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**Aireborough Trust &**

**Tranmere Park Primary School**

**Attendance Policy**

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| **Approved:** | Sept 2018 |
| **Reviewed:** | Summer 2021 |
| **Governors’ Committee:** | Curriculum and Policy |
| **Responsible Officer:** | Headteacher/Deputy Head/Pastoral |

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**Section 1: Introduction, Ethos and Background**

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality and, as a consequence, raise levels of achievement.

This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

• The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010; and

• The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes for children and young people. Research findings and learning from best practice shows that:

• Students must attend regularly to achieve their full potential

• Students who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind

• Leave in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect your child’s education.

• Students who consistently miss 17+ days in a school year lose one full grade in their GCSEs

• Unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent:

* 98% = Fewer than 4 days absent in one school year.
* 95% = Fewer than 10 days absent in one school year.
* 90% = 4 weeks (20 days) absent in one school year.
* 85% = 5½ weeks (28 days) absent in one school year.
* 80% = 7½ weeks (38 days) absent in one school year.

Over a period of 5 school years, students with an average attendance of 85‐90% will have missed half a school year of education while students with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year.

Our aim is to therefore is to encourage full attendance for all students at Tranmere Park Primary School.

We do this by:

* Creating a warm and welcoming environment
* Ensuring that students feel safe at all times
* Developing a strong sense of citizenship within our students
* Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
* Ensuring high quality teaching at all times
* Encouraging, praising and celebrating achievement and success

This policy outlines the process by which parents/carers can request leave under exceptional circumstances for their child/ren. In addition this policy provides clear procedures regarding absence through illness and the school’s response to illness and absence. This policy follows the latest Government legislation and guidelines and is the culmination of detailed consultation with both Leeds City Council. It has been developed and agreed by the Aireborough Family of Schools to ensure consistency, fairness and clear decision making in relation to school attendance and absence.

**Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities**

At Tranmere Park Primary School we are clear that attendance is everybody’s responsibility. By working in partnership with parents, carers, students and other professionals, we seek to ensure every child has an attendance that meets or exceeds the Tranmere Park School target of 97%. Outlined below are the roles and responsibilities of key staff within school and how they will help to ensure this target is achieved:

 **Headteacher**

The Headteacher will provide a strategic lead throughout the school by line managing key members of attendance staff, supporting other school leaders in the effective deployment of resources, ensuring compliance with the policy outlined and having oversight of cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution. The Headteacher will also be responsible for data analysis and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

**Key Stage Co-ordinators**

Key Stage co-ordinators will have an overview of attendance and priorities within their key stage. Alongside the Headteacher and Learning Mentor, they will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of students. Alongside this, Key Stage co-ordinators will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help students overcome these barriers. Key Stage co-ordinators will be integral in ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children within their key stage and will do so through regular communication, sharing of data, supporting difficult cases and rewarding excellent attendance as well as improvement.

**Teachers**

It is the class teacher’s responsibility to ensure the register is done within the first ten minutes of each morning and afternoon. Class teachers will support the phase leader and Learning Mentor in using data to identify priorities, recognise barriers to attendance and plan to overcome them. Key Stage teams will work directly with students and parents to assess and review attendance, set targets, complete attendance trackers and review progress where necessary. Teachers will also be integral to supporting, and challenging, students with poor punctuality, whether to school or lessons. Teachers and phase leaders will be involved in the communication around attendance to other staff, students and home.

**Learning Mentor**

The Learning Mentor plays a critical role in the management of absence through illness, leave or other means. They are the key point of contact between home and school and will ensure contact is made in all cases on the first day of absence. Where absence is ongoing, the Learning Mentor will provide a bridge between home and school and will develop an understanding of the barriers to attendance and, through liaison with other colleagues in school, plan to overcome those barriers.

As well as the attendance of children in the school building, the Learning Mentor will also monitor and record the attendance all students attending any offsite learning opportunities.

The attendance officer will lead on the ‘Fast Track’ part of the attendance system by monitoring data and trends, issuing warning letters, monitoring for improvement and following up the appropriate course of action.

The Learning Mentor will work with the phase leaders and Headteacher to identify a ‘casework’ cohort where additional support is required. In these cases, the Learning Mentor will track and log all actions and interventions and, where attendance remains stubbornly low they will prepare the evidence for prosecutions. They will also be responsible for reporting children as missing education where this is appropriate.

All Learning Mentor communication will be logged on CPOMS.

