



**TOLWORTH GIRLS' SCHOOL & SIXTH FORM**  
**STUDENT ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Reviewed: December 2017**  
**Approved by Student Welfare Committee: March 2018**  
**Approved by Student Welfare Committee: January 2019**  
**Reviewed by Behaviour, Attitudes & Personal Development committee: January 2020**  
**Next Review: January 2021**

## **1 Aims**

- The Governors of Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form (TGS) are committed to providing a full and effective education for all our students. We will do all we can to ensure that all students attend to their fullest and that any problems which impede this are identified and acted upon as soon as possible. However, whilst we will provide support and guidance, it is ultimately the parents' /carers' legal responsibility to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance.

## **2 Rationale**

- Regular and punctual school attendance is essential to enable all students to gain the maximum benefit from the opportunities provided throughout their education. Improving attendance is a vital element of school improvement and as research indicates, positively impacts on the levels of achievement of students. Academy attendance is subject to education legislation and this policy is written to reflect the law and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE).

The [Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7](#) states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive full-time education suitable:

- (a) To his/her age, ability and aptitude and
  - (b) To any special needs they may have
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For education purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

### 3 Principles

- We believe a positive attendance culture is more likely to be achieved when all partners co-operate with each other
- A student's progress is severely hampered if she/he does not regularly attend the Academy.

To illustrate:

90% attendance is an average of one day out of school per fortnight over a school year.

90% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is half a school year missed.

80% attendance over 5 years at secondary school is the same as one whole school year missed.

TGS Attendance Definitions	
98-100%	Expected
95-97%	Satisfactory
Below 95%, but above 90%	A cause for concern
Below 90%	A serious cause for concern

Key Responsibilities: -

#### Academy

Parents/carers can expect that the Academy will:

- Provide a good quality education appropriate to their child's needs
- Record their child's attendance regularly, accurately and efficiently
- Make every reasonable effort to contact the parent/carer when their child fails to attend the Academy without good reason
- Deal discretely and properly with any problem notified to the Academy by the parent/carer
- Make all efforts to encourage good attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- Instigate proper enquiries before removing a child from the Academy roll

#### Parents/Carers

We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Encourage their child to attend the Academy every day and on time
- Ensure that they contact the Academy before 8.30am on the first day of absence and every day thereafter to advise their child is unable to attend the Academy
- Ensure that their child arrive in school fully prepared for the Academy day and provide the Academy with up to date home, work and emergency contact numbers

- Not arrange family holidays during the Academy term (When parents request leave for their children for religious observance, students will be granted a day's authorised absence for a particular religious' festival. (Requests in respect of preparation for religious festivals will be regarded as unauthorised absence)
- Inform the Academy, in confidence, about any problem which might affect their child's attendance or behaviour

The DFE guidelines state that the following activities would classify as unauthorised:

- minding the house
- caring for relatives
- awaiting repair people
- shopping
- a birthday or family celebration
- unauthorised holiday
- parental illness
- excessive illness without a medical reason

*(Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.*

*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).*

The DFE's guidelines look at the area of "Special Occasions" and make clear that only truly exceptional occasions should be classified as authorised. This will be decided at the discretion of the Headteacher. We ask parents to notify the school well in advance (preferably 4 weeks' notice) of any proposed special occasion to ascertain whether the school would view the reason for absence as valid or not. The DFE's guidelines make it plain that, in the final analysis, it is the school that judges whether an absence is authorised or not. A note from home therefore does not automatically make an absence valid/justified/authorised.

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

## Students

We expect that all students will:

- Attend the Academy regularly
- Arrive on time to the Academy and to all lessons. (please see the Academy website for current Academy timings)
- Tell a member of staff about any problem which is making it hard for them to attend the Academy regularly

## Guidelines: Promoting Good Attendance

- We will encourage good attendance by placing more emphasis on rewards rather than sanctions although we recognise that in a minority of cases effective sanctions are necessary.

We will encourage good attendance by:

- Accurately completing attendance registers at the beginning of each session using SIMS ATTENDANCE
- Following-up absence on the first day wherever possible
- Undertaking attendance checks at appropriate times
- Recording good attendance on students' records, e.g. school report
- Acknowledging improvements in attendance
- Providing feedback on individual attendance data to students and, where necessary, parents/carers
- Encouraging informal liaison between the Academy, Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and other agencies wherever possible
- Welcoming and supporting children returning to the Academy after a long term absence and, where necessary, provide work and support via our Student Support Workers (SSWs) prior to re-entry to help students keep up to date
- Identifying children 'at risk' early
- Rewarding attendance for individual students on a termly and annual basis i.e. Attendance Tea Party for those students that achieve 100% attendance in a term
- Encouraging improvement
- Sending letters home to parents/carers of students where attendance is a concern
- Collecting data on attendance for the whole Academy and by year group and making this available to governors and to parents/carers

## Responding to Non-Attendance:

- When a student fails to attend the Academy without a satisfactory explanation or if attendance levels fall below 90% we will:
  - Contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence wherever possible by telephone
  - Send a letter to the parent/carer or make a home visit if there has been no response and the unauthorised absence has exceeded 3 school days

- Ask for medical evidence in cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absence or after 3 consecutive days' absence e.g. GP appointment card/GP, dentist, hospital letter/photocopy of prescription/medication
  - Discuss the matter with Academy's EWO, with a view to a further home visit and possibly a formal referral if the student or parent/carer fails to respond
  - Issue a fixed penalty notice in line with borough guidelines if a student's absence persists and/or a student takes a holiday during term time
  - Arrange an attendance panel meeting at the Academy. This will be undertaken with our Headteacher, Attendance Officer and EWO. The purpose of the meeting will be to discuss the issues and plan for improvement. A parent/carer's absence from/refusal to attend the panel meeting will not be seen as an excuse to delay any further formal proceedings.
- The return to the Academy and the reintegration of a student who returns to the Academy after a lengthy absence requires special planning. The Head of Year(HOY), in conjunction with the Attendance Officer will be responsible for deciding upon the programme for return and for the management of the programme. In collaboration with the parent and the EWO, programmes will be tailored to individual needs and may involve phased, part-time re-entry with support in the student support centre and lessons, as appropriate. This may involve the Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). Staff will be notified of the return of a long-term absentee through the daily briefing and consultation with individual staff as appropriate.

#### 4 Sixth Form:

An absolute minimum of 95% attendance for each subject is required by all students to guarantee entry to the relevant examinations.

#### 5 Punctuality and Lateness:

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2013](#), require schools/Academies to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

- Registration times are 8.30 am and 2.50pm. We register students twice every day (am/pm). And we also register at the start of every lesson. Please see website for whole [school day timings](#).
- Students arriving after the start of the day should sign in and will be recorded as late. If late there will be an immediate detention of 30 mins to be completed at the end of that Academy day. All parents/carers will be informed via text or email that the student has a detention.
- The intention is that a strict line on punctuality will lead to improved attendance in the long term.

## **6 Roles and Responsibilities:**

- In order for this policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey to the students the importance of the education being provided.

### **(6.1) Governors**

- To ensure that the Academy has in place a whole school Student Attendance policy.
- To receive termly reports from the Headteacher in respect of attendance data and trends.
- To monitor the effectiveness of the whole school Student Attendance policy.

### **(6.2) Headteacher**

- To oversee the whole policy.
- To have particular regard to the equalities aspects of the policy as they pertain to gender and ethnicity and to those students looked after by the Local Authority.
- To report to governors on attendance issues on a termly basis.

### **(6.3) Heads of School (HOS)**

- To liaise with Head of Years (HOYs).
- To oversee the collation and analysis of attendance data.
- To report to the Academy's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) on attendance matters and trends.
- To ensure liaison with the link EWO

### **(6.4) Head of Years (HOYs)**

- To meet on a weekly basis with the Attendance Officer to agree actions and review the impact of previous actions.
- To design and implement interventions to improve the attendance of identified groups of students.
- To praise and reward good attendance
- To work with Heads of Year (HOYs) to ensure the appropriate support for and improve attendance of PPG students.
- To work with the Attendance Officer to organise the reintegration of long-term absentees

- To provide updates to HOS

#### **(6.5) Attendance Officers**

- To collate attendance data for the year group
- To oversee the registration process and ensure that registers are completed accurately and on time
- To record all reasons for absence in the register
- To follow up any unexplained non-attendance by contacting the parent/carer on the first day by phone in the first instance and then by email/text.
- To reinforce good practice at meetings
- To raise the profile of attendance at appropriate times (e.g. assemblies)
- To initiate contact with parents/carers in the case of prolonged and unexplained absence
- To liaise with the EWO on a weekly basis
- To work with the HOYs to organise the reintegration of long-term absentees

#### **(6.6) Class Teachers / Form Tutor**

- To complete registers accurately and on time
- To inform the Head of Year of any concerns

### **7 Potential Safeguarding Concerns related to Attendance:**

Please see [Keeping Children Safe Policy](#) with particular focus on:

#### **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)**

The Heads of Year and associated staff have an awareness of FGM and the potential attendance indicators associated with it. These are likely to present themselves through non-attendance or parent leave of absence requests at the end of the summer term. Where a student has been subject to FGM, they may also suffer irregular attendance through ill health at the start of the autumn term. Where suspicions arise, the Academy will investigate thoroughly and inform the relevant services immediately.

#### **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)**

Sporadic attendance is often an indicator of possible CSE, particularly amongst vulnerable students. It is important that we liaise with the agencies which support vulnerable students.

#### **Children Missing in Education**

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. Academy staff members will follow the Academy's procedures for dealing with children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse

and neglect including sexual abuse or exploitation and to help prevent the risk of their going missing in future. If a child fails to attend the Academy for 5 Academy days or more without permission and there has been no contact from parents/carers, the Academy will notify the Education Welfare Service and contact the relevant local authority children's social care. The Academy will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child during this period.



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