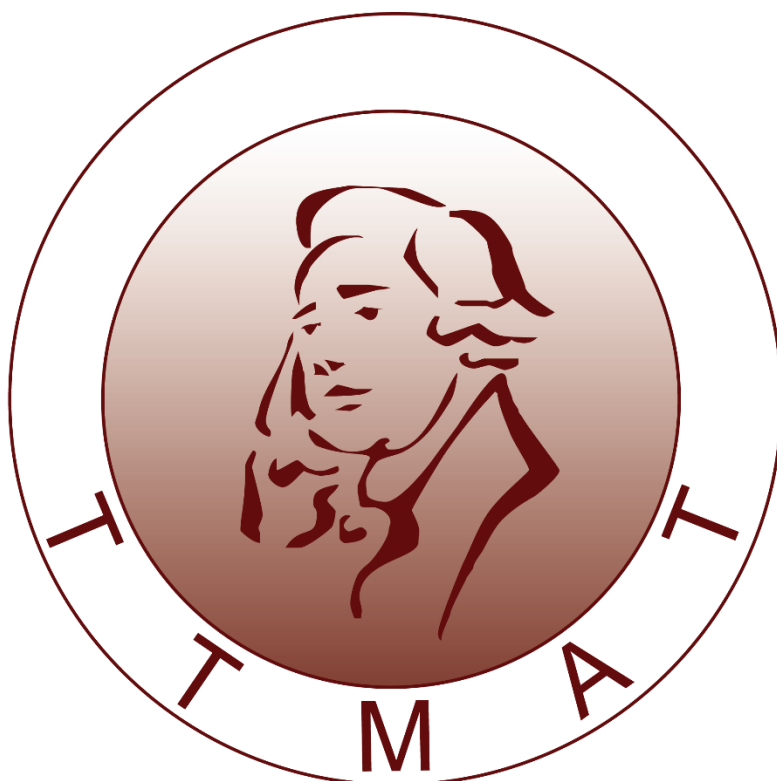


Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust and Thomas Telford School



Attendance Policy

Originally Prepared by: Sir Kevin Satchwell

Reviewed by: Ian Rawlings

Approved by: Governors

Date: June 2025

Review Date: June 2026

This policy summarises the expectations required from all Schools/Academies within Thomas Telford Multi Academy Trust (TTMAT) and Thomas Telford School (TTS). Further details are contained in the DfE Statutory Guidance, Working Together to Improve School Attendance published 29 February applicable from 19 August 2024. The Guidance should be read in conjunction with this Policy.

Extract from Statutory Guidance applicable from 19 August 2024

Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively in partnership with, not against families. All partners should work together to:

Expect

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

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 and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. 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 an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

The Law and day to day processes

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly.

There is a strong link between persistent absence and crime.

The law requires that all schools must have an admission register.

Appropriate national attendance and absence codes must be used.

Schools/Academies should only grant leave of absence under exceptional circumstances.

Lateness should not exceed 30 minutes.

Where possible Schools /Academies should hold more than one emergency contact number.

Statutory returns to the LA and DfE must be complied with.

All schools must have an electronic management information system which can be accessed by the DfE.

As a minimum what leaders, staff, pupils, and parents need to understand:

- It should be made clear to all parties that attendance and punctuality, expectations of pupils and parents, including start and close of the day, register closing times and the processes for requesting leave of absence and informing the school of the reason for an unexpected absence are appropriately followed.
- All Schools/Academies should appoint a Senior Attendance Officer.
- All Schools/ Academies should provide contact details of the school staff who pupils and parents should contact about attendance. It is sensible to have a triage system to facilitate for more detailed support where appropriate for complex cases.
- Day to day processes for managing attendance, for example first day calling and processes to follow up on unexplained absence should be in place for all schools/Academies.
- How to incentivise good attendance.
- Data to target attendance improvement should be readily available for teachers', leaders, and Governors.
- All School/Academies should provide a strategy for reducing persistent and severe absence, including how access to wider support services will be provided to remove the barriers to attendance and when support will be formalised in conjunction with the local authority.
- Details of the National Framework for Penalty Notices and when Notices to Improve, penalty notices or other legal interventions will be sought if support is not appropriate (e.g. for a holiday in term time), not successful, or not engaged with.

TTMAT, TTS and Local Governing Boards

All trusts and governing bodies are expected to:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.

Multi-academy trust boards and governing bodies of federations are also expected to:

- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Monitor attendance patterns.

Local Authority (LA) and Safeguarding Partnerships

The LA and safeguarding partnership have a key role to play regarding attendance.

They are facilitators of wider support. They should provide a minimum support service and be used to support schools. They should have a support team, offer advice, provide family support and if needed take legal action.

It is important that all our schools have a clear understanding of what service the LA can provide and what their expectations are from the schools.

The LA must provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance support team. Each Academy must know the contact details of the named contact.

The LA can apply legal intervention to support schools where appropriate including issuing penalty notices or prosecute.

The LA can provide additional support services and help families which in turn can impact on school attendance.

LAs should communicate with each other when working with cross border pupils.

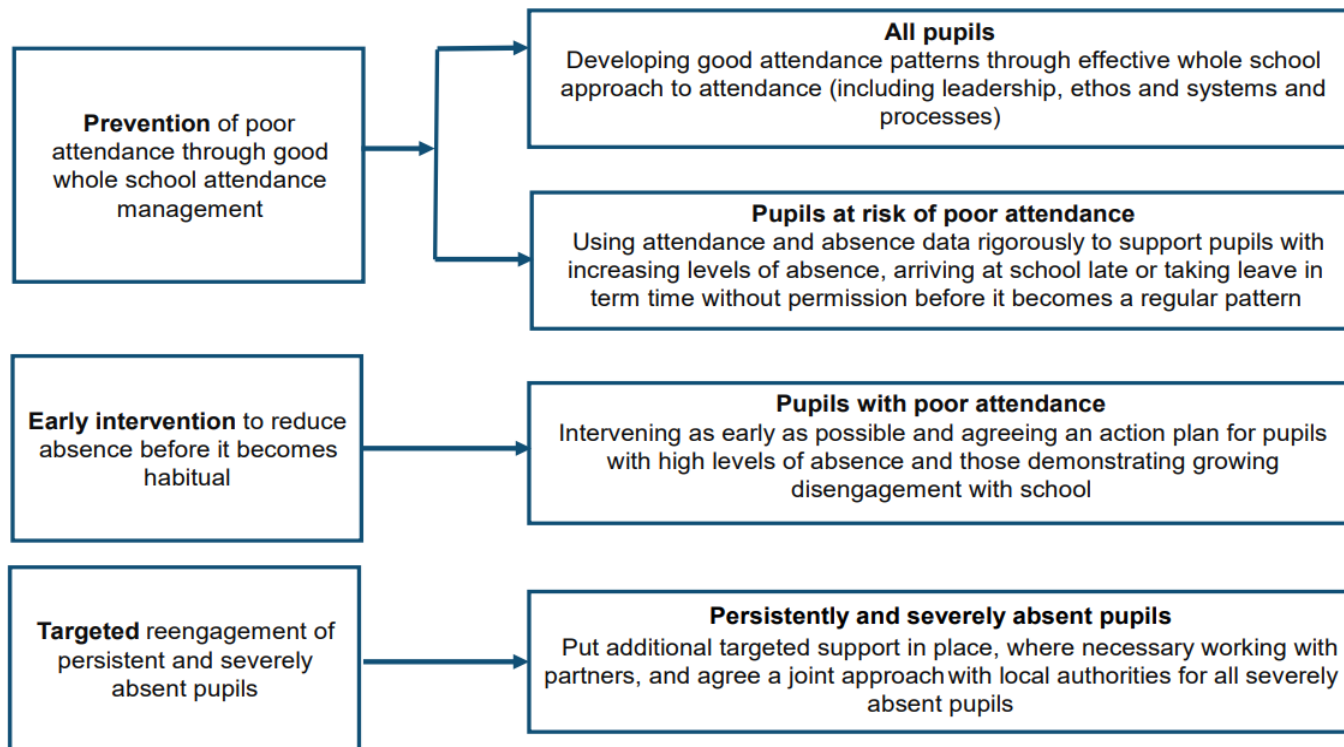
Persistent and severe absence

Targeted support should be in place for pupils who miss 10% or more of school.

Appropriate services should work together to ensure that those pupils with less than 50% attendance should be given top priority.

