

**TURVEY PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**UPDATED SUMMER 2023 - TO BE REVIEWED SUMMER 2026**

**1. Introduction**

1.1 **Turvey Primary School** is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children and young people be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone’s part in this.

1.3 The policy has been drawn up based on current government and Local Authority guidance and statutory Regulations. The school will ensure that all members of the community know of the policy and have access to it.

**2. School’s roles and responsibilities**

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Turvey Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

2.2 Attendance Leader

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school’s work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As the Attendance Leader, the Headteacher will ensure that up-to-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that the Governing Body is fully aware of attendance data and targets. She will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

REGISTER CODES

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| CODE | **DESCRIPTION** | **MEANING** |
| **/** | Present (AM) | Present |
| **\** | Present (PM) | Present |
| **B** | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| **C** | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| **D** | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| **E** | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| **F** | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| **G** | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorised absence |
| **H** | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| **I** | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |
| **J** | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| **L** | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| **N** | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| **P** | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| **R** | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| **S** | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| **T** | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| **U** | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| **W** | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| **X** | Non-compulsory school age absence  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y** | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Z** | Pupil not yet on roll  | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **#** | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

ii) The register will be called promptly at **8.55 am** and **1 pm** (KS2) **or 1.15pm** (KS1) by each classteacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

iii) The registers will close at **9.10 am** and **1.10/1.25 pm**. Any pupil who arrives **after** the closing of the register will be marked as **absent**. Any child arriving late but before the closing of the register will be marked as **late.**

2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment / correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Headteacher.

ii) Turvey Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child’s education as unauthorised absence and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Turvey Primary School will challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child’s absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil’s home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example –

· a pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,

· a pupil is involved in an **exceptional** circumstance

· in **exceptional** circumstances, permission has been granted for a family holiday for which the parents have sought permission in advance (see appendix for the school’s term-time holiday form)

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him / her to school beforehand;

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family’s control,

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s / student’s parents belong;

 (g) the pupil / student is of no fixed abode, his/her parent is engaged in a trade which required him/her to travel, the pupil / student has attended school as often as the nature of the trade permits **and**, have reached the age of six, he/she has attended 200 sessions in the preceding 12 months;

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

· no explanation has been given by the parent;

· the school is not satisfied with the explanation;

· the pupil or parents are staying at home to mind the house;

· the pupil or parents are shopping during school hours;

· the pupil is absent for **unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;

· the pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission;

2.5 Approved educational activity

Where a student is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Absences after close of class registers

Any sudden absences that occur during the day will be picked up immediately by the classteacher and reported to the school office. The school office will advise the Headteacher.

2.7 Staff Training

The School Attendance Leader will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

**3. Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Leader will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body. The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school’s future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year group and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, pupils / students with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE (via the Local Authority and SIMS) within the stipulated time frame.

**4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Turvey Primary School. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment.

4.2 Turvey Primary School has procedures for dealing with unexplained absences within a week. The school office will contact the families for an explanation of absence and refer to the Headteacher.

4.3 First-day calling

Turvey Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will be telephoned on the first day if a pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents’ knowledge. Where it is not possible to make contact with parents on the first day of absence, the school will send a letter to them by first class post.

4.4 Meetings with parents

Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil’s absence or if attendance drops below 90% with or without explanation, the school will send an initial letter/email to parents. A pupil with attendance below 90% is classed as a persistent absentee. 3 weeks will be given for attendance to improve. If no improvement is made parents will be sent a second letter requesting a meeting with the headteacher.

4.5 Referral to the Education Welfare Service

If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service. The school may also ask the Education Welfare Service to consider a Penalty Notice. If you do not pay a Penalty Notice, you will be prosecuted in Court.

**Children missing in education (CME)**

If the school believes the child may be missing in education or the child has been missing for 10 unexplained days we will adhere to the missing children procedures. The school will contact the LA’s CME officer and will follow CME procedures as outlined in the Bedford Borough document.

4.6 Lateness and punctuality

Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time every day. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive after the register closes will be marked absent for the whole session (a session being a morning or an afternoon). This absence will be unauthorised unless the school is satisfied that there is a legitimate reason for the pupil to be late. A pupil who is persistently absent by reason of lateness will be dealt with in the same way as other students with an emerging pattern of absence. If the matter is not resolved quickly, it will be referred to the Education Attendance Service.

4.7 Pupils / students who arrive late for school but before the register closes must report to the school office and will be recorded in the “Late Book”. They will then be marked as late.

4.8 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the school office. **It is important that all pupils arriving late follow this procedure**.

4.9 For the same reason it is important that parents of pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day inform the school office. The school office will record that the child has left the school site and will mark them back in when they return.

**5. Term-time Holidays**

5.1 Turvey Primary School will consider every application individually, its policy is NOT to grant leave of absence for a holiday other than in exceptional circumstances. Time off school for family holidays **is not a right**. An application must be made in writing using the appropriate form (see appendix 3), with appropriate evidence, **in advance** of the intended holiday.

5.2 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

· cheaper cost of holiday;

· availability of the desired accommodation;

· poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and

· overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.3 Turvey Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence using the appropriate form (see appendix) giving the reasons for the decision.

5.4 Turvey Primary School will NOT authorise a holiday during periods of national tests (usually in May and June), ie SATS/Phonics screener/MTC.

5.5 As of 1 September 2013, the amendments to the law states “Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances”. As a result of the change to this law, the school can apply to the Local Authority for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued where it is satisfied that a parent has removed a child from the school during term time to take or extend a holiday.

Leave request based on the availability of cheap holidays or holidays that overlap term time are not considered to be exceptional circumstances.

You have to get permission if you want to take your child on holiday during term time. You can only do this if:

* an application is made to the Headteacher, using the tear off section on the form, in advance of the holiday by a parent the child normally lives with
* there are exceptional reasons for needing to take the leave of absence,

**6. Parents’ / carers’ responsibilities**

6.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Turvey Primary School.

6.2 Turvey Primary School expects parents / carers will:

· ensure their children attend the school regularly;

· support their children’s attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;

· not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

6.3 Parents will also be expected to:

· notify Turvey Primary School on the first day of absence

· ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the day;

· work in partnership with the school, for example by attending parents’ meetings and consultation, taking an interest in their children’s work and activities;

· contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children’s school life at Turvey Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

**7. Pupils’ responsibilities**

7.1 All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher.

7.2 Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. Pupils also have a responsibility for reporting to the school office if they arrive late.

**8. Governors’ responsibilities**

Section 175 (2)

8.1 The governing body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are pupils at the school.

**9. Conclusion**

**Reviewing the policy**

The school will review this policy every 3 years with the governing body or sooner if there is a need.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**A GUIDE FOR PARENTS**

**1. When does my child need to be in School?**

Your child should be at school, when the bell is rung on the playground at 8:50 a.m. The register is taken at 8.55a.m. Afternoon school starts at 1:00 (KS2) or 1.15p.m (KS1) p.m.

**2. What happens if my child is late?**

Registration finishes at 9.10 in the morning and 1.10/1.25 in the afternoon.

Pupils who arrive after the bell rings at 8.50am should report to the school office and sign in the late book. Arrival after 9.10am is classed as an absence.

A series of unauthorised late marks may lead to referral to the EWO (Education

Welfare Officer).

**3. Does the School need letters explaining my child’s absence or will a phone**

**call do?**

We would expect a parent to telephone the school on the first day of absence.

We will telephone you if your child has not arrived in school by 9:30 a.m. If we do not receive an explanation, or if the explanation is unsatisfactory, we will not authorise the absence.

If we are concerned about aspects of your child’s attendance or punctuality we will contact you to discuss the best way forward.

An accumulation of unauthorised absences will lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

**4.** **What is unacceptable?**

The school will not authorise absences other than those in exceptional circumstances. Family holidays, day trips, shopping or birthdays are not classed as exceptional.

**5.** **Can we take family holidays during term-time?**

Family holidays should be taken during the 12 weeks of school holidays. There are 190 statutory school days a year; so there are 175 other days (weekends and school holidays) available for holidays which would not have a negative effect on your child’s education. Only in exceptional circumstances will permission be given. You need to request permission for your child to accompany you on a family holiday during term time. You should complete a leave of absence application form (see appendix) stating the reason why the holiday must be taken in term time. The Headteacher has the right to refuse permission.

**6. What can I do to encourage my child to attend School?**

Make sure your child gets enough sleep and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he / she leaves home in the correct clothes and properly equipped. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his / her education.

**7. My child is trying to avoid coming to School. What should I do?**

Contact your child’s class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child’s reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem.