

# TORRE C of E ACADEMY

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

### Philosophy

Torre Academy is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience to all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we will organise and do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that impede full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

*We expect all of our children to have an attendance of above 96%.*

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

### Principles

Ensure that all staff are aware of the registration process.

Complete accurate registers at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session within 10 minutes of the start of the session.

School will be open 10 minutes before the start of the day to allow children time to get into class ready to learn at 8.50am.

Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence.

Consult with all members of the school community and the education welfare service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

Inform parents annually of published attendance rate.

Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Send a clear message that if a pupil is absent she/he will be missed.

Have procedures that allow absentees to catch up on missed work without disrupting the learning of other class members.

## **Procedures**

Parents/Carers are requested to ring the office before 9.30 a.m. where possible, on the first day of a child's absence to explain the nature of the absence (see Appendix 1). An answer-phone will intercept early calls.

If a reason for an absence has been given by telephone or email, parents are not requested to send an explanatory note to the class teacher upon the child's return to school, as the office will already have been informed of the absence.

If we do not hear from a Parent/Carer and cannot reach them by 11am, the South West Family Values Door Knocking Service will be contacted to conduct a home visit. If any concerns are raised by the home visit, the Police or Children's Services may be contacted.

On the sixth day of absence, the Attendance Clerk will inform the Headteacher.

The Head will consider the facts and initiate contact with the family. This may be done before the sixth day, if the family is one with which there are existing concerns.

Pupil records are checked on a weekly basis by the Attendance Administrator to monitor for persistent absence and these records are shared with the Headteacher weekly and the Chair of Governors fortnightly. Teaching staff are responsible for identifying actions to address issues with any pupil having persistent absence and these are shared with the Attendance Administrator, Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

## **Performance**

Targets for improved attendance will be set annually. It is important to set realistic targets.

Part of the evaluation process will be to look at what interventions have been successful. This will include considering:

- Has the attendance of individual pupils and/or attendance as a whole improved?
- Has the school ethos improved?
- Has the behaviour of pupils improved?
- Is the school a better place to be for staff and pupils?
- Has the school been successful in raising the profile of attendance both within the school and the community?
- How well informed are new pupils about the importance of attendance and the policy and procedures operating within the school?
- Have attendance issues been included as topics in school assemblies, Personal, Health and Social Education (PHSE) lessons, or as a theme for any other curricular lessons?

## **Lateness**

There are two negative results caused by pupils who constantly arrive late. These are:

- The loss of education suffered by the pupil themselves which over a year can add up to a significant proportion of their time in school,

- The disruption to other children in their class as the teacher's attention is taken from the task at hand.

The strategies that the school will use to tackle lateness will include:

- Persistent lateness will be referred to the Head.
- A letter will be sent to parent. This is letter 1 after three occasions of lateness – seeking an improvement.
- If the child is late on three further occasions, letter 2 will be sent, seeking compliance. If the child is again late on one more occasions, letter 3 will ask the parent to meet with the Head to and a parent/carer contract will be drawn up.
- If the child is late again on two more occasions, a referral to the Targeted Help panel will be suggested in a meeting between the Headteacher and parents.
- The Headteacher or another member of the Senior Leadership, greet families at the gate every morning, allowing the monitoring of pupils arriving late.

### **Persistent absence**

Where there are significant concerns over a child's absence due to illness, the school will take all reasonable measures to ascertain medical proof. This could be a prescription, note from a GP, or a card issued by the school for the GP surgery to date and stamp.

Parents/carers will be invited in to meet with the Headteacher to discuss any persistent absence and a parent/carer contract will be drawn up.

### **Children's absence for leisure/family pursuits in term time**

From the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 came into force. These amendments make clear that Headteacher may not grant leave of absence during school time unless there are **exceptional circumstances**.

The Headteacher or person with delegated responsibility - Mrs Wyatt, will decide whether or not to authorise the absence, on a case by case basis and will only do so where there are exceptional circumstances.