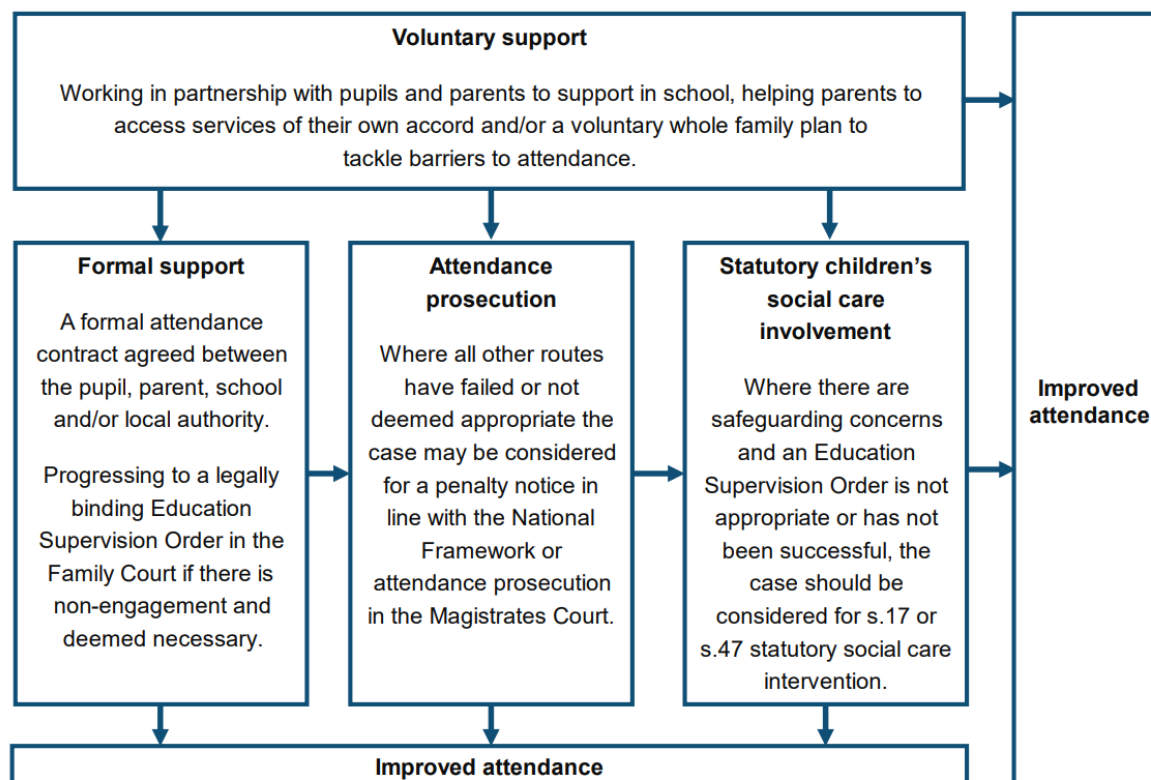
Where partners are unable to impact upon severe absences a full social care assessment should be conducted in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education.

Effective school attendance improvement and management



Extr:

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



Further details in relation to contracts, Education Supervision Orders (ESO), prosecutions, parenting orders and penalty notices are contained in Statutory Guidance paras 134 to 200.

Headteachers, Safeguarding leads and Senior Attendance officers appointed by Academies should familiarise themselves with legal intervention strategies and ensure that appropriate data is shared regularly with Governors.

Admissions Register

The school admission register must be kept in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. The admission register must be kept electronically.

Deletion of names

Where a school notifies the local authority that a pupil's name is deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the following information about the pupil from the admission register:

- full name;
- address;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency;
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there.

Off-rolling without following the appropriate procedure, which includes informing the LA must not happen.

All Schools/Academies must follow the updated use of registration codes as follows.

Extract from DfE Statutory Guidance

Code / \: Present at the school / = morning session \ = afternoon session 286. Pupils must not be recorded as present if they are not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration, they will still be counted as attending for statistical purposes.

Code L: Late arrival before the register is closed 288. All schools are expected to set out in their attendance policy the length of time the register will be open, after which a pupil will be marked as absent. This should be the same for every session and not longer than 30 minutes. If a pupil is marked N but arrives later in the session after the register has closed, the attendance register must be amended to mark them as absent using code U.

Code K: Attending education provision arranged by the local authority 290. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority.

A pupil attending provision arranged by the school rather than the local authority must be recorded using Codes P or B instead. 291. Schools must also record the nature of the provision, examples are: • attending courses at college; • attending unregistered alternative provision such as, home tutoring.

Code V: Attending an educational visit or trip. The pupil is attending a place, other than the school.

Code P: Participating in a sporting activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is a sporting activity.

Code W: Attending work experience. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is work experience provided under arrangements made by the school as part of the pupil's education.

Code B: Attending any other approved educational activity. The pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience.

