

Testwood School Attendance Policy



Key Responsibility area:	PW
Last Review:	May 2024
Next Review:	May 2026

Revision History

Version	Date	Amendments	Initials
V1.1	13/03/2018	Changed references to TSC to Testwood School	AS
V2.0	30/04/2019	Pg 5 – 2a) last word of last sentence – Headteacher replaced school. Throughout the policy the wording ‘in the last 100 possible school sessions’ has been added when referring to absence. The revised Code of Conduct and information on Penalty Notices hyperlink has been added to the policy.	JBa
V3.0	29/04/2020	Progress Leader replaced with Year Leader. Attendance Manager replace with Pastoral AHT.	DM
V4.0	30/03/2022	Replace “pupil” with “student” Attendance Support Worker added D9, D11 and D13	DM
V5.0	27/04/23	Replace Pastoral support worker with Attendance Team ALP (Attendance Legal Panel) replaced with LIT (Legal Intervention Team)	DM DM
V5.1	01/05/24	Revision dates updated	JBa

[Article 28](#) (right to education) Every child has the right to an education. Primary education must be free and different forms of secondary education must be available to every child. Discipline in schools must respect children’s dignity and their rights. Richer countries must help poorer countries achieve this.

Rationale:

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our students and endeavour to provide an environment where all students feel valued and welcome.

Parents/carers and students play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents/carers and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to students and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital that they are at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- 1) Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- 2) Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- 3) Regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- 4) Regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- 5) Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training

Attendance Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning registration period or afternoon (period 4) must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Taking a register

For all sessions and lessons

- All sessions (registration period and lessons) will be completed through Arbor
- The register should be taken within the first 5 minutes of every session/lesson
- The member of staff **must only use** one of the following codes:
 - / = Present (Visible within the class)
 - N = Unauthorised Absence (No reason yet provided for absence; not in the class)
 - L = Late (Late to class adding the number of minutes late)

Legal AM Morning registration (08.30-08.50)

- Registers are taken in accordance to the procedures above ("For all sessions and lessons")
- Members of staff must not enter any other code for attendance other than those listed above ("For all sessions and lessons") (/, N or L).

Legal PM Period 4 (12.10pm)

- Registers are taken in accordance to the procedures above ("For all sessions and

- lessons”)
- Members of staff must not enter any other code for attendance other than those listed above (“For all sessions and lessons”) (\, N or L).

Lateness and Punctuality

General guidance

- Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 08.30am.
- The registers will remain open for 20 minutes, from 08.30am. Any student arriving after this time (08.50am) we will consider marking as an unauthorised absence unless there is an acceptable explanation. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered, on receipt of a note/evidence being provided.
- School gates will be locked at 08.30am after this time students must enter through main reception and sign in via the InVentry sign-in system. This information will be used for front office staff to call and inform parents/carers that their child was late for school

Lateness during tutor registration period

- Students arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present, but will be coded by the member of staff taking the morning register as late (L).
- The member of staff **must** record the exact number of minutes the student was late.
- The front office team will use this data to inform parents/carers of their child being late for school
- The Year Leaders, Attendance Team and Senior Leadership Team will have an overview of ongoing lateness from students (reports provided by the DHT (welfare) and then issue suitable sanctions for students that are repeatedly late.

Lateness after tutor registration period closes (08.50am Mon, Tue, Wed & Fri, 09.15am on Thur)

- Students arriving after the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as unauthorised absence for the morning session, and will be coded by the Attendance team as late (U) after registers close.
- Arbor or the member of staff signing the student into school **must** record the exact number of minutes the student was late
- Year Leaders will take any relevant action from weekly report from DHT identifying any ongoing trends/concerns with specific students

Late Arrivals & Sanctions

- At given points throughout the academic year, identified weeks and specific days, Year Leaders and/or Senior Leadership Team members may operate the ‘Late Arrivals’ up to 08.50am to engage in immediate conversations with students who are late. This will be directed by the DHT

- The school gates will be locked at 08.30am requiring late students to enter through reception to sign in as late on InVentry
- **All students who are late, will be issued with a 30-minute after-school detention on the same day.** The Attendance Team calls to inform the parent/carer of this detention
- If there is a growing concern the school would contact home to discuss how to move forward

First Day Absence

- We expect to receive contact from a parent to explain the reason for the students' absence at the earliest opportunity. An answer phone system is in operation outside of school hours. The school number to call is 02380 862146 and parents/carers then have the option to inform the school of their child's absence
- If no parental contact has been made, and a student is absent, ARBOR will send a text and email asking for contact by break time (10.50)

Third Day Absence (when no contact from home has been received)

- If your child is not seen and contact has not been established with you or any of the named parents/carers after three days of absence the school is required to start a child missing in education procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council (HCC) guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents and the child including making enquiries to known friends, wider family.
- The Attendance Team will continue to seek parental contact.
- If contact can't be made via phone communication, a letter, via Arbor, is sent to the parent requesting they contact Testwood School to explain the absence. If the absence is medical a Doctor's note may be required in order for the absence to be authorised. This is at the discretion of the Head Teacher or their nominated representative.
- We **could** also conduct a home visit to check on the young person

Continuing Absence (if, still, no contact from home has been received) - Including Eyes On Procedure

- The Attendance Team will coordinate with relevant staff to seek parental contact to explain the absence. At this point any other agencies that have an ongoing involvement with the absent student will be notified of the student's absence by the Attendance Team or Safeguarding Manager, either by email or telephone.
- Testwood School will monitor the continued absence of students and if students are off school for 5 continued days, the school will begin the "Eyes On" safeguarding procedure. This includes Testwood staff completing door step checks of these students. Families who do not respond (answer the door) will have a letter from the school put through the letterbox explaining there was an attempted visit.

Ten Day's Absence

Any student who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be notified to the Local Authority, by submitting a referral to Children's Services/Legal Intervention Team (LIT). The school will include details of the action that they have taken.

Persistent Absence

- It is the responsibility of the Year Leaders to bring to the attention of the Attendance Team and their Line Manager of any emerging attendance concerns
- In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/carers. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School First Aid Team if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the Children's Services Locality Team.
- Student's attendance is monitored appropriately at different thresholds by the Attendance Team.
- All meetings with families are to support improvements in attendance, are to discuss possible reasons for absence and agree a monitoring period to secure improvement through realistic targets; this is likely to include involvement of various members of the school and outside agencies.
- During Line Management meetings between the Senior Leader, Attendance Team and the Year Leaders attendance is a standing agenda item to discuss and agree interventions

Penalty Notices for non-attendance – Hampshire's *Code of conduct*

The *Code of conduct* states that:

Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes *G*, *U* or *O* on the register)
- persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed
- persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met
- absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance
- absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance

unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

Legal measures for absence taken when the headteacher has declined parents/ carers' request for leave of absence

Where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- 1 non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or

2 a holiday that has been taken without permission

and the unauthorised absence (coded G) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued.

If a child has other types of unauthorised absence (coded O and U) and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve the attendance then a single Penalty Notice is issued for either:

- 1 10 sessions (five days) of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week school period**
- 2 one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment of testing where dates are published in advance.**

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via a letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.

Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

1. Promoting Good Attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and the child. The Home/School agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what parents/carers will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

2. Promoting Attendance and Awards

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Parents must monitor their child's attendance carefully. Parents can use the Arbor app to monitor up-to-date attendance. They will see attendance in writing via the termly progress reports sent home.

- Every half term the Deputy Headteacher (welfare) will produce a detailed report for SLT, Year Leaders and the Attendance Team. This report shows students that meet the following criteria for rewards and recognition:
 - **100% Attendance (weekly):** 1 house point awarded by Attendance Team
 - **100% Attendance = Students that have 100% attendance for the year so far:** Certificate and letter from Deputy Headteacher (welfare). 5 house points are awarded by Year Leaders.
 - **99% Attendance = Students that have 99% attendance for the year so far:** 4 house points are awarded by the Year Leaders
 - **98% Attendance = Students that have 98% attendance for the year so far:** 3 house points are awarded by the Year Leaders
 - **97% Attendance = Students that have 97% attendance for the year so far:** 2 house points are awarded by the Year Leaders
 - **96% Attendance = Students that have 96% attendance for the year so far:** 1 house point is awarded by the Year Leaders
 - **100% Attendance per team = Students presented in the End of Term Celebration Assembly**

At the end of the year the house with the highest attendance wins the House Attendance Cup on the school's Celebration Day for awards.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Attendance Leader

A member of the Senior Leadership Team 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. This person will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parent/carer 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 student's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the Headteacher.**

Responsibilities of Classroom Staff:

- I. Ensure that all students are registered accurately
- II. Promote & reward good attendance at all appropriate opportunities.
- III. Liaise with the Attendance Leader on matters of attendance and punctuality and
- IV. Communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence.

Responsibilities of Students:

- I. Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence.
- II. Arrive in school on time.
- III. Go to all their registrations and lessons on time.
- IV. Take responsibility for registering at Reception if they are late or are leaving the school site during school hours.

Responsibilities of Parents and Carers:

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carers legal responsibility (section of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents/carers will:

- I. Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- II. Discuss with the tutor/class teacher any planned absences well in advance.
- III. Support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- IV. Make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by phone or text on the first and subsequent days of absence, or by letter if a phone is unavailable.

- V. Avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments.
- VI. Only request for leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance.

Request for Leave of Absence

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: **(Student registration) (England) regulations state that:**

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. It is important to note that Headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are rare, significant, or unavoidable which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is however, no legal entitlement for time off in school time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.** Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from our Reception in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorized** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire's Code of Conduct parent/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine, or other legal action in accordance the code.

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children out during school time.

Alternative Provision

The School will work and liaise with all alternative provision providers to ensure that their procedures and methods for recording and monitoring attendance are shared with the school, Year Leaders and Attendance Team. For our school this would be provision like Greenwood (PRU), Academy 21 and Ngage Ltd. We would expect at least a weekly attendance report for any school students that are attending alternative provision. Testwood School would conduct at least termly visits (coordinated by DHT) to review and monitor all aspects of safeguarding academic provision and pastoral care. These visits would be written up and recorded onto CPOMS as part of the schools safeguarding procedures for reduced hours/alternative provision.

Coding for attendance is as below table summary (MM = Managed Move):

- Managed move out from Testwood: D code
- Managed move into Testwood: / or \ for attending sessions in Testwood school. All other codes where relevant e.g. I if sessions not attended online due to illness
- Greenwood: D
- Online provision or tutoring: B for all sessions attended online. All other codes where relevant e.g. I if sessions not attended online due to illness
- Reduced hours: / or \ for attending sessions in Testwood school. C code for times at home. All other codes where relevant e.g. I if sessions not attended online due to illness

The Registration System

The School will use the Arbor system for keeping the school attendance records. Registers by law must be kept for at least 3 years. The following national codes will be used to record attendance information. Those codes in bold text are for unauthorised absences.

To be clear on the above codes, the following codes which build up could result in penalties being issued:

- O = unauthorised absence
- U = un-authorised late
- L = late
- G = unauthorised holiday

Understanding types of absence:

Students are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an **exceptional reason** for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- I. **Authorised Absence:** is when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence, or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- II. **Unauthorized Absence:** is when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - a) parents/carers giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - b) truancy before or during the school day
 - c) absences which have not been explained

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorized absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school other than when leaving at the end of Year 11 parents/carers are asked to:

1. Give the attendance team comprehensive information about their plans including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing

2. If students leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a 'Child Missing in Education'. This requires schools and Local Authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in child performances

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the Headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for Sport.

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy Roma Traveller Showman and Showman families

Absence of a child from a traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the home school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance Learning packs for traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

Study Leave

We believe that students' needs are best met if they attend school every day in the period leading up to examinations. No study leave will be granted during this period, therefore, and students / students will be expected to attend school in the usual way. Study leave will only be granted to Year 11 students during the time of the GCSE examination period. Should any students wish to attend school (or should their parents/carers wish them to) on the days and at times when they are not sitting examinations, arrangements will be made for them to do so. The school will work within the legal requirements of:

1. study leave should only be granted to Year 11 students and never to those in other year groups;
2. it should never exceed 15 school days in a year and is most appropriately granted during the examination period itself, i.e. not before the beginning of that period;
3. it should always be granted sparingly taking account of an individual student's ability to manage and benefit from unsupervised study;
4. any student has the right to attend school during study leave and a parent has the right to insist he/she does so;
5. any sessions given to students as study leave has a statistical meaning of authorised absence (it is not an 'approved educational activity' as it is unsupervised) and should be recorded and reported on by the school as such.

Teenage Pregnancy

Support will be directed to keeping a student in school and wherever possible her return to full time education as soon as possible after the birth. A student who becomes pregnant should be allowed no more than 18 weeks authorised absence to cover the time immediately before and after the birth of the child. After that time, any absence should be treated as unauthorized.

Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 3 years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies

This policy was approved by the Board of Trustees and will be reviewed bi-annually.