



# Attendance Policy

Tibshelf Schools Federation

[Version 1.1]

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## **Introduction**

Improving attendance is everyone's business. The foundation of securing good attendance is that schools are a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. At Tibshelf Schools Federation we expect children to attend every day, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. Excellent attendance and punctuality is important if children are to benefit from everything the schools have to offer. Tibshelf Schools Federation believes that regular attendance is vital for children to be successful. School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life and research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance, punctuality and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the Tibshelf Schools Federation staff are partners in making this a success and this partnership is very important to the schools. As Tibshelf Schools Federation, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that every child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. We follow guidance from <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

## **The law on school attendance and right to a full-time education**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that their school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from their school.

## **Aims**

Our attendance policy aims to:

- support children and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all children have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable children to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the schools;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities;
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets.

## **Expectations**

We understand some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, we are committed to work with pupils and parents to

remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships. As a result, we can ensure a child has the correct support in place.

**We expect that all children will:**

- attend their school every day as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so
- attend their school punctually
- attend appropriately prepared for the day
- discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance. (where age appropriate)

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- ensure regular attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- ensure that their child arrives at their school punctually and prepared for the day
- ensure that they contact their school **daily** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school
- contact their school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away
- notify the schools of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child
- notify the schools immediately of any changes to contact details

**As Tibshelf Schools Federation we will:**

- provide a welcoming atmosphere
- provide a safe learning environment
- keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality
- contact parents on the first day of absence when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents/carers. (Although parents/carers may offer a reason, only the Senior leaders can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested)
- regularly inform parents/carers of the % attendance of all children
- If a pupil is not attending the schools due to circumstances related to illness but are well enough to work, Tibshelf Schools Federation will immediately offer the pupil access to remote education. The schools will keep a record of and monitor engagement with this work.

**We will work with all partners to do the following:**

**EXPECT**

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in their school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the schools.

**MONITOR**

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

**LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND**

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

**FACILITATE SUPPORT**

Remove barriers in the schools and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of the schools. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

**FORMALISE SUPPORT**

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

**ENFORCE**

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, work with the Local Authority to enforce attendance through statutory intervention, fixed penalty notice or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

**Definitions**

- Everyday counts as two sessions.
- Every half-day absence has to be classified by the schools as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing, telephone/text.
- Regular attendance means that your child must attend their school every day, unless there are justified reasons, and arrive on time.

### **Authorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child is away from a school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. The Senior leaders authorise the absence.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from a school without the permission of the Senior Leaders.

- Unauthorised absences are those which Tibshelf Schools Federation does not consider reasonable and for which no 'authorisation' has been given.

Examples

Authorised absences:

- \*genuine illness of the pupil;
- \*hospital/dental/doctor appointment for the pupil;
- \*major religious observances;
- \*visits to prospective new schools;
- \*external exams or educational assessments.

Unauthorised absences

- \*shopping / day trip / visit to a theme park;
- \*a birthday treat;
- \*oversleeping due to a late night;
- \*looking after other children / other family member;
- \*appointments for other family members;
- \*holidays during term time

### **Rewards**

- The main benefit from regular and punctual attendance is that continuity and progression in learning are ensured.

- We acknowledge good attendance through a variety of ways across the schools such as assemblies, award cup and stickers

### **When to Report Absence to Tibshelf Schools Federation**

All absences must be reported on a daily basis. In all cases of absence the parents/carers should:

- only keep your child away from their school if really necessary. Tibshelf Schools Federation will always call and send home an unwell child;

- telephone on 01773 872571 (Tibshelf Infants) or 01773 872306 (Town End Juniors) at the earliest opportunity to let them know why your child is going to be absent. Please try and phone by 9.00am at the very latest. The office has an answer machine and messages can be left on here;

- message us on the Schools Comms app, clearly stating why your child will not be attending. Please try and message by 9.00am at the very latest.

- please call daily and keep the schools informed if more than one day's absence is necessary;
- send a note to their school explaining the reason for absence;
- if medical appointments are absolutely necessary, please bring your child to school for the rest of the school day.

Tibshelf Schools Federation uses a '1st day calling' system. If your child fails to register or is absent and we have not received notification by 9.15am a call will be made to you. This only applies on the first day of absence. It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to call their child's school each day their child is off and explain the reason why.

If a child is absent from their school with no explanation offered by the parents/carers within two weeks, it becomes an unauthorised absence.

### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality is crucial. All schools are expected to proactively manage lateness. Lateness causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other children in the class. It is paramount therefore that all children arrive at their school on time. For children the gates are opened and are supervised from 8.20am at Tibshelf Infants and 8.35am at Town End Juniors. Children go straight to classrooms on arrival to their school. If your child arrives after the start times of 8.30am at Tibshelf Infants and 8.45am at Town End Juniors, they must enter via the office where they will be signed in. Your child will then be delivered to their class teacher by a member of the admin team.

Registration starts promptly at the times above and is closed once the teacher has completed it.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil.
- After 20 minutes from the start time, lateness may be recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- Afternoon registration is taken at 12.25pm at Tibshelf Infants and 1.00pm at Town End Juniors. Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the Family Liaison Worker with the support of the Safeguarding Lead person in the Tibshelf Schools Federation and may be referred to Education Welfare at Derbyshire County Council.
- Children's attendance and punctuality is recorded regularly by the admin staff and is analysed termly by the Headteacher.
- A log is kept of attendance and actions taken where attendance is poor and this recorded on individual pupil's reports and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

### **Pupils Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours, Tibshelf Schools Federation staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the day.

Children are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from their school. Whenever possible, parents/carers should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of Tibshelf Schools Federation time.

Parents/carers are requested to confirm by phone call, letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, and the expected return time.

Children must be signed out on leaving their school and be signed back in on their return.

Where a child is being collected from their school, parents/carers are to report to the office before the child is allowed to leave the site.

If a child leaves their school site without permission, their parents/carers will be contacted.

*Should we be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the child as a missing person.*

### **Leave of Absence**

In September 2013 the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force. These regulations make it clear that Headteachers should not grant approval for any leave of absence during term-time, including holidays, unless there are exceptional circumstances. These regulations also state that holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively.

Any requests should be on an official Tibshelf Schools Federation absence request form and sent into the office for consideration prior to any holiday/leave arrangements being made.

You may be issued with a Penalty Notice should leave be taken which is not authorised. If unpaid this could lead to prosecution under section 444(1) of The Education Act 1996.