

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

<b>Role</b>	<i>Designated Teacher for Attendance</i>	<i>Deputy Designated Teacher</i>
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*Our 'Named Governor' with special responsibility for Attendance is Mrs Lucy Follis*

Policy Reviewed & Approved by Governors:

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed by Headteacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on behalf of the  
Governors Staffing Committee: \_\_\_\_\_

## Townley Grammar School - Attendance Policy

### 1. Introduction

'Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school'

*Department of Education Guidance 2014*

Townley Grammar School enjoys very high rates of attendance and punctuality, significantly above national rates. We believe strongly that this supports the high levels of academic attainment at the school.

### 2. Aims and responsibilities

#### The School

Townley Grammar School aims to:

- Create an inclusive, nurturing and welcoming ethos in which students are stimulated, grow in self-esteem and experience success
- Encourage the educational development of all students by promoting the importance of school attendance
- Ensure all staff give attendance a high profile with clear procedures and expectations
- Work in partnership with governors, parents and carers, the Education Welfare Service and other professionals to support students in achieving optimum attendance at school
- Make sure that students know that their presence is important
- Inform parents promptly over concerns about student absence and give them an opportunity to discuss difficulties with a member of the pastoral team
- Employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance and punctuality and promptly investigate all absences, liaising closely with parents or carers

Townley Grammar School is required to:

- Register pupils attendance twice daily, once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session
- Record whether every pupil is present, attending an approved educational activity, absent or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

- Inform the Local Authority if any student fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more

### Parents

Parents are legally obliged to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly

Parents are expected to support the importance of education by ensuring that:

- Their daughter/son attends school every day, properly attired and in a condition to learn
- Their daughter/son arrives at school on time
- They contact the school daily before 9.30 a.m. if their daughter/son is unable to attend
- They avoid making routine medical appointments for their daughter/ son during school hours
- That family holidays are only taken during the school holidays

### Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend school every day
- Arrive on time and appropriately prepared for lessons
- Speak to their House Tutor and/or a member of staff if experiencing any problems in school
- Accept help, support and guidance when offered and deemed appropriate

### **3. Registration**

- Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.45am and 1.55pm
- If a student in Yrs 7-11 arrives after the registers close at 8.45 am, they should report to Student Services to sign in and register. The signing in book should be filled in with the reason for their lateness
- If a Sixth Form student arrives after the registers close at 8.45 am, he/she must sign in with the Sixth Form Administrator
- The Attendance Officer (or Sixth Form Administrator) will mark the student late on the register and record the reason for lateness
- If a student registers after 9.10am then this will be recorded as an absence for the morning session and the parent will be required to provide an explanation for the absence
- Registers will also be taken in the first ten minutes of every lesson

### **4. Punctuality**

- In Years 7 to 11, students may receive a late detention if they are late four times over the year to either the morning or afternoon session. Each further late mark will result in a late detention
- If the student is late on more than ten occasions then a formal meeting will be held with the Learning Manager to discuss ways to resolve the issue. The student may receive a Learning Manager Detention. Each further late mark will result in a Learning Manager detention

- If the student is late on more than thirteen occasions ((i.e. has served three Learning Manager detentions) then a formal meeting will be held with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for the relevant year group to discuss resolving the issue. A Saturday detention with a member of the Senior Leadership Team may be issued

In all cases parents will be notified.

- In the Sixth Form If punctuality is poor the student will have an **initial verbal warning** from their House Tutor with 'payback' time (fifteen minutes) at the end of the school day with the Learning Manager on each day of lateness
- If there is no immediate improvement (within one week) the Sixth form office will issue a **formal written warning** to the student with a copy to parents/carers as well as receiving an 8am detention for 30 minutes with the Learning Manager or Assistant Headteacher
- If there is regular pattern of continued poor punctuality a formal meeting will be called between the Assistant Headteacher, the student and their parent/carer. A one hour 'late detention' after school will be issued and held by the Assistant Headteacher
- If there is still no improvement a **final written warning** will be issued as well as a Saturday detention with a member of the Senior Leadership Team

## 5. Authorised Absences

The Attendance Officer (Years 7 to 11) or Sixth Form Administrator (Sixth Form) must be informed on the first day of absence before 9.30 am by either

- a letter signed by the parent/carer
- a 'phone call from the parent/carer
- an e-mail from the parent/carer (sent from the same e-mail address currently notified to us on our administrative systems)

and **every subsequent day** before 9.30 am if the absence continues.

- The attendance officer (Sixth Form Administrator) will inform parents/carers of their child's absence if the school has not received any notification
- If, after a period of seven school days since a student has returned, there has been no communication from parents/carers despite a written, e-mail or 'phone request from the School's Attendance Officer to explain the absence(s), this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence
- Punctuality and attendance is reported on School reports
- In the Sixth Form, for routine reasons (eg university open days, interview, medical appointment, funerals and religious festivals) students should complete an authorised absence slip. This needs to be signed by subject teachers and handed in to the Sixth Form administrator before the proposed absence
- Sixth Form students are allowed to attend a maximum of three university open days that take place during school time over their time in the Sixth Form

The following absences may be treated as authorised by the school:

- Illness
- Medical or dental appointment (parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments out of school hours. Where possible the student should only be out of school for minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment)
- Religious observance
- Close family bereavement
- Leave of absence authorised by the school
- Exclusion

#### Other absence that may be authorised

The school may authorise other absence providing the Attendance Officer is notified by 12 noon on the first day of the absence.

These absences include:

- Emergency situation of a family member e.g. sudden illness
- Transport problems where these are not known in advance

The Attendance Officer should record the reason for absence in the register.

**In all cases, the School will decide whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.**

## **6. Requests for Leave of Absence**

Requests for leave of absence require approval in advance and should be submitted at least five days before the planned absence. The student or parent should obtain an Absence Request Form from the Attendance Officer or from the school website. When the completed form is returned, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Attendance Officer, will decide whether to authorise or not, and send the appropriate letter.

**The School disapproves strongly of term time absences for reasons other than illness except in specific circumstances. DFE guidelines are quite clear.**

Discretionary authorised absence may be granted for family reasons such as attendance at a funeral, for approved educational activities and for an exceptional experience, for example performing in a West End Musical.

Authorised absence will only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and the permission given. Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.

Where the School and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the student is then absent from school the absence must be marked as unauthorised and notified to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Where parents keep a student away for longer than agreed then the extra time should also be marked as unauthorised.

Leave will not be granted for family holidays, long weekend package tours nor for days immediately before end of term or at the start of a new term where this is not justified on any of the grounds outlined above.

## **7. Unauthorised Absences**

Absences will not be authorised for:

- Truancy
- Any work undertaken during school hours
- Family holidays during term time (unless agreed by the Headteacher following an application procedure)
- Interview/meeting for a Sixth Form place at another educational establishment – please note that it is unlawful for a school to conduct an interview as part of their admissions arrangements for Sixth Form and is in breach of the Admissions Code to which all schools must adhere
- Part-time work
- Leisure activities
- Birthdays or similar celebrations
- Babysitting younger siblings
- Shopping
- Driving lessons
- Family weddings

If a student truants from a lesson they may receive a Saturday detention with a member of SLT. If a student truants for a day they will be required to make up the time missed outside of the normal school day. This may include making up the time on a weekend.

When considering whether to authorise individual cases of absence, the school will consider:

- The nature of the event
- Frequency of absence
- Whether advance notification was given
- Overall attendance record of the student

## **8. Persistent Absence**

### Year 7 to 11

Attendance (either on a lesson or daily basis) falling below 95% (the school expects 96%) or persistent lateness, without a medical or other satisfactory explanation, will be considered to be a serious concern and will be closely monitored by the school.

If attendance (either on a lesson or daily basis) falls below 90% then remedial action will be initiated by the Attendance Officer working with the Education Welfare Officer. The following procedure will be taken:

- In the first instance a school attendance letter from the Attendance Officer will be sent to parents/carers alerting them to the school's concerns and explaining that the student has fallen below 90% and the school will be monitoring their attendance
- If the student's attendance does not improve, the Education Welfare Officer will then send an official letter from the Borough stating that the student's attendance will now be monitored by the Education Welfare Officer

- If there is still no improvement in the student's attendance, parents/carers will be invited in to school for a meeting with the School and the Education Welfare Officer to discuss the situation with their daughter/son and to take action to improve their daughter/son's attendance or persistent lateness
- If the student's attendance does not improve following this meeting, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer who will now take responsibility for dealing with the issue. Any absence for medical appointments or illness without a medical certificate or appointment card will be deemed unauthorised by the school. In such cases the School may choose to issue parents/carers with a Fixed Penalty Notice
- If, after this, attendance deteriorates then Education Welfare Officer will raise the student's attendance for legal proceedings

### Sixth Form

Attendance (either on a lesson-by-lesson basis or on a daily basis) falling below 95% without known and agreed reason will be considered to be a concern and the following procedures will be taken:

- The student will have a meeting with the Learning Manager and a letter will be sent home expressing concern of falling attendance
- Attendance for any combination of reasons (either on a lesson-by-lesson basis or on a daily basis) falling below 90% is considered a very serious matter. If attendance falls below 90% the student will have a **Stage 1 Attendance Commitment Interview** with the Learning Manager, student and parent/carer. The student will be on Attendance Report for a minimum of 5 working days. A formal letter will be sent home summarising the meeting
- A continued pattern of non-attendance, such that attendance falls below 85%, will result in a **Stage 2 Attendance Meeting** with the Assistant Headteacher: sixth form, student and a parent/carer. Targets will be set and the student will be on Attendance Report for a minimum of 10 working days and on a final warning to improve. There will be a discussion about future studies at the school. The key aim is to see attendance improving
- If the attendance problem is not resolved, a final **Stage 3 Attendance Meeting** will be arranged in which the student will be asked to consider their future at Townley – support will be provided from the Sixth Form Team

## 9. Long-term absence due to illness

The person with overall responsibility for students who cannot come to school because of medical needs is the Manager of Student Services. Contact with parents and monitoring of school work rest with the Assistant Learning Manager (or Sixth Form Pastoral Co-ordinator in the Sixth Form). If a student is, or is likely to be, absent due