Code D: Dual registered at another school. The law allows a pupil to be registered at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil is absent with leave to attend the other school at which they are registered. The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. The school at which the pupil is scheduled to attend must record the pupil's attendance and absence with the relevant code. Code D may only be used by either school for a session where the pupil is scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexpected and unexplained absences are promptly followed up.

Code C1: Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad. All schools can grant leaves of absence for pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours. Schools should be sympathetic to requests for leave of absence that are supported by a licence issued by a local authority or a BOPA; as long as the school remains satisfied that this will not have a negative effect on a pupil's education. It is at the discretion of the school to grant leave of absence.

Code M: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment.

Code J1: Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution.

Code S: Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination. Schools maintained by a local authority and special schools not maintained by a local authority can grant leave of absence for a pupil to study for a public examination and the leave has been agreed in advance with a parent who the pupil normally lives with (or the pupil if they will be over compulsory school age by the time of the absence).

Code X: Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school.

Code C2: Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable. All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In very exceptional circumstances, where it is in a pupil's best interests, there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. This requires a start and finish date of any agreement and should be short term.

Code C: Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. All schools are able to grant a leave of absence at their discretion. A leave of absence must not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Code T: Parent travelling for occupational purposes.

Code R: Religious observance. The pupil is absent on a day that is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body the parent(s) belong to (not the parents themselves). The school may only record one day using this code; the rest of the time would need a leave of absence, and this is granted at the school's discretion as set out under Code C.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointment). The pupil is unable to attend due to illness (both physical and mental health related).

Code E: Suspended or permanently excluded and no alternative provision made. The pupil is suspended from school or permanently excluded from school, but their name is still entered in the admission register, and no alternative provision has been made for the pupil to continue their education. When a pupil of compulsory

school age is suspended or permanently excluded on disciplinary grounds from a maintained school, pupil referral unit, academy, city technology college, or city college for the technology of the arts, alternative provision must be arranged from the sixth consecutive school day of any suspension or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made for the session in question and the pupil is attending it, schools should record this using the appropriate attendance code, or if the pupil is attending another school at which they are a registered pupil, schools should record this using code D (dual registered at another school).

Code Q: Unable to attend the school because of a lack of access arrangements.

Code Y1: Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available.

Code Y2: Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel.

Code Y3: Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed.

Code Y4: Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

Code Y5: Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention.

Code Y6: Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance.

Code Y7: Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause. An unavoidable cause, that is not covered by one of the other 'unable to attend' codes detailed above, is preventing the pupil from attending the school. This code should be used only where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question.

Code G: Holiday not granted by the school.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet established 393. Schools must follow up all unexplained and unexpected absence in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

If a reason for absence cannot be established within 5 school days, schools must amend the pupil's record to **Code O.** 395. This code is classified for statistical purposes as unauthorised absence.

Code O: Absent in other or unknown circumstances.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed.

Code Z: Prospective pupil not on admission register. To enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens.

Code #: Planned whole school closure.

Other relevant legislation and guidance

The Education Acts 1996 and 2002

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 School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024

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

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, as amended The Education (Information about Individual Pupils) (England) Regulations 2013

The Children and Young Persons Acts 1933 and 1963

The Equality Act 2010

Relevant government guidance

Children missing education

Keeping children safe in education and Working together to safeguard children Special educational needs and disability code of practice: 0 to 25 years

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

Arranging education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs

Promoting and supporting mental health and wellbeing in schools and colleges

Preventing and tackling bullying Providing remote education.

Some Draft Letters

UNAUTHORISED TERM TIME LEAVE LETTER DATE ADDRESS RE:

Dear

Request for Term-time Absence.

Thank you for your letter requesting term-time leave of absence for xxxxxx on the yyyyyy.

While I understand your situation, I am sorry to tell you that I am not able to authorise your request as it does not meet the Government guidelines for exceptional circumstances.

SUSPECTED HOLIDAY LETTER

Dear

I am writing about absence from school from xxxxxx to yyyyyy.

Due to information received from other sources we believe that this was because to a family holiday. You have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time and this will be recorded on xxxxxx attendance record.

ATTENDANCE MONITORING SYSTEM LETTER

Dear

Following a recent attendance review I understand that has had authorised absence due to illness and that you called the school to keep us informed. We would just like to let you know how this has affected attendance which is currently at xx% This letter is purely to inform you of the statistics, and I hope you understand that school has a duty to do so.