**Supporting Attendance**

In order to support great attendance, we will record two attendance sessions a day (AM and PM) and report on student attendance at fixed periods throughout the year. Each morning and afternoon, we will ensure registers are complete and that all children are accounted for as this is a key part of our safeguarding protocols. Students who we feel need to improve their attendance will be set targets and supported in identifying barriers to attendance and, wherever possible, removing or overcoming these barriers.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analysis the impact of the school’s work and identify priorities and areas for improvement. Data will be used to:

* Monitor individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons
* Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
* Identify students who should be celebrated for great attendance or significant improvement

**Term Time Absence and Requests for Leave**

Parents/Carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term time without prior permission and agreement by the Headteacher or those granted that level of authorisation by the Headteacher. In the event of exceptional circumstances parents may request leave during term time in writing and using an Exceptional Circumstances request form available on the school website or from the school office. Each application will be considered by the Headteacher and/or Governors who will decide whether or not the absence is to be authorised and the number of days. **Please note leave will not be considered retrospectively.**

In the event that unauthorised leave is taken, then the school will consider a fixed penalty fine.

**Please note, it has been agreed across the Aireborough Trust that we cannot take into consideration the impact of other Local Authority school holidays, continental shift patterns or public service shift patterns when considering holiday and leave requests.**

**Fixed Penalty Fines**

Under the latest Government Legislation parents / carers who take their children out of school during term time, without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Authority and could face possible prosecution in court.

In Leeds, a penalty notice will be issued for unauthorised absences of five days or more within a twelve week period and as an Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust School we are fully committed to this policy.

The penalty notice includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absence. If a penalty notice is issued, it will be for the whole period of absence. So the penalty would be the same for an absence of five days or ten days.

Fines are issued for each parent and each child so, for example, a family of four with two parents and two children will be fined a total of £240. The penalty will double if the notice is not paid within 21 working days. If it remains unpaid, it will be passed for prosecution at the Magistrates Court

**School Responses to Absence**

At Tranmere Park Primary School we value great attendance and work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child is accessing their education. As with every school, and in line with DFE guidance, we make a distinction between ‘authorised absence’ and ‘unauthorised absence’. Below are some examples of both, but please be aware this list is not exhaustive:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Authorised Absence** | **Unauthorised absence** |
| * Medical appointment (with letter)
* Family bereavement
* Religious observance (2 days max)
 | * Unexplained absences
* Family holiday in term time
* Truancy
* Birthdays
 |

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact. Below are the key stages for parents and carers to be aware of:

**95% +** Attendance is positive and a cause of celebration

**90% - 95%** Attendance is reasonable but could be improved. School will monitor.

**<90%** Attendance is a concern. A letter outlining the risk of persistent absence will be issued other than in exceptional circumstances

**75% - 90%** In the event that attendance is between 75% and 89.9% **or** if there are ten missed sessions over a twelve week period, the school will undergo a risk assessment and, unless there is absolute satisfaction that the absences were unavoidable, school will undertake the ‘FastTrack’ initiative in line with DFE guidance. This will then lead to a period of monitoring for twenty days and if there is no immediate improvement, a School Attendance Panel will be convened and a fixed penalty notice warning letter may be issued. Once a fixed penalty notice is issued, any further unauthorised absence could lead to a fixed penalty fine.

**<75%** Where attendance is below 75% there will be a ‘casework’ allocation and there will be an ongoing risk assessment of whether to recommend a ‘FastTrack’ process or pursue further levels of prosecution. Only cases that have unavoidable circumstances or those that have shown significant improvement over a six week period will avoid recommendations for prosecution.

Although we are aware that there are times absence may be inevitable or unavoidable, we commit to undertaking a thorough risk assessment process for cases under 90% to ensure that our decision making is fair and consistent.

**Appendix 1: Guidance on authorising absence / leave requests**

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| **Leave categorisation** | **Authorised?** | **Number of days** | **Other information?** |
| **Death of close family member** | **Yes** | **5 + 1** | **5 days + one day for funeral with additional consideration where required** |
| **Death of extended family member** | **Yes** | **1 + 1** | **One day + one day for funeral** |
| **Religious Observance** | **Yes** | **2** | **2 days i.e. Eid = one day for each observance. If in doubt, consult with local place of worship** |
| **Hospital Appointment** | **Yes** | **1** | **Only authorised with letter from hospital / professional** |
| **Medical / dental Appointment** | **Yes** | **.5** | **Unauthorised without letter** |
| **Sports Representation** | **Yes\*** | **HT’s Discretion** | **Representation at city, regional and above** |
| **Weddings** | **Yes** | **1** | **One day for family** |
| **Graduation** | **Yes** | **1** | **One day for immediate family** |