



## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

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Coordinator(s): Ms Gregory and Mrs Wright  
Governor:  
Principal: Ms Bingley

\* Policy Review: Annually or otherwise dictated by the Governors or by changes in legislation.

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## 1) AIMS

Tower College aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons. In this instance, 'regularly' means the School's internal attendance target of 96%.

Research both locally and nationally shows that there is a clear link between high attendance and good progress and attainment. We believe that excellent attendance is key to children's progress and attainment and that excellent punctuality shows respect for staff and that the children are ready and willing to learn.

## 2) LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2023) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2023'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'
- DfE (2023) 'Providing remote education'

## 3) SCHOOL PROCEDURES

### Expectations

*Pupils: We expect that all pupils will:*

- Attend school regularly
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day
- Discuss with their class or form teacher or Assistant Principal any problems preventing them from attending school
- If a child is late (after registration at 8:50), they MUST to report to the Main Office.

*Parent/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:*

- Encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- Where possible, give notice for an appointment and supply appropriate documentation (letter, text, screenshot).
- Contact the school by the start of the school day on every day of absence, whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school
- Update the school each day of their child's absence. If a child is absent for multiple days, the reason of absence for the first day does not count for the subsequent days (exemption for those self-isolating for so many days or have days of absences already authorised by the office).
- Contact the school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school

*The governors expect that school staff will:*

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils as required by current legislation
- Monitor every pupil's attendance
- Contact parents/carers as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence
- Encourage good attendance
- Provide an appropriate response to any concerns about any pupils attendance.
- Include attendance figures in reports to the governors.

## **Attendance register**

By law, we are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark (see appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes) whether every pupil is:

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

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry

- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

### **School session times**

Pupils are permitted to be on site from 8.30am onwards. Any pupil arriving before this **MUST** attend Breakfast Club, where they will be supervised. Parents will be invoiced accordingly.

Pupils who are attending a pre-arranged booster session can be onsite from 8AM. They must report to the designated GCSE booster classroom.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8:50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10.

Pupils who arrives at school after 9:05am, a late mark will be recorded. A pupil who arrives after 9:10am without a valid explanation will be recorded as 'late after close of register' and counted as an unauthorised absence for that session. Any pupil who arrives after 9:10 am will be recorded on the school's MIS in case of any emergency drill.

### **Unplanned absence**

Parents must notify the school office on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8:50am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents/carers must notify the school by telephone or via email on the first day of an unplanned absence.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and parents will be notified of this in advance of any amendments.

### **Medical or dental appointments:**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

However, whilst the school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments, parents/carers are encouraged to make these appointments out of school hours where possible. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school office should be notified in advance in writing of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Evidence of the appointment may be requested.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

## Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond following statutory guidance as set out in the DfE Children Missing Education 2016 :

- 1) **On the first day of absence**, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.15am, the school will make reasonable enquiries to contact them that day by phone, text message or e mail, using all contacts for the family recorded on our school system, in line with the duty under section 10 of the Children Act 2004. The school will also record that they have completed these procedures.
- 2) **On the second day of absence** if no contact has been made further reasonable enquiries will be carried out.
- 3) If, **by the end of the third day** there has still been no contact made, the school will send a letter of concern to parents/carers. If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and a meeting will be arranged with a member of SMT.
- 4) **After 10 days of absence in a row** (unauthorized), we must report this to the local authority.
- 5) If a child is absent (unauthorized) without leave for **20 days or more in a row**, we are allowed to remove the child from our register.

## Reporting to Parents

Attendance will be reported to parents three times per academic year via the reporting system (Upper and Middle School will receive half termly reports and Pre-School and Lower School will receive termly reports). Attendance will be reported as a percentage with the following grades given:

**Below 96%** - Low, needs to improve

**96 - 97%** - Minimum Expected

**97.1 – 98.9%** - Good

**99 – 100%** - Outstanding

## 4) AUTHORISED AND UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

### Granting approval for term-time absence

We expect that every child will attend school every day. The Principal may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances. If a situation arises where a parent feels they need to request a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances, the parent must apply in writing, to the Principal at least two weeks prior to the proposed absence.

*Exceptional circumstances could include:*

- Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
- Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 4 above, the Principal agrees to consult with the Attendance Officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

*Valid reasons for authorised absence include:*

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.5 and 3.6
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

### Unauthorised Absence

- If a child is absent without authorisation for 10 days or more in a row, we must report it to the local authority.
- If a child is absent without authorisation for 20 days or more in a row, we will most likely remove the child from our register.

## 5) STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

We encourage regular attendance in the following ways:

- By providing a caring and welcoming learning environment
- By responding promptly to a child or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils
- By accurate and punctual completion of registers during morning and afternoon registration (see lateness).
- By publishing attendance statistics
- By celebrating good and improved attendance - Brunch for those pupils with 100% attendance (termly)
- By monitoring pupils' attendance with the Attendance Monitor
- By informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, including lateness
- By arranging meetings with parents/carers where necessary
- By reporting 10 consecutive days of unauthorized absence to the Local Authority

## 6) ATTENDANCE MONITORING

Parents are expected to contact the school office by 8:50am or as soon as practically possible, if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

If a pupil's attendance drops below 96% we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. (See letter 1 in Appendix 2.)

