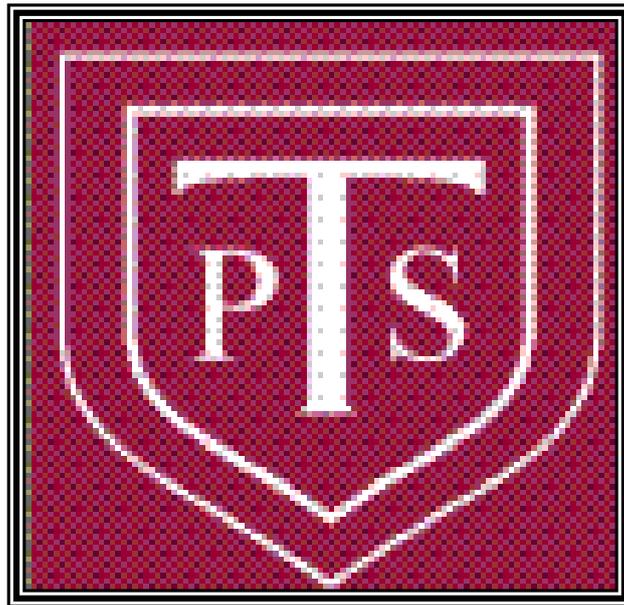


# **ATTENDANCE POLICY**



**Tyntesfield  
Primary School**

**Policy approved: Spring 2016  
Policy review: Spring 2019**

## **1. Introduction and background**

At Tynesfield, we recognise that good attendance and punctuality are central to raising standards and pupil attainment.

This policy is written with the above statement in mind and this policy underpins our school ethos to enable every child:

*'...to be happy, caring, secure and responsible; to develop a lifelong passion and thirst for learning, to enable them to fulfil their potential and be prepared for the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.'*

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

## **2. Promoting Regular Attendance**

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff. To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- Report to parents/carers annually on how their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below 90%.
- Celebrate good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements;

## **3. Understanding types of absence**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- absences which have never been properly explained
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. We can use outside agencies to help with this such as the School Nurse or the education Welfare Officer.

## **4. Persistent Absenteeism (PA)**

At Tynesfield, we class a pupil as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully we also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. All PA pupils are highlighted to our EWO and an identified plan of action agreed.

### **5. Absence Procedures**

If a child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

- Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.30. The school has an answer phone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take the call
- Or they can call into school and report to reception.

If a child is absent we will:

- Telephone parents/carers on the first day of absence if we have not heard from them;
- Invite them in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher if absences persist;
- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance moves below 90% or if on-going concerns persist.

### **6. The Education Welfare Officer**

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, we may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

### **7. Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a child misses the start of the day they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage absence. Good time keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.00am and we expect our children to be in the playground before this time ready to line up when the whistle is blown. The whistle is blown a couple of minutes early although the door and gate into school are not shut until 9am.

Any child arriving from 9am, must enter school via the main entrance where they will be given a late mark.

At 9.10am the registers will be closed. If a child arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site, but this will not count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence. This may mean that parents could face the possibility of a Penalty Notice if the problem persists.

If a child has a persistent late record you will be asked to meet with the Headteacher to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children.

## **8. Holidays in Term Time**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday and we strongly discourage children from having any time off school for holidays. All applications for leave must be made in advance and at the discretion of the school a maximum of 10 days in any academic year may be authorised. In making a decision the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. We urge parents to apply for only one period of absence in a school year up to a maximum of 10 days.

We strongly recommend that parents gain consent for any holiday in term time before booking your holiday.

We will not agree leave during term time under the following circumstances:

- When a pupil is just starting the school. This is very important as your child needs to settle into their new environment as quickly as possible.
- Immediately before and during assessment periods (SATS) for year 6 pupils.
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any level of unauthorised absence.
- Where a pupil's attendance rate is already below the school's target of 95% for any individual or will fall below 90% that level as a result of taking holiday leave.
- Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

## **9. Summary**

The minimum level of attendance for any child at Tyntesfield is 90% attendance. We will keep parents updated regularly on their child's progress. Our target is to achieve better than this, however, because we know that good attendance is the key to successful schooling. Through the school year we monitor absences and punctuality to show us where improvements need to be made.

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend.

All school staff are committed to working with parents and pupils as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.