REVIEW LETTER

Dear

Following a recent attendance review I am writing to advise you that school attendance is causing concern as it has fallen to xx% and as a result we are becoming concerned that yyyyyy is missing a significant part of learning. I have enclosed a copy of attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

REVIEW LETTER REQUESTING MEETING

Dear

I am writing to inform you that xxxxxx attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance could affect progress and we need to meet with you. Please could you attend a meeting with me to discuss this matter further on the date and time below. This meeting will give you the opportunity to explain the percentage of attendance and will help the school maintain an accurate picture. If you are unable to attend please let us know so that an attendance meeting can be rescheduled.

Date:

Time:

LETTER CONFIRMING DETAILED AGREEMENTS

Dear

I appreciate that you were able/I am sorry that you were unable to attend/rearrange the meeting scheduled for as requested in my letter dated xxxxxx. It has been noted that attendance is now at xx%. Due to this the following targets need to be met;

- attendance needs to show improvement to 90%+ over the next xxxxxx weeks
- Monitoring period will be xxxxxx to yyyyyy
- Medical evidence is to be supplied to explain absences due to illness.
- Etc

As a parent it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which they are registered, regularly and punctually.

LETTER LATENESS

Dear

I have noted during a recent attendance review that your child is beginning to show a pattern of lateness. It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption.

If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's education, I would welcome the opportunity of meeting with you to discuss this. Please note that if your child arrives after registers close this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered.

REQUEST FOR REMOVAL/DELETION FROM THE SCHOOL ROLL

Parental notice of child(ren) leaving the school and requiring removal from the school roll Please complete as appropriate.

Name of Child(ren):

DOB(s):

Class(es):

Current Home Address:

Current Telephone Number:

Current E-mail Address:

Leaving Date:

Reason for Leaving:

We are moving Date:

New Home Address:

New Telephone Number:

We are moving abroad Date:

New Home Address: Country:

I have registered my child(ren) at another school :

Start Date:

Name of School:

Telephone Number:

I am going to educate my child(ren) at home and have informed the school in writing.

Start date:

Parent/Carer:

Printed Name:



Thomas Telford School

Attendance Processes

1. Roles and responsibilities

1.1 The Governing Board

The Governing Board at Thomas Telford School is responsible for:

- Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, students and parents
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately on the MIS, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
 - Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual students or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Holding the Headmaster to account for the implementation of this policy

Our safeguarding Governor will act as the link Governor for attendance, meeting the DSL to discuss attendance monitoring, trends and concerns.

1.2 The headmaster

The Headmaster is responsible for:

- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for students who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all students, but adapts processes and support to students' individual needs
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting students needs

- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - The importance of good attendance
 - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
 - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
 - The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the attendance officer to be able to do so
- Working with the parents of students with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for students with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where students with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a student with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the student's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to students and parents through all available channels

1.3 The Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff
- Liaising with students, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed
- Building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr Jamie Norman and can be contacted via jnorman@ttsonline.net or 01952 200 000

1.4 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the Headmaster
- Working with local authority link advisors on attendance
- Advising the Headmaster when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The Attendance Officer is Mrs Catherine Stevens and can be contacted via cstevens@ttsonline.net / attendance@ttsonline.net or 01952 200 000

1.5 Class Teachers

Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on the school MIS system within the first 10 minutes of the lesson. Morning lessons start at 8.30am and afternoon lessons start at 11.50am. Class Teachers are also required to update the information as required throughout the lesson.

1.6 School Administration staff

School administration staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school MIS system/email Attendance Officer with the relevant information. School lines open at 7.30am daily.
- Transfer queries from parents/carers to the relevant staff, including Personal Tutors, Heads of Year and Attendance Officer where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

1.7 Parents

- Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or Local Authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:
 - All natural parents, whether they are married or not
 - All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
 - Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
 - Parents are expected to:
 - Make sure their child attends every day on time
 - Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and on each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
 - Provide the school with at least two emergency contact numbers for their child
 - Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day
 - Keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority
 - Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting the students Personal Tutor in the first instance, who can be contacted via their email or by calling 01952 200 000

1.8 Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session, on time
- Be aware of the importance of attendance and punctuality
- Engage in any support on offer from the school and parents

2. Recording attendance

2.1 Attendance Register

At Thomas Telford School we will keep an electronic attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every student 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
- We will also record:
 - Whether the absence is authorised or not
 - The nature of the activity, where a student is attending an approved educational activity
 - The nature of circumstances, where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for six years after the date on which the entry was made.

The school day starts at 8.30am and ends at 3.15pm for Years 7-11 and 3.20pm for Sixth Form students.

