



# Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Tibshelf Schools Federation

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### Introduction and aims

At the Tibshelf Schools Federation, staff and governors are united in their belief that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them. Helping them to become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

Tibshelf Schools Federation values all children. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the barriers to achieving and maintaining excellent attendance and offer the right service at the right time to try to resolve any difficulties.

The Attendance Leaders (Heads of School), (Executive Headteacher) and Learning Support Mentor will monitor attendance and use attendance data to identify any patterns of concern, whilst also celebrating success. Attendance concerns will be raised with parents if reasons are not known by the school, e.g. a long period of illness and this information may be shared with the Local Authority following concerns. Where we have concerns, or lack of engagement from families to improve attendance, we will follow the federation escalated approach to improving attendance.

The federation escalated approach is child-centred and prioritises support and developing strong working relationships with families. We will use the early help process to provide support prior to escalation and consider how we can work with families to enable your child to access their right to education.

Our aim is to always to work in partnership with parents and any referral for consideration of a penalty notice is deemed to be a last resort. Attendance figures for each child will be reported to parents as part of the annual report, we will also share a child's attendance profile if we have concerns regarding a child's attendance. Throughout the school year the Attendance Team will report on the overall attendance figures for children groups, this will be closely monitored for support and reported to the Governing Body.

Please click on link to Derbyshire County Council attendance letter to parents:

### To support good safeguarding and attendance, we:

- Ensure the school is welcoming and every child feels a sense of belonging and connectedness.
- Ensure the school site is open at the stated times.
- Ensure the regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance is complete by every class teacher each day. This further supports our approach to safeguarding within the school.
- Take safeguarding seriously and we will always contact you on the first day that your child is absent from school, this includes before and after-school clubs. If your child arrives late after the close of registration, we will record their arrival at reception and transition the child to class.
- Consider any requests for leave in term time individually.
- Inform the Local Authority of children whose parents have notified the school in writing and have opted for Elective Home Education.
- Notify the Local Authority of Children Missing in Education – aligned to the

DfE 2024 Attendance paper.

## **Our Federated Approach: How we do things at the Tibshelf Schools Federation**

Securing good attendance at within the Tibshelf Schools Federation cannot be achieved in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve working closely with other Leaders within the federations. The Attendance Leaders will work alongside the Curriculum Leaders, Behaviour Leaders, SENDCo's, and Pupil Premium Leaders to facilitate a whole school approach.

The Tibshelf Schools Federation adopts the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework, this is modelled on the work of Professor Katherine Weare. The emphasis is on developing a school culture and climate that builds a sense of connectedness and belonging to ensure all children can attend school and thrive. The approach ensures we prioritise building solid working relationships with children, and parents, prior to escalation. The staged approach we follow ensures we identify triggers early that can lead to poor attendance issues such as mental health issues, lack of trust, communication and relationship breakdowns and the possible lack of networking opportunities both internal (in-school) and external (external agencies).

### **Our aims are to:**

- Increase school Attendance and reduce Persistent Absence to meet set targets.
- Ensure Attendance is well managed within the school, with the appropriate level of resources allocated.
- Enable the schools to make informed use of attendance data to target interventions appropriately, focusing on the key demographic groups highlighted in the 2024 DFE attendance paper.

### **Objectives:**

- create an ethos within the federation in which good attendance is recognised as the norm and every child aims for excellent attendance.
- make attendance and punctuality a priority.
- set focused targets to improve individual attendance and whole school attendance levels.
- embed the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality.
- record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise absenteeism.
- develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing relevant attendance data.
- provide support, advice and guidance to; parents, children and develop mutual cooperation between home and the school in encouraging good attendance and in addressing identified attendance issues.
- Demonstrate, using rewards, that each school recognises good attendance and punctuality are achievements in themselves.

## The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice



### 5 Foundations Of Effective Attendance Practice

The main aim of the framework is to ensure the school promotes a culture of good attendance and celebrates success. Ultimately, the framework will ensure there is a culture of feeling safe and school being a place where children want to be.

Positive health and emotional well-being are key factors in improving social development, school attendance and educational achievement. The 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice model promotes, and supports, a whole school approach to mental health and emotional well-being; ensuring SEMH support remains a key driver in improving attendance for all children.

Each Foundation is supported by 5 Key Performance Indicators, these are used to ensure the school can embed the Foundations framework and understand the strategic direction regarding attendance improvement. Each year the school will use the 5 Foundations self-assessment tool to understand what works well and identify what we need to do even better. We then follow the 5 Foundations school improvement process to implement the attendance plan and ultimately improve the lives of children and families we work with.



#### Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate

*The school has a fully embedded ethos in which excellent school attendance is expected, developed and nurtured. The escalated approach to supporting attendance is built on foundations of belonging and connectedness.*



#### Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes

*The approach to improving attendance is built on clear policies, systems and processes. This ensures continuous and sustainable improvement drives attendance practice. The attendance policy is understood by all stakeholders and allows the school to set, and maintain, high expectations to improve the culture of attendance*



#### Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development

*The school prioritises developing a team of attendance experts, with a shared vision and core purpose. The Attendance Leader delivers bespoke training to support all staff to fully understand their role in improving attendance. External partnerships support attendance improvements through a multi-disciplinary approach for identified children and families.*



#### Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention

*Data information and analysis direct resources proactively towards key demographic groups and identified individuals. The expert use of data analysis informs decision making at all levels. The attendance process ensures the Attendance Leader understands the reason for attendance concerns, these barriers can then be successfully supported and removed.*



#### Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management

*Connecting and belonging drives the school approach to supporting attendance. All staff are supported to understand 'deeper roots' regarding poor attendance concerns. The school has developed, and embedded, an*

*effective rewards system to further drive attendance improvements and celebrate success.*

## Working Together to Improve School Attendance (DfE)

From September 2024 the DfE: Working Together to Improve Attendance paper will replace all previous guidance on school attendance except for statutory guidance for parental responsibility measures.

The table below identifies how the 5 Foundations of Effective Attendance Practice will underpin the DfE 2024 paper.

DfE Summary of Expectations	 Foundation 1 Whole School Thinking Culture & Climate	 Foundation 2 Supportive Policies, Systems and Processes	 Foundation 3 Professional Learning Staff Development	 Foundation 4 Implement Targeted Programmes And Intervention	 Foundation 5 Connect Appropriately With Approaches To Behaviour Management
Develop a whole-school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Have a school attendance policy		✓			
Have day-to-day processes to follow up absence	✓	✓	✓		
Monitor and analyse data to identify those that need support		✓	✓	✓	
Engage with families, understand barriers to attendance and work together to remove them	✓			✓	✓
Provide additional support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND			✓	✓	✓
Share information and work collaboratively with others	✓	✓	✓	✓	
A new focus on persistent and severe absence		✓	✓	✓	✓
Find out what the DfE expects from other stakeholders		✓	✓	✓	

## Working in Partnership With Our Parents

The Tibshelf Schools Federation recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child’s life and their lived experience. This may be related to problems at home or in school. Parents should inform the school of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child’s attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school to identify any additional early help that may be required. Safeguarding is a priority, concerns for any child at any time will be reported to the Designated Senior Leads for Child Protection (Heads of School) or Deputy DSL. A list of safeguarding leads can be found via this link: <https://www.tibshelf-inf.derbyshire.sch.uk/safeguarding-5/safeguarding-4/> We will always follow Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and our Child Protection Policy.

Some children are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, children who are vulnerable, have a medical need or EHCP plan will be monitored and supported in school. At the Tibshelf Schools Federation we will proactively identify and follow up on a child’s non-attendance and gather information about the child. This will result in taking early action to prevent non-attendance developing and monitoring the impact of targeted

support.

### Attendance Support

We offer a supportive approach to attendance and encourage our families to contact us should there be any barriers to your child arriving at school on time every day. Mrs Alton (Infants) and Mrs Hodson (Juniors).

### First day contact

At the Tibshelf Schools Federation we expect our parents to make contact at the earliest opportunity on the first day of any absence. If we do not receive any communication, we will always contact you via the School Gateway App (School Comms) or by calling you. Where we have on-going concerns regarding your child's attendance, we will visit your home address and write to you. We may even invite you to meet with a member of staff to discuss any on-going concerns regarding attendance. It is important that you talk to us first; you are legally responsible under Education Act 1996 for ensuring that your child is in school every day and on time. If we cannot make contact with you, we will continue to make announced and unannounced visits.

### Parents / Carers Responsibility

Parents are responsible for ensuring their children receive a full-time education. Each situation will be dealt with on an individual basis, fairly and equitably always remembering the welfare and safety of the child is the paramount concern.

The term 'parent' includes those who are not a natural parent but have parental responsibility for the child as defined by the Children's Act 1989 or have care of the child as defined by the Education Act 1996.

