately. Work must be sent home and parents/carers must be informed and no student must be sent home unless contact with parents/carers is made.

**Attendance Officer**

The Attendance Officer will analysis attendance data which will identify those students whose attendance causes concern. They will decide where to set levels of intervention with the team and plan strategies for working with those students below it. One strategy may be to invite parents/carers and students to a meeting with the Head of Centre or Attendance Officer and identify:

- Reasons for the poor attendance.
- Strategies to address improving the attendance.
- Attendance contract to be put in place.
- Targets to achieve.
- A date for a review to take place.

**Information to share with Students**

- Good attendance at school is the most important factor in ensuring maximum life chances – good attendance is linked to educational achievement.
- Students who miss school risk failing to achieve their potential.
- Data has shown that 90% of persistent, poor or non-attenders fail to achieve five or more good grades at GCSE and approximately one third achieve no GCSEs at all.
- Developing good habits of attendance and punctuality are key life skills.
- When students miss school ... they miss out!

**Questions to consider:**

- Do you know what your current attendance and/or punctuality figure is?
- Do you know how school attendance can affect your future?

**Parents and carers**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents and carers:

- Engage with their child's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they are doing at school.
- Promote the value of education and the importance of regular school attendance at home.
- Encourage and support their student's aspirations.
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return.
- Do everything possible to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours.

- Use the school for support when they or their child are having difficulties, and form a positive relationship with the school so that there is good communication when a problem arises
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance.
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of bedtime, use of devices etc.
- Do not take their child out of school for holidays during term. time. Permission from the Executive Headteacher must be sought for any planned absence during term time.

You can only do this if:

- You make an application to the Executive Headteacher in advance (this would be from the parent/carer the student normally lives with).
- There are exceptional circumstances.

### **Responsibilities of Students:**

- a. attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- b. arrive at school on time.
- c. attend all registrations and lessons on time
- d. take responsibility for registering at the reception or main office if late or leaving the school site during school hours.

### **Punctuality matters too!**

- Missed minutes = missed learning = missed opportunities!
- Being frequently late for school adds up to lost learning:
- Arriving 5 minutes late every day adds up to over 3 days lost each year.
- Arriving 15 minutes late every day is equivalent to missing 2 weeks a year.
- Arriving 30 minutes late every day is the same as being absent for 19 days a year.

### **Some Strategies to Improve Punctuality**

- Bedtime routines – packing school bag ready for the next day, getting to bed earlier, setting a time for a television, iPad, computer, mobile phone and other devices to be turned off.
- Morning routines – setting the alarm earlier, no television until ready for school (and maybe not even then), having breakfast before leaving home, so no need to call in at the shop, meeting a reliable friend to walk to school with.
- Coming to school for breakfast club

## **4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences**

Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the

school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with English as an additional language.

**Absence will be categorised as follows:**

No reason yet given (N) Until a reason is obtained a student's absence is temporarily recorded as a (N). The attendance ensures that these N codes are reconciled after a maximum period of 1 week. Those that remain unreconciled are converted to unauthorised (O)

Illness (I)

In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the college that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness, or the absence exceeds the amount of time that would usually be expected for the illness stated. This may be an appointment card, prescription etc. Students should always be encouraged to attend school with minor illness that can be managed in school.

Medical/dental appointments (M)

Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents should show the appointment card to school.

Approved sporting activity (P)

This code is used for those students taking part in a sporting activity supervised by a person authorised by the Head teacher.

Interview (J)

This code is used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or for a place at a further or higher educational establishment (year 11 students only).

Educated off site (B)

This code is used for all students, including Traveller student, who are present at educational provision which is not in a school.

Dual registration (D)

This code is used when a student is dual registered at two schools

Other authorised circumstances (C)

This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

#### Educational visit or trip (V)

This code is used for students attending an approved educational activity which ordinarily would be arranged by the school.

#### Excluded (no alternative provision made) (E)

Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence.

#### Family holiday not agreed (G)

School will not authorise any leave for students to take holidays during term time. If a parent requires leave of absence for their student in exceptional circumstances, a written request must be submitted in advance of the dates required detailing the reason. This letter should be addressed to the Head of Centre.

#### Religious observance (R)

Tameside Student Referral Service acknowledges that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends which necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

It is reasonable for a parent to allow their child not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their student to be absent.

#### Study leave (S)

Study leave may be granted for Year 11 students approaching GCSE examinations.

#### Work experience (W)

Work experience is for students in years 10 and 11. Students who are out of school on a work placement are given this code and it does not affect their attendance percentage.

#### Forced closure (Y)

This code is used when students are unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances and the school is forced to close. For example; in very poor weather where transport is an issue or when the school building is out of use e.g. (no heating).

#### Student not on roll (Z)

This code is used for students not registered at the school at that time i.e. before their admission date.

#### School closed to students (#)

This code is used for planned closures, like general school holidays.

#### Traveller absence (T)

The aim for the attendance of Traveller student, in common with all other student, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

**Examples of unsatisfactory explanations for absence include:**

A student's/family member's birthday.

Shopping for uniform.

Looking after a sibling or relative.

Having their hair cut.

Closure of a sibling's school.

Minor ailments that do not warrant absence from school.

Holidays taken without the authorisation of school.

A student has woken up late (it is never too late to come into school.)

**5. School action: following up absences**

Class registers are submitted to the school office via SIMS at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences will contact the parents or carers initially by telephone, this will be followed up by a text message should no response be received.

Phone calls will be made on every day of absence, we can never assume that a student is still unwell and will need daily contact with parents if an absence is more than one day.

More vulnerable students will also receive a safeguarding visit on the first day of absence – please see the Attendance SOP for further details.

Persistent and prolonged poor school attendance that cannot be resolved with support and intervention may result in parents/carers facing prosecution for failure to ensure regular school attendance under section 444 of the Education Act.

Members of staff from Tameside Student Referral Service may visit student's homes if a student is absent regardless of whether a reason for absence has been received.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that student when they re-enter school to help them to catch up on any work that they have missed.

Where a student has been absent from school for a period of more than, and where the absence was unauthorised and both the school and the LEA have been unable to contact the parents, the school follow the LEA Student Missing from Education protocol and the student may be removed from roll.

The school will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be truanting in accordance with TPRS Behaviour for Learning Policy and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss reasons and school support systems that could help. The school may



take further action against the parents, including referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.

#### Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority.
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age.
- Permanent exclusion has occurred, and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system.
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student.
- A medical condition prevents attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school age.
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school and location is unknown after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student.

#### **Factors to consider when authorising absences:**

A lot of children manage fine in school with a range of minor ailments, especially if they have been given over the counter remedies before arriving, in fact a lot of illnesses are 'forgotten' about once a child is with their friends and peers and occupied by school work. Encourage the parent to bring the child in to school if possible.

**Minor ailments include: sore throats, headaches, tummy aches, leg/arm aches, these will not be authorised by school as they are not considered sufficient reasons for absence.**

Children with an attendance level of 93% or below should not have an absence authorised for a minor ailment.

School must consider whether the reason is more than just a parental excuse for not bringing a child in, where there is a history of poor attendance or the child is subject to an attendance improvement plan then the absences should not be authorised.

Advise parents that they will need to contact school on each day of absence.

Schools could consider maintaining a list of pupils where any absence is not to be authorised without medical evidence and where absence is not to be authorised in any circumstances, this should be kept in the front office and made available to staff who manage the phones to refer to.

Some pupils are involved with other agencies, consider whether these absences should be authorised, do other agencies need to be informed if a child fails to attend today.

## Daily Attendance Process

The purpose of this SOP is to give absolute clarity on all practice in relation to attendance at both Elmbridge School and White Bridge College during the academic year 2021-2022. As colleagues will be aware, we have a number of very vulnerable young people and as a result, we have needed to adapt processes for monitoring attendance now that the Covid restrictions don't apply in the same way. We also anticipate that the pandemic may well have impacted negatively on attendance across both sites potentially creating further safeguarding issues. For this reason, we are anxious that we monitor attendance very carefully over the year and have specific safeguarding actions that will apply to all students and particularly our most vulnerable.

STAGE 1A Day 1	<b>Student</b> does not attend session in school/college or is not contactable for Tutor or Welfare or Safeguarding Check	Phone call home made and text sent but no answer	Log on SIMS and inform Attendance officer
STAGE 1B Day 1	<b>Vulnerable student</b> – CFC/CP/CIN or at risk in any other way is not contactable for Tutor or Welfare or Safeguarding Check	As above and: Immediately notify Safeguarding Team and Attendance Officer if contact has not been made	Log on SIMS and inform Attendance & Pastoral. Safeguarding Team will arrange for a home visit to be made that day unless Social Worker or intervention workers can confirm that the student has been seen by them. Outcome of Home visit will be logged on CPOMS
STAGE 2A Day 2	<b>Student</b> does not attend session in school/college or is still not contactable for Tutor or Welfare or Safeguarding Check	Repeat phone call home made but still no answer and text sent immediately notify Safeguarding Team and Attendance Officer if contact has not been made	Log on SIMS and inform Attendance & Pastoral. Safeguarding Team will arrange for a home visit to be made within 24 hours unless contact is made in the meantime. Outcome of home visit to be logged on SIMS.
STAGE 2B	<b>Vulnerable student</b> – CFC/CP/CIN or at risk in any	Immediately notify Safeguarding Team	Log on SIMS and inform Attendance & Pastoral.

Day 2	other way is not contactable for Tutor or Welfare or Safeguarding Check	and Attendance Officer if contact has not been made	Safeguarding Team will arrange for a home visit to be made that day unless Social Worker or intervention workers can confirm that the student has been seen by them. Outcome logged CPOMS
STAGE 3A Day 3	<b>Student</b> does not attend session in school/college or is still not contactable for Tutor or Welfare or Safeguarding Check	Repeat phone call home made but still no answer	Log on SIMS and CPoms and inform Attendance & Pastoral. Safeguarding Team will arrange for a home visit to be made that day. Outcome of home visit to be logged on CPOMS
STAGE 4A Day 4	Safeguarding alert Police to complete a home visit		Safeguarding Team notify relevant personnel
STAGE 4B	Safeguarding Team contact Police for update on the visit arranged on day 2 of absence		Safeguarding Team would also seek updates from social workers and other professionals involved