

**ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Signed: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Chair of Governors**

**Date Proposed ratified: 14/2/2020**

**Rationale**

The Government expects that:

Schools, colleges and local authorities:

* Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent

absence

* Ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
* Act early to address patterns of absence.

Parents:

* Perform their legal duty by ensuring that children of compulsory school age are registered at school and attend regularly.

Students:

* Be punctual to school and to their lessons.

Talbot Specialist School is committed to maximising the achievement of all students irrespective of race, gender or disability. Regular attendance and good punctuality are vital to educational achievement and social integration at school. Success at school can help the student gain access to appropriate post 16 opportunities and equip them with the skills needed for a fulfilling adult life.

In supporting good attendance the school will work in partnership with the student, parents/carers and wider professionals including MAST, Social Care and Health professionals. Good attendance will be seen as an achievement in school and students will be recognised and rewarded as such. Attendance will be continuously monitored and intervention / support developed where problems are identified.

**Purposes**

* To promote an ethos in which good attendance is expected and is the norm.
* To promote, support and reward good attendance and punctuality.
* To have effective systems of recording, monitoring and reporting student attendance.
* To work closely and effectively with MAST to support students and families to improve their attendance.
* To support and encourage parents/carers to enable their children to reach good attendance levels.
* To be sensitive to the particular circumstances of students and their families and how these can effect attendance.
* To inform all staff of the key roles and responsibilities within the school.
* To monitor and provide effective information on levels of attendance and punctuality.
* To ensure a safe, secure school environment and curriculum which meets students’ individual needs is in place to promote and enable good attendance.

**Responsibilities of the Head Teacher**

* The Head Teacher has overall responsibility for attendance matters.
* To oversee and monitor the work of the Attendance coordinator in school

**Responsibilities of the Attendance Coordinator (Assistant Head Teacher)**

* To have strategic oversight of attendance matters in school
* To monitor, review and ensure appropriate implementation of attendance and punctuation policies across all school settings.
* To monitor/analyse all attendance data termly to identify appropriate interventions (for all students who are persistent absentees and for those with lower than 90% attendance)
* To ensure attendance is promoted and rewarded in school
* To ensure that all absences are recorded appropriately and in line with DFE guidelines
* To make decisions regarding absence requests for special occasions / holidays in line with DfE guidelines and school procedures
* To produce and supply attendance information to the Head Teacher and governors
* To coordinate liaison with other agencies, including health, MAST and social care, in order to identify appropriate Educational Provision and support
* To ensure single referrals are made to MAST for students for whom the main concern is attendance (and internal interventions have not been successful in improving attendance figures)
* To ensure that information regarding attendance, punctuality and absence is available to all parents
* To make referrals to social care for any student with unexplained absence on the third day (for a safe and well check) and on the first day of unexplained absence for a child on a child protection plan.
* To identify / support reintegration packages for students previously missing from education

**Responsibilities of the Deputy Safeguarding Lead**

* To track students attendance where there are safeguarding concerns and ensure appropriate action is taken in line with the schools safeguarding procedures / individual student plans
* To be the link person for contacting home regarding attendance where this is deemed to be the most appropriate procedure.
* To be involved in multi-agency meetings as needed to support children and their families in improving attendance issues.

**Responsibilities of the Class Teacher**

* To keep an accurate, timely and up-to-date register of attendance following the agreed procedures and codes using SIMS
* To ensure that information provided by parents regarding absence and attendance is communicated to the year team support
* To promote an ethos of good attendance and punctuality with parents and students
* To liaise with Assistant Head Teacher where concerns are held/ raised about a child’s attendance in school
* To ensure that students on agreed part-time timetables are provided with the agreed work to undertake at home
* To be involved in multi-agency meetings as needed to support children and their families in improving attendance issues
* To liaise with other professionals as needed to support student attendance in school
* To provide a safe, secure school environment and a curriculum which meets individual needs
* To discuss attendance at each child’s Annual Review meeting and parents consultation meetings
* To ensure that action identified in students intervention plans are implemented fully
* To participate in student progress meetings working with Deputy and Assistant heads to identify appropriate action for individual students and their families to improve attendance
* To ensure that, if a member of the class team phones a parent regarding a child’s absence, the year team support is immediately informed of the call and outcome of the call. (This is important to ensure families only receive one call regarding the day’s absence)

**Responsibilities of the ClassTeam (TA’s)**

* To be involved in multi-agency meetings as needed to support children and their families in improving attendance issues
* To promote an ethos of good attendance and punctuality with parents and students
* To ensure that information provided by parents regarding absence and attendance is communicated to the year team support
* When covering for a teacher ensure that procedures for completing registers are undertaken

**Responsibilities of parents**

* To contact school if their child is absent to inform us of the reason for the absence
* To inform school in advance, by telephone or letter, of any medical appointments which need to be taken in school time
* To make every effort to take holidays during school holiday periods
* To request and complete a holiday request form for any planned absences from school
* To try to arrange medical appointments out of school hours where this is possible
* To promote and encourage good attendance
* To notify school of any concerns or difficulties you have with getting your child to attend
* To support your child to attend school by working cooperatively with school, and other agencies where appropriate; by attending meetings and following agreed actions
* To support your child to be ready punctually for school and for collection by transport

**Responsibilities of students**

* To make every effort to be ready on time for school transport in the morning
* To come to school every day unless you are too ill to attend
* To talk to an adult in school if you have any concerns or worries about coming to school.

**Responsibility of the Year Team Support**

* To liaise with class teams to ensure information received from parents regarding absence is communicated
* To check that class teams have appropriately marked registers, that appropriate codes have been used and that unexplained absence is followed up with parents
* To contact parents on the first day of any unexplained absence (in liaison with class teams)
* To pass on concerns regarding student attendance to the safeguarding team as appropriate
* To ensure that the Attendance Coordinator is fully informed of any unexplained absence in order to ensure that procedures are followed and students are safe and well. This may include contacting social care as needed for a safe and well check.
* To ensure that any unexplained absence is referred to the Designated Safeguarding Lead or safeguarding HLTA for a child on a child protection plan
* To perform weekly monitoring of attendance data; including appropriate use of coding and chasing up unexplained / unauthorised absences
* To provide attendance data to the attendance coordinator as needed each half term and for the Head Teachers Report

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# **Procedures**

Registers are a legal document, care must be taken to ensure registers are marked accurately. Attendance of all pupils is monitored and evaluated regularly using the following procedures:

* All registers should be completed by tutor teams before the closing of registers at 9.30am and 1.30pm respectively.
* Any known reasons for absence should be recorded on SIMS by the tutor team or phase year team supports as the information is received and the explanation put into the comment box provided for each student when their attendance is recorded in SIMS. If class teams are unable to do this when information is received the phase year team supports should be informed verbally to enable the data to be appropriately input into SIMS
* The designated office staff will contact parents on the first day of absence for any unexplained absences and the explanation recorded in the comment box.
* Staff must only use the official codes as listed above. If the reason is unknown N should be used until further information is received.
* Tutor teams should not use authorised codes such as H for holiday unless they have been informed by the admin team that it has been approved by SLT
* All staff should direct parents to fill in a request for leave form if they are made aware of parental plans for holidays / absences. Parents should be reminded of the importance of attendance and encouraged to take holidays during school holiday periods wherever possible.
* Students arriving in school after the close of registers must be registered on entry into the building by admin including the time of arrival. The receptionist must contact the relevant tutor team to notify them of the student’s arrival.
* Any student leaving school premises during a school session must sign out before leaving the building.
* For students who attend school on a reduced timetable, Year Team Supports are notified by reception on their arrival/non-arrival to enable registration to be completed. Non-attendance procedures are followed as required.

### **Authorising Absence**

***Only the Head teacher may authorise absence*.**

* Even when a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence the Head teacher will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence.
* The school will clearly set out, in its Parent Policy, obligations for parents/carers regarding attendance and punctuality

Absence may be authorised if:

* The pupil is too ill to attend school
* The pupil is prevented from attending by an unavoidable cause
* The pupil is absent on a day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil’s parent/carer belongs
* The school at which the pupil is registered is not within walking distance and no suitable arrangements have been made by the Local Authority *unless the parents/carers have chosen to send their child to a school which is not within walking distance*
* The pupil is the child of Traveller parents who temporarily leave the area giving reasonable indication of their intention to return
* There is a close family bereavement
* The pupil has a local authority licence to take part in a public performance and the school has granted leave of absence
* Leave of absence is granted *by the Head teacher* under exceptional circumstances

Absence should not be authorised if:

* No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
* The school is not satisfied with an explanation offered
* The pupil is staying home to look after parents, siblings or the home
* The pupil is absent on special occasions e.g. birthday
* The pupil is absent on exceptional term time leave for longer than agreed by the Head teacher
* The pupil is absent on holiday without agreement under the exceptional leave guidance
* The pupil is absent unnecessarily e.g. taken shopping, for a haircut

### **Requests for term time exceptional leave**

Talbot Specialist School adheres to Education Regulations 2006 (Pupil Registrations) which came into force on 1st September 2013. These regulations state that schools may not grant leave of absence for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. All holidays taken during term time will therefore be deemed as unauthorised absences unless considered to be special or exceptional. Parents will be informed of the importance of their child attending school and of the need for holidays to be taken only during term time. This will be included in the school information given to parents at the beginning of each academic year. All requests for leave during school time will be considered individually by the attendance coordinator and Head Teacher. Each application received will be reviewed as to whether circumstances are deemed to be special / exceptional. Individual student attendance data will also be carefully considered alongside the request.

Responding to absence – criteria for requesting support from the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST)

* Home/school contact has not prompted an improvement in attendance
* Poor overall attendance (e.g. below 90%) and no mitigating circumstances or acceptable reasons for absence provided to school
* If attendance continues to give cause for concern strategies will be considered and steps taken in an attempt to improve attendance and punctuality. This could include home visits from school staff, meetings in school with other professionals if deemed appropriate
* When a pupil has not attended for 10 school days the school has a statutory responsibility to inform the Local Authority.

# **Children Missing from Education**

The Attendance Co-Ordinator (Assistant Head Teacher) is the nominated member of school staff to liaise with the Local Authority’s Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures **(See policy *Children Missing from Education)***

## **Children in Public Care**

Designated Teacher for Looked after Children (Assistant Head Teacher) is the co-ordinator who liaises with the Local Authority’s Children Looked After team. CLE pupils will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

Absence Due to Parental Concerns relating to Covid19

Where a parent expressed the reason for absence is due to them being concerned for their child’s health due to Covid 19 then school will consider each absence on a case by case basis to identify next steps. E.g

* Consultation with Health Professionals
* Agreed Phased Return
* Referral to MAST
* Provision of Home-Based Learning
* Consultation with Local Authority
* Notify allocated Social Worker

In these minority of instances the family will be allocated a member of SLT to work in close partnership with the family and outside services to build confidence and return to school as quickly as possible.

**Monitoring, review and Implementation of the Policy**

The Attendance Coordinator (Assistant Headteacher) is primarily responsible for the implementation of the Attendance Policy. Any concerns regarding attendance procedures will be highlighted to the Attendance Coordinator in school. Training for staff will be delivered as needed to ensure all staff in school are able to follow the given policies and procedures.

The Attendance Policy will be reviewed annually by the Attendance Coordinator in conjunction with the office manager, year team support and governing body

**Attendance Codes**

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| **Code** | **Code Meaning** | **Statistical Meaning** |
| / | Present (am) | Present am |
| \ | Present (pm) | Present pm |
| U | Late (after registration closed)  Admin Team to record time of arrival on SIMS  This code will not be applied if transport is delayed or a slightly later time has been agreed by SLT | Unauthorised absence |
| B | Educated off-site | Present |
| C | Other authorised circumstances  SLT will determine if C code is to be applied and Admin team will add comment to confirm reason for C | Authorised Absence  Comments Should always be added e.g   * Parent concerned about returning to school due to Covid. * Child moved area and awaiting school placement in different Local Authority. * Phased return agreed * Part time timetable agreed * Whole School staggered Sep start |
| D | Dual registration |  |
| E | Excluded | Authorised Absence |
| F | Extended family holiday agreed | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday not agreed | Unauthorised Absence |
| H | Annual family holiday (agreed) | Authorised Absence |
| I | Illness  Admin team will add comment to give specific type of illness | Authorised absence |
| J | Interview | Authorised Absence |
| L | Late (before registration closed)  Admin Team to record time of arrival on SIMS  This code will not be applied if transport is delayed or a slightly later time has been agreed by SLT | Unauthorised Absence |
| M | Medical/dental  Type of medical appointment to be written in comments by the admin team and only used when evidence of appointment has been seen | Authorised Absence |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence  Admin team will alert student wellbeing team as soon as practically possible if no response is received. The DSL or Deputy DSL based on risk factor will determine if a home visit is needed. | Unauthorised Absence |
| O | Unauthorised circumstances | Unauthorised Absence |
| P | Approved sporting activity | Authorised absence  Used by Admin Team only |
| R | Religious observance | Authorised Absence  Used by Admin Team only |
| T | Study Leave | Authorised Absence |
| V | Educational Visits | Present |
| Y | School Closure | Not Counted |
| W | Works Experience | Present |
| X | Covid –19 Absence | X code is for children who are quarantining following notification from track or trace, awaiting test results, isolating due to a positive result in the family or school, shielding letter received by family, school restrictions in place, local lockdown or returning from abroad and needing to quarantine.  If a student tests negative but are still ill for other reasons then after the day of the test result the student is recorded as **I if still absent: illness** |