

Totley Primary School



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Attendance and Punctuality Policy



We believe that good attendance and punctuality are vital if children are to attain their full potential as learners. It is important that all children attend school on a daily basis and that they arrive on time so as not to miss valuable learning time. We are therefore committed to a whole school approach towards attendance and punctuality in a partnership with parents/carers.

Attendance and the Law

- Parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive a suitable full-time education by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- The school must complete attendance registers at the beginning of the morning session and during the afternoon session.
- Legally, there is no entitlement for parents to take children on holiday during term time.
- Failure by parents to ensure the regular attendance at school of a registered pupil is an offence punishable by law (Education Act 1996 Section 444).
- Fixed penalties can be issued by the Local Authority where the criteria for such a notice are met.
- Parents and carers who regularly take their child out of school in term time may be prosecuted under the higher charge of an 'aggravated offence'. Aggravated offences are considered by the courts as being more serious offences and carry higher sentences/fines. Aggravated Offences are also recorded on the Police National Computer against the parents/carers and would be disclosed on any Disclosure and Barring Services (DBS) requests.

The [Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Head teachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Headteachers have the discretion to grant leave, but they should only do so in exceptional circumstances. If a Headteacher grants a leave request, it will be for them to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. This leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Parents can be fined for taking their child on holiday during term time without consent from the school.

Requesting term time leave

Legally, there is no entitlement for parents to take children on holiday or out of school during term time. Parents/carers are legally required to request exceptional term time leave from the Head teacher of the school at which their child is registered. We will consider all term time leave requests on its own merit and the impact upon the child's learning and wellbeing will be central to the decision made. However, no leave of absence will be authorised unless it is for exceptional circumstances.

To ensure a fair response to the request, the following procedures will be adopted:

- All requests for exceptional term time leave must be made at least 20 days in advance of the leave being taken to allow the school time to consider the request.
- A form must be completed and handed in to the school office and completed by the Head teacher or member of the SLT. (See appendix 1)
- Exceptional Term time leave requests must include specific start and end dates, as this will formally constitute the leave period. Where no specific dates are provided, then the request cannot be considered or granted.
- Parents/carers who are intending to travel abroad with their children during term time should not book travel prior to securing approval from the school.
- The child's attendance must be above 95% (at the start of a new school year, the previous year's data will be used) for the request to even be considered.
- No more than two requests for holiday time in any one year are requested.
- No absences will be authorised during the Statutory National Assessment Test periods. These are generally taken in the summer term.
- The school will consider the request for term time leave and ensure that a written decision is obtained by the Parents/Carers requesting leave within 10 days of receiving the request.
- The Headteacher's decision is final.

Decision

The decision may result in the term time leave request being a) authorised b) part authorised or c) unauthorised. This will be communicated clearly on the request form which will be sent back to parents.

Penalty Notice Holiday Fine

If parents/carers take their children on holiday during term time for more than 5 consecutive days and this is not authorised by the School, they can be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (Holiday Fine) of £60 (if paid in 21 days) or £120 (if paid between 21 and 28 days). Each parent/carer can be issued with a notice for each child so two parents with two children can potentially be issued with 4 fines. If the fines remain unpaid and the child's attendance does not improve the parent/carer may be taken to court to be prosecuted under the higher charge of an 'aggravated offence'.

The responsibility for requesting Penalty Notice Holiday Fines is with the school and will be issued when requested by the Head Teacher.

The School will provide the paperwork for pupils identified and this will include:

- Completed Request for Support Form - stating a holiday fine
- Parents request for holiday absence plus the schools response
- Up to date attendance certificate - showing unauthorised absence
- BLUE Head teachers certificate - covering holiday period

Leave for Religious Observance

Totley Primary School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

- Leave may be granted for any day of religious observance if recognised by the parents'/carers' religious body.
- Parents/carers are requested wherever possible to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent by completing a request for absence form (see appendix 1)

However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than two days be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in any academic year.

Punctuality

School starts at 8.50am and we expect all children to be on the school playground at this time. Doors from the playground will be locked after 8.50am and latecomers should report to the main office to be recorded as late. Registration is at 9.00am and any child not in school at this time will be recorded as late. Tasks often start as soon as the children enter the classroom and it is important that they do not miss learning time. It can also be embarrassing for children if they enter the classroom after registration and this is something we aim to avoid. After 9.15am, registration is closed and the child will be recorded as absent.

Reporting Absence and Illness

Children who are ill should not attend school and should remain absent for 24 hours after suffering sickness or diarrhoea symptoms. For all other illness children should return to school as soon as they have completed the contagious period and are fit and well. Parents should contact the school as early as possible to report a child's absence. An answerphone message service is in use for parents who ring out of school hours. Parents will be contacted if no message has been received explaining a child's absence after 9.15am. If there is a plausible reason to think that the child is not ill but merely absent, then school reserve the right to issue a penalty notice to parents.

Medical Appointments

Medical and dental appointments should, where possible, be kept to out of school hours. When a child is absent to attend an appointment, parents should give prior notice. An authorised absence slip will be provided.

Celebrating Good Attendance

Children who achieve 97.4% and above for attendance in any given term will receive a certificate as a reward. Children achieving the school target of 100% attendance over the full academic year may be rewarded with a prize by the school.

Criteria Referral to Outside Agencies

- The Headteacher or members of the Senior Leadership Team will inform parents when their child's attendance record drops between 95-90% and below 90%. The Headteacher will make a referral to the School's Family Advocate Officer who will monitor the situation.
- If the child's attendance does not improve over a period of three weeks following this communication, a formal letter from the school will be sent to parents.
- If there is still no improvement the school will make a referral to the Multi Agency Support Team (MAST). At this formal stage, the parents may be issued with fixed penalty fines.

Children with 100% attendance records (190 days) will still have an amazing 175 days holiday each year.