- Absence can only be authorised by the school; parents do not have this authority. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless satisfactory evidence for the child's absence has been received. In the First instance contact from the parent will be accepted as evidence. However, if a child's attendance continues to cause concern, parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where absences occur repeatedly due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescriptions etc. Absence may be coded as unauthorised without evidence.
- Parents should wherever possible make all medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, children should attend school for part of the day. Appointment cards should always be provided as evidence of medical/dental appointments.
- Unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and it has been accepted by the school absence will not be authorised.

**Please also view the list of responsibilities and expectations regarding parents.**

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A child's/family member's birthday.
- Shopping for uniform.
- Having their hair cut.

- Closure of a sibling’s school for INSET or other purposes.
- “Couldn’t get up”.
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school without medical authority and in the absence of a communicable disease.
- Leave during term time taken without authorisation of the school

## Punctuality

### Tibshelf Infant & Nursery School

Gates open for children at 8:20am and will close at 8:30am. The register will close at 8:40am.

Children arriving between 8:40am and 9am will be recorded as late (L). This will not affect a child’s overall attendance score, but does need to be monitored as this is a loss of learning time.

Children arriving after the close of registration will be recorded as unauthorised (U) and will count as an absence for the school AM session. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

### Town End Junior School

Gates open for children at 8:35am and will close at 8:45am. The register will close at 8:55am.

Children arriving between 8:55am and 9:15am will be recorded as late (L). This will not affect a child’s overall attendance score, but does need to be monitored as this is a loss of learning time.

Children arriving after the close of registration will be recorded as unauthorised (U) and will count as an absence for the school AM session. The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

## Transition following long-term absence

Absence can significantly interrupt the continuity of children’s learning. During any long-term absence, Tibshelf Federation will:

- Maintain contact with the child.
- Carefully plan the transition back to school, ensuring your child feels welcome and gains a sense of belonging.
- Ensure the child once again feels safe in school and if they experience any concerns, they will have an appointed member of staff to check in with them.
- The Class Teacher and Teaching Assistant will support a child when returning to class and help them with any work they may have missed.

## Leave during term time

Pupils should not be taken out of school during term time unless it is unavoidable. Schools are required to consider requests for leave of absence in term time and should only approve the leave if there are exceptional circumstances. If a request for leave is denied and the pupil is absent for 5 days or more then the school is expected to refer the case to the LA. The LA will



## Using attendance data

Children's attendance will be monitored and shared with other agencies and the DfE.

Regular attendance meetings will be held between the Attendance Leaders and the Attendance Team. Meetings will focus on agreed actions for those children of concern. The purpose of each meeting will be to understand the progress the school is making when supporting identified individuals or groups of children.

Attendance data will be used to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole federation strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

It is the responsibility of school governors to challenge and support the school regarding overall attendance, regular reports will be presented to this body. The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided for them and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as can be.

issue a penalty notice with no requirement for a formal warning to be issued. Penalty notices can also be issued where a pupil is absent for repeated incidents of unauthorised leave in term time that fall below the 5-day threshold. In every case, the request for the Penalty Notice comes in from the school to the LA for the process to be completed.

Leave of absences during term time should be submitted via our online form:

<https://forms.office.com/r/cMH9aS6vn2>

## Statutory Duty

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

In accordance with the regulations regarding pupils' attendance at school, each school within the federation keeps an attendance register on which at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session children are marked present or absent. The marks are electronically processed and stored on the school's central administrative system Integris. This information is shared with the Department for Education.

## Legal Sanctions

There are several sanctions that school can take to address the issue of non-attendance. To try and identify the reason for absence we will always talk to you first to identify the reason for absence. We will always ensure the escalated process map is followed, focusing on the support a child needs at each stage (please access on the school website). However, for lack of engagement in attendance support there are sanctions that will be followed:

### Penalty Notices (Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003)

Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A child is absent from school for the purpose of a Leave of Absence in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A child has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence within a ten week rolling period – this can be met with a combination of unauthorised absence including late after close of registration and unauthorised leave in term time

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Derbyshire Council Code of Conduct.

### Prosecution

Where intervention through the school's process fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the local authority will be notified and legal proceedings in the Magistrates Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under section 444/4441 (a) of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring their child's attendance at school.

**Section 4441(a) of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.**

Schools, trusts and local authorities are expected to work together and make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices or prosecution. It is for individual schools and local authorities to decide whether to use them in an individual case after considering the individual circumstances of a family. These are:

- Parenting contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices

***Please refer to section 6 of the DFE Working together to improve school attendance 2024 for more information.***

### Children Missing in Education

Children Missing Education (CME) are a vulnerable group of children. All agencies who work with children have a duty to support the Local Authority in ensuring all children are safe and looked after appropriately.

**CME** includes those children who are **missing** (family whereabouts unknown), and are children who are registered on a school roll / alternative provision. This might be a child who is not at their last known address **and either**

- has not taken up an allocated school place as expected, or
- has 5 or more days of continuous absence from school without explanation, or
- left school suddenly and the destination is unknown

It is our responsibility as a school to work with the LA Education and Inclusion team, by making referrals.

### Celebrating Success

At the Tibshelf Schools Federation, we feel it is important to reward children who have achieved good or improved attendance. Different rewards at class level are shared weekly in assembly.

The Tibshelf Schools Federation will always challenge falling attendance and reward improvements. We are committed to the future of all children that attend our school and by working in partnership with the school community we believe that together we can achieve more!

We can only achieve this by working in partnership with you, if you have any concerns or anything that prevents your child from attending school, please contact the Heads of School.

## **Expectation of Stakeholders**

### **Expectations of Parents:**

- Parents are legally responsible for ensuring their children attend the school regularly and may risk prosecution if they fail in this responsibility.
- Parents should ensure that their children arrive at school on time, with the correct equipment and in full school uniform.
- Parents should support the school by avoiding, if possible, non-emergency medical/dental appointments for their child during school time.
- Parents should be aware that they do not have the automatic right to take their child out of the school for a holiday during term time.
- It is the parents' responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence on the first day of absence and in line with the school's procedures for informing of absence.
- All unexplained attendances will be monitored and parents will be kept informed about any attendance concerns relating to their own child. Parents are expected to attend meetings when requested and support the school in responding to ongoing attendance concerns.

### **Expectations of Children:**

- All children should aim to have an excellent attendance and punctuality record, for which there will be appropriate rewards.
- All children are expected to be on the school site on time and ready to learn.

### **Expectations of Class Teachers:**

The Class Teacher are the key staff members in promoting regular punctual attendance. The Class Teacher will:

- Provide a good example by always being punctual to registration and meeting children at the door – providing a welcoming environment;
- Keep an accurate and up-to-date register of attendance;
- follow the attendance policy procedures when dealing with absences and punctuality;
- Maintain swift action and effective communication with school leaders on all attendance matters concerning the class group;

- Ensure that children and young people are aware of the importance of the school attendance target;
- Ensure children receive rewards in relation to attendance and punctuality success – aligned to the attendance policy;
- Build a welcoming atmosphere in the classroom and provide support as necessary when children return after an absence.

#### **Expectations of the federation attendance team:**

The federation attendance team will take responsibility for monitoring the attendance of children and regularly promote the importance of attendance and punctuality. They will:

- Ensure that their team is aware of their responsibilities with respect to promoting attendance and punctuality and adherence to the attendance policy and procedures;
- Ensure that rewards and sanctions for attendance and punctuality follow agreed procedures and align to the school Behaviour and Attendance Policy;
- Monitor and track the attendance of vulnerable groups;
- Monitor the attendance of individual class groups, following up with irregular patterns of absenteeism that are not being effectively addressed;
- Liaise effectively with the Attendance Leader and work together on ensuring that appropriate action is taken in the management of absenteeism and poor punctuality;
- Have attendance as a regular item during pastoral meetings;
- Ensure contact is made with parents of poor attendees – always placing support before sanction.

#### **Expectations of the School Business Assistants / School Business Services Manager:**

The school offices are responsible for regularly checking attendance data and ensuring data is accurate and up to date. The Attendance Support Workers will:

- Ensure that data is input daily into the attendance management system;
- Ensure that parents of absent children are contacted where notification of absence has not been received;
- Respond to any parent seeking support on attendance concerns;
- Provide regular attendance and punctuality data for relevant staff and external agencies in line with the agreed procedures and timescales;

## **Relevant Legislation and Government Guidance**

### **Relevant legislation**

The Education Act 1996 The Children Act 1989

The Crime and Disorder Act 1998

The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003

The Education and Inspections Act 2006

The Sentencing Act 2020 The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007

### **Relevant government guidance**

Parental responsibility measures for attendance and behaviour  
Children missing education  
Keeping children safe in education 2024  
Working together to safeguard children  
Elective home education  
Alternative provision: statutory guidance for local authorities  
Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England  
Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions  
Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs  
Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges  
Approaches to preventing and tackling bullying