- Holidays/leisure time and family pursuits in September will not be authorised. If time is taken, this will immediately incur an application for a fixed penalty notice.
- Holidays/leisure time and family pursuits for Year 6 from January until SATs will not be authorised.
- Holidays/leisure time and family pursuits for children with attendance under 96% will not be authorised.
- Parents have to request approval for absence in advance on the appropriate form, available from the school office.
- Requests for holidays/leisure time and family pursuits must be sent to the office where authorisation or non-authorisation will be given and the Attendance system will be updated immediately.
- Parents will be informed in writing when their request for leave of absence has been authorised or unauthorised.
- Holidays/leisure time and family pursuits taken without seeking approval will not be authorised and the parents will be informed by writing that the absence has not been authorised and a penalty notice will be applied for.

- If the parents/carers can demonstrate that the child's absence during this time was due to an exceptional circumstance and that an absence request could not have been made in advance of the said absence, then a penalty notice will not be applied for.
- The LA wants to stop children having authorised holidays in term time, and our new policy is working towards this.

### **Exceptional Circumstances:**

Such as -

- Due to work, a family holiday cannot be taken during the school holidays.
- A family wedding.
- One-off events – i.e., competition 'wins'
- Other exceptional circumstances reviewed on an individual case-by-case basis by the Attendance Officer and Headteacher.

Parents will be reminded of the school's policy about children's holidays/leisure time and family pursuits in term time by regular texts and also in the monthly school newsletter.

### **Other authorised absence**

If a child is taking part in a competitive sport, in a performing arts pursuit or something else deemed to be appropriate, which requires absence from school, a request can be put into the headteacher for this absence to be authorised. This would then be logged as 'off-site educational activity' or 'participating in a supervised sporting activity', provided there is written proof of the activity and that the Headteacher approves the activity.

### **Funerals:**

A funeral is not classed as a holiday/leisure time or family pursuit, therefore a 'holiday form' does not need to be completed. Parents/carers need to inform the school about the funeral and this will be logged in the attendance records using the appropriate code. Absences of this nature, will of course, be authorised.

### **Sanctions:**

- Parents will be asked to meet the Head to explain unauthorised absences. Three unauthorised absences will lead to an Early Help Assessment, for the family to obtain support via the Local Authority.
- Parents who take their children out of school for holidays/leisure time and family pursuits without authorisation may be subject to a fixed penalty from the Local Authority.
  - £60 per child, per parent, paid within 21 days.
  - £120 per child, per parent if paid after 21 days, but before 28 days.
  - If the fine is not paid, parents may be prosecuted.
  - The school delegates the collection of fines to the Local Authority.

### **Attendance Letters**

When a child's attendance regularly falls below 95% the following actions will be taken:

- **Attendance letter 1** will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 96%
- **Attendance letter 2** will be sent if the child's attendance does not improve after weekly monitoring, inviting parents/carers into a meeting with the Headteacher.

- **Attendance letter 3** will be sent if parents/carers do not attend the meeting and/or there is still no improvement following letters 1 and 2, inviting parents/carers into a meeting with Headteacher and Governor.

#### **Rewards for good attendance:**

- Class attendance will be monitored half termly. At the end of each half term, the class with the best attendance will receive certificates and a class shield.
- At the end of the school year, children with an overall attendance of 100% will be presented with a certificate.
- The attendance notice board displays current attendance achievements in the school hall.
- Bronze certificates will be rewarded for 100% attendance for a full term. Silver certificates will be rewarded for two terms of 100% attendance. Gold certificates will be rewarded for three terms of 100% attendance.
- There is a grand prize draw for attendance at the end of the school year for children with 100% attendance for three terms. A prize draw (for a smaller prize) will also take place for those who have attained 100% for two terms.
- These will be given out at the end of each term.
- Names will be displayed on the Attendance notice board.

#### **Child Missing in Education (CME)**

Any child meeting the criteria listed below is classed as 'missing in education'. This criteria also applies to pupils in the Nursery.

- The pupil is not on a school roll and is not registered as being home educated *or* home education is unsuitable
- A pupil *does not* attend on or after the expected start date and no contact can be made with parents/carers
- The School is informed that a child is moving out of area but has no details of the next School and after 10 days no further information has been obtained.
- A pupil has 10 unauthorised school days with no notification as to why and no contact can be made with parents.
- The school is informed that a pupil is moving out of area, details of the new school are provided but after 15 days, no confirmation obtained by new school.

If one of the above criteria apply, a 'Children Missing in Education' referral form (Appendix 3) is completed and sent to the Local Authority Attendance Improvement Officer. A child who has been referred as being a CME will not be removed from roll without confirmation from the Attendance Improvement Service.

#### **Children Following Reduced Timetables**

There are times when the decision is made to place a child on a part-time time-table for a temporary period. Parents are involved in this decision and weekly review meetings are held to discuss progress towards the child becoming full-time. Torbay Council's Attendance Improvement Officer will monitor and track all children who are placed on a reduced timetable. See Appendix 2.

***Policy approved by Governors: 18.10.17***

***Date of policy review: Autumn 2018***

## **Appendix 1: First Day Reporting.**

### **Rationale**

It is important that any children absent from school on any day are accounted for.

### **Purpose**

- To establish routines for the first day reporting of a child's absence.
- To ensure that all pupil absences are accounted for.
- To provide the school with accurate records of all pupil absences.

### **Guidelines**

- Parents/Carers are notified (and reminded periodically) by the newsletter what to do when their child is absent from school.
- **On the first day of absence the parent/carer rings school before 9.30a.m. where possible to** inform the office that the child will be away and give a reason for the absence.
- Office staff keep an Absence Book – recording all telephone calls received each day.
- Immediately after registration, **class teachers send their registers** to the office.
- Between 9.30 a.m. and 10.30 a.m. a member of the office staff reconciles the absences in the class registers with the calls in the Absence Book.
- Parents/Carers of any child whose absence is unexplained are contacted by the office staff to find out why the child is not at school.
- The reported reason for absence is recorded neatly in the Absence Book.
- If a reason for the child's absence is not given before 11am and every reasonable attempt has been made to contact the family without success, then the door knocking service will be contacted.
- South West Family Values (SWFV) will visit the family and attempt where possible to see the child and speak to the parents.
- The information will be reported back to the school
- Any safeguarding concerns will be relayed to the school Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) Mrs Julyan and acted upon accordingly. SWFV will provide supporting information to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) when required.
- On occasions where it is not possible to contact or see children (i.e. nobody at home) then this would need to be risked assessed by the DSL on a case by case basis.

### **Conclusion**

Each day the school should have no unexplained absences: all children are accounted for and safe.

## **Appendix 2: Guidance for children on reduced timetables**



**TORBAY COUNCIL  
Children's Services**

### **Children on reduced timetables – A guide for Schools and Academies**

#### **Introduction**

Reduced or part time timetables may be used by schools for pupils who are not allowed or not able to attend either mainstream or special schools on a full-time basis for medical, behavioural or other reasons.

DfE statutory guidance on the use of part-time timetable and exclusions is very clear:

*“In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a pupil’s individual need. For example where a medical condition prevents a pupil from attending full-time education and part time package is considered as part of a reintegration package. A part-time timetable must not be treated as a long-term solution. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time-limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time or be provided with alternative provision”.*<sup>1</sup>

Schools have a statutory duty to provide full time education for all pupils. This guidance sets out Torbay Council’s position in relation to reduced timetables.

#### **When is it acceptable for a child to be on a reduced timetable?**

1. When it has been agreed by the school as part of a reintegration for pupils who have not attended school for a period of time due to illness, disability, mental health issues etc.
2. Reduced timetable can be used as a method of managing pupils who are at risk of exclusion

#### **Conditions of a reduced timetable**

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<sup>1</sup> School Attendance (DfE)

There are a number of items that need to be discussed prior to putting a child on a reduced timetable. These are:

- A reduced timetable must be agreed with the parent/carer and the school. The pupil should also be present in discussions concerning their timetable.
- The number of hours a pupil will be expected to attend school
- How and when the reduced timetable will be reviewed – a reduced timetable should not exceed 6 weeks.
- How the absence will be coded in the register
- A written agreement must be put in place

Part-time timetables that do not have clearly defined objectives, a specified end date, a review process, and/or the consent of parents/carers may constitute an **illegal exclusion**.

### **Illegal exclusions**

Occasions when a pupil is considered to have been illegally excluded are as follows:

- The school fails to follow correct procedures for recording an exclusion.
- Pupils being placed in inappropriate 'alternative provisions' or extended study leave as a way of removing them from school
- Coercing parents into moving their child to a different school, educate at home or under threat of permanent exclusion
- Encouraging parents to keep their child at home rather than attend school
- Sending pupils home who have SEN if their teaching assistant is unavailable

The Ofsted School Inspection Framework states:

*"Should inspectors find that the school has used exclusion illegally, this should be taken very seriously and taken into account when judging leadership and management."*<sup>2</sup>

Statutory guidance can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-exclusion>

### **The role of the Attendance Improvement Service**

Torbay Council's Attendance Improvement Officer will monitor and track all children who are placed on a reduced timetable.

Schools will be expected to provide information on which pupils are on a reduced timetable, how many hours they are expected to be in school, the provision provided and when the timetable will be reviewed.

This information will be sought on a half termly basis and will be collated in order to ensure that they are being regularly reviewed; to identify patterns and to ensure that there are no illegal exclusions.

### **Coding the register**

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<sup>2</sup> Paragraph 70, Subsidiary guidance, OFSTED, January 2014

The code identified as being appropriate when a child is placed on a reduced timetable are:

*C code – Leave of absence authorised by the School*

Statutory guidance can be found at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

### **Best practice guidance**

When considering placing a pupil on a reduced timetable, the school/academy:

1. Must be satisfied that a reduced timetable is an appropriate intervention given the needs of the pupil. There must be a clear and evidenced rationale for considering a reduced timetable as an intervention aimed at supporting the needs of the pupil. For all pupils on a reduced timetable, a Safeguarding Hub Enquiry Form (SHEF) should be completed where appropriate to determine any additional support required.
2. Must not pursue a reduced timetable without parental permission as this can be construed as an unofficial exclusion which is unlawful.
3. Must have signed parental permission, evidenced on the pupil file prior to the commencement of a time limited reduced timetable. If the parent does not agree, the reduced timetable arrangements cannot be implemented. In these circumstances the school will have to consider alternative interventions.
4. Must complete a detailed action plan, agreed with the parents and the pupil which shows a clear path of planned reintegration from part time to full time provision over a maximum of a six week period. The school must ensure the pupil has an active involvement in the process of planning, reviewing and evaluating the planned intervention.
5. Must not put in place a reduced timetable that exceeds a six week period. If the pupil is still on a reduced timetable as the time limit approaches, a review must be held to discuss the next steps. A maximum of one further period of six weeks should only be agreed in exceptional circumstances with parental agreement and the plan revised to reflect why an extension was appropriate.
6. Ensure that where pupils have a statement for special educational needs, the Local Authority SEN team must be involved to ensure the statement is reviewed and amended where appropriate. The Local Authority SEN team must agree to the intervention and a reduced timetable must not interfere with additional support given to a student due to his/her educational needs.
7. Must undertake a risk assessment of the pupil's needs to assess the impact that a reduced timetable would have on the pupil. It is essential that the pupil's welfare during any absence from school is considered. Risk assessments should follow these five steps identified by the Health and Safety Executive:<sup>3</sup>

Step 1: Identify possible hazards

Step 2: Decide who may be harmed and how

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<sup>3</sup> Health and Safety Executive. 2015. *Health and Safety Executive*. [ONLINE] Available at: <http://www.hse.gov.uk/risk/controlling-risks.htm>.

- Step 3: Evaluate the risks and decide on precaution
- Step 4: Record your findings and implement them
- Step 5: Regularly review your assessment and update if necessary

The risk assessment should include the safety and wellbeing of the pupil as well as the risk of the pupil engaging in criminal activity or substance misuse whilst not in receipt of education during the school day.

8. The attendance lead within the school must ensure that they keep a central record of all pupils on a reduced timetable. It is recommended that they set up a reduced timetable pupil group within SIMs.net.
9. The Attendance Improvement Service should be given access to school documentation relating to pupils on reduced timetables upon request. Our Attendance Improvement Officer is legally able to take extracts from schools registers under the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) regulations 2006.
10. All pupils should receive full time education consistent with their age and previous guidance from the DfE recommends the following:

- 21 hours at Key Stage 1
- 23.5 hours at Key Stage 2
- 24 hours at Key Stage 4 (Year 10)
- 25 hours at Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

It is illegal for schools to discriminate against pupils on the basis of their SEN and/or disability, including those with BESD.

**Part-time Timetable Consent/Notification Form (PTCF1)**

Pupil: .....

UPN: ..... Ethnicity: .....

Date of birth: ..... Gender: MALE/FEMALE

Year Group: ..... School: .....

Is the pupil 'looked after' by Torbay, or any other local authority: YES/NO

If yes, which local authority? .....

Have you consulted with the Torbay Virtual School: YES/NO

Does the child have a Statement of SEN or an Education, Health & Care Plan: YES/NO

Is the child subject to a Child Protection Plan: YES/NO

Has the pupil had a part-time timetable before? YES/NO If yes, when:.....

Name of parents/carers:	
Name of lead person in school:	
Name of social worker (if applicable):	

Name of SEN caseworker (if applicable):	
Name of Virtual School rep (if applicable):	
Name of Attendance Improvement Officer:	

Reason for the part-time timetable:

Date of meeting agreeing the part-time timetable:	
Start date of part-time timetable:	
Number of hours in education each week:	
Review date of part-time timetable:	
End date of part-time timetable:	

TIMETABLE	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Time in education:					

Objectives of the part-time timetable:

Any other comments relating to this part-time timetable:

I understand my child has been placed on a part-time timetable for a limited period of time. I have discussed the matter fully with the school and agree, during the period of the part-time timetable to:

- Take full responsibility for my child during the hours when not attending school
- Ensure there is supervision of school work during those hours
- Ensure there is a flow of work between school and home for marking and guidance
- Take full responsibility for the health and safety on my child when they are not in school

Parent/carer signature: ..... Date: .....

During the period of the part-time timetable the school will:

- Monitor the effectiveness of the part-time timetable
- Hold a review on the agreed date
- Provide work the child to do whilst at home and mark all work complete

School signature: ..... Date: .....

Other signatures (if required):

SEN caseworker: .....Date: .....

Social worker: .....Date: .....

Virtual School rep: .....Date: .....

Attendance Improvement Officer: .....Date: .....

**Once completed this form should be sent to: [Tracey.powell@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:Tracey.powell@torbay.gov.uk) and a copy retained with the pupil's school records**

**Appendix 3 – Children Missing in Education Referral Form**

**Children Missing Education Referral (CME)**

Please use this form to notify the Local Authority of any child you believe is missing from education.

Please ensure one of the following criteria is met before sending this referral in:

- The pupil is not on a school roll and is not registered as being home educated or home education is unsuitable
- A pupil *does not* attend on or after the expected start date and no contact can be made with parents/carers
- The School is informed that a child is moving out of area but has no details of the next School and after 10 days no further information has been obtained.
- A pupil has 10 unauthorised school days with no notification as to why and no contact can be made with parents.
- The school is informed that a pupil is moving out of area, details of the new school are provided but after 15 days, no confirmation obtained by new school.

Name of child  DOB

Previous/alternative Surname  Gender

Name of siblings  DOB

Name of Parents/Carers

Contact numbers/email address

Current/Last known address

Possibility of where child/family might have moved to

Is the child subject to a Child Protection Plan or are there any other services involved with the family? I.e. GP, Social Worker etc. :

What actions has the referrer taken to locate the child? I.e. have parents, other Local Authority and admissions been contacted, spoken to friends/other family members, home visit attempted?

Any other relevant information?

**Referrer details**

Name of referrer

Job title/School

Contact details

Date

A child who you have referred as being a CME should not be removed from roll without confirmation from the Attendance Improvement Service.

Please be reminded that you must inform the Local Authority before removing any child from roll, except at normal transition.

Please post this form to Attendance Improvement Service, c/o Torquay Town Hall, Castle Circus, Torquay, Devon, TQ1 3DR or email [attendance@torbay.gov.uk](mailto:attendance@torbay.gov.uk)