If after contacting parents/carers a pupil's attendance continues to fall to between 92-96%, we will invite the parent/carer into school for a meeting to discuss how we can work together to make improvements. (See letter 2 in Appendix 2.)

When attendance has fallen below 95% and this is due to a number of short-term illnesses, a letter will be sent to parents asking to provide proof of this. (See letter 3 in Appendix 2.)

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Once attendance falls to or below 90%, The attendance monitor will meet with the parent/carer to draw up an action plan to improve school attendance, which will be monitored and evaluated on a weekly basis.

Pupil-level absence data is collected on a weekly basis for both average attendance figures and for Persistent Absentees. Data of this will include: average weekly attendance, attendance for vulnerable groups, class attendance data and comparison to both National and Local Authority Averages. At Tower College we endeavour to monitor potential persistent absentees (pupils with attendance between 90.1 – 92%) and where necessary intervention and support may be put in place to prevent these pupils from dropping into the persistent absentee bracket.

Each term absence data is published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.



## **7) ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **The Principal and Governors**

- Adopt and implement the whole policy consistently across the school
- Ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently in line with current legislation and that appropriate resources are provided
- Ensure that all absences are coded correctly in line with DCSF guidance
- Initiate a scheme for contacting parents/carers on the first day of absence
- Initiate contact with parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness
- Ensure that key office staff have dedicated and protected time for liaison and follow up work the Attendance Officer
- Consult and liaise closely with SMT on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred without delay
- Work in close collaboration with the Attendance Monitor during their termly/half termly register analysis ensuring agreed action is carried out
- Set whole school attendance targets and to publish attendance data
- The Principal will monitor and evaluate attendance with the Attendance Monitor and report it to governors
- The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils

### **The Behaviour Team and Office Team**

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Oversees the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and punctually
- Initiates contact with parents/carers about daily absences and records it in the school system
- As instructed by the Principal or Senior Management Team, manages the school's scheme for contacting parents/carers in cases of unexplained absence and lateness
- Consult and liaise closely with the SMT regularly to tackle persistent absence
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

### **Class and Form Teachers**

- Complete registers accurately and punctually at least twice daily
- Inform the Principal of concerns
- Be alert to signs of disaffection that may lead to non-attendance and report them to the attendance monitor.

### **Office or Admin staff**

- Share any concerns expressed about attendance or disaffection that might lead to non-attendance with the SMT
- Follow up any unexplained non-attendance or lateness with the SMT when required.

## **8. MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

This policy will be reviewed annually by the SMT. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

## **9. LINKS WITH OTHER POLICIES**

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## APPENDIX 1: Attendance Codes

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

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment

<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

## **APPENDIX 2: Letters to Parents**

### **Letter No. 1**

Dear

Re Attendance for [name]

Pupil's welfare is of paramount importance to us and we know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for the success and fulfilment of pupils.

[name's] attendance is currently ..... %, which is below our expected minimum of 96%.

This may be owing to illness or medical reasons but if there are any other issues which may be affecting attendance, please contact the school office as soon as you can to discuss this.

0151 426 4333 (email)

I look forward to an improvement in [name's] attendance as we move onwards through the school year.

Yours sincerely,

xxxxxx

Principal

### **Letter No. 2**

Dear

Re: Attendance for [name]

I'm writing to express my concern at [name's] recent high levels of absence from school.

Pupil's welfare is of paramount importance to us and we know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for the success and fulfilment of pupils.

[His/her] current attendance has fallen to [percentage]. Falling below our expected minimum of 96% attendance will likely have an impact on [his/her] academic achievement.

We acknowledge that each family's circumstances are different, and we aim to work with parents to provide the best education for every child.

We want to make sure that we can support [name's] education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help [him/her] to address gaps in learning due to absence.

I therefore request that you contact the school office, on 0151 426 4333 or email [office@towercollege.com](mailto:office@towercollege.com) as soon as you can to arrange a meeting to discuss how we can best support [name] in improving [his/her] attendance.

Yours sincerely,

Principal

### **Letter No. 3**

Dear

Re: Attendance for [name]

Pupil welfare is of paramount importance to us and we know that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for the success and fulfilment of pupils.

I'm writing to express my concern at [name]'s attendance. You will note we wrote to you on [date] outlining our concerns with [name]'s attendance.

We are committed to working with families to make sure every pupil gets the support they need, including looking into how we can help address any gaps in learning due to absence.

In line with our Attendance Policy [name's] place at Tower College is now at risk. And the Local Authority will be informed of [name's] large number of absences.

If you would like to discuss [name's] attendance, please contact the school office, as a matter of urgency.

Yours sincerely

Ms A C Bingley (Principal)