Students must arrive in school by 8.25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.30am and will be kept open until 9.00am The register for the second session will be taken at 11.50am and will be kept open until 12.20pm.

2.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am, or as soon as practically possible, by calling the school office, who can be contacted via 01952 200 000 or attendance@ttsonline.net. School lines open at 7.30am.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 3 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school may ask for 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.

2.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

If a student has a pre-arranged medical or dental appointment, before the appointment an email must be sent to attendance@ttsonline.net from the email address registered to the school by the parent/carer. Wherever possible, please try to schedule appointments outside the school day.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 3 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

2.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- Session 1 register closes at 9.00 am. Session 2 register closes at 12.20pm.

Students who arrive late to school or late to lessons will be monitored through the both the Pastoral Team and the Attendance Officer. Students who are persistently late will be contacted by their Personal Tutor, Head of Year team or Attendance Officer explaining the importance of punctuality. If the concerns continue, meetings will be set to address the concerns.

2.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will communicate with the parents via a text message. If there is no response to this, the following actions will be taken:

- Call the student's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit and if there are concerns this will be reported to the police and appropriate front door services, for example Family Connect.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than five working days after the session(s) for which the student was absent
- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving the local authority attendance advisor
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the student's youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the student and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the student needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals
- Where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with: issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention (see section 3.2 below), as appropriate.

2.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels in all module reports which occur a minimum of 5 times per year.

3. Authorised and unauthorised absence

3.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Headmaster will allow students to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings.

The Headmaster will only grant a **leave of absence** to a student during term time if the request meets the specific circumstances set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad
- Attending an interview
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted using the Headmaster's professional discretion, including the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a student to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least four weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible at reception and via the school website. The headmaster may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- If the student is currently suspended or expelled from the school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Other reasons the school may allow a student to be absent from the school site, which are not classified as absences, include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the student is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the student not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

3.2 Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The Headmaster (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that student
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the student's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same student, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within three years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those three years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first five days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the student must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the student attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the student's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between three and six weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

This follows guidance from Telford & Wrekin Attendance Support Team.

4. Strategies for promoting attendance

Thomas Telford celebrates attendance by promoting the value of attendance through assemblies, parents information evenings, personal tutors and rewarding high attendance levels across the school. All parties are encouraged to celebrate attendance over 98% and we pay particular attention to those students who regularly meet 100% attendance.

5. Supporting students who are absent or returning to school

5.1 Students absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Students who are presenting with complex barriers to attendance will be supported through the pastoral system where in the first instance personal tutors will work with the families to understand the barriers. If progress is not made this will escalate to support meetings being set with heads of year, attendance lead and the attendance officer.

5.2 Students absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a student has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the student's needs, the school will inform the local authority.

Students who are absent due to physical or mental health ill health will be supported and monitored by the pastoral team ensuring all support networks, including the use of external agencies are utilised by the family to present the most appropriate support programme. This may include staggered starts to the school day and adapted timetable provision.

5.3 Students returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Students who are returning after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence will be supported and monitored by the Pastoral Team ensuring all support networks, including the use of external agencies are utilised by the family to present the most appropriate support programme. This may include staggered starts to the school day and adapted timetable provision.

5.4 Students accessing work during periods of absence

Students who are absent have access to the schools online curriculum via the school website. When work is missed students are expected to complete this at an appropriate time. This may be before, during or after a period of absence. Class teachers will direct students to the work required and provide relevant marking and feedback as necessary. The communication may be via the schools email system or via Microsoft teams.

6. Attendance monitoring

It is the responsibility of all staff at Thomas Telford School to monitor attendance, punctuality and highlight any potential patterns. Heads of Year, attendance lead and attendance officer access the attendance monitoring spreadsheet where information is gathered and analysed by each year group and subsequent student groups. This is complete and updated on a fortnightly basis. Attendance is a regular agenda item at pastoral meetings. The attendance lead and attendance officer analyse the data against national, regional and local data. This information is shared with the Headmaster and Governors.

6.1 Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student, year group and cohort level.

Specific student information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Data will be collected each term and 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.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

6.2 Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify students whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

6.3 Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual students, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the students it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to Personal Tutors to facilitate discussions with students and families, and to the Governing Board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinator, designated safeguarding lead and student premium lead)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a student's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific students, where appropriate

6.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these students. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)
- Any concerns highlighted may result in parent meetings, local authority referrals and potentially prosecution.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by Mr Jamie Norman, Attendance Lead. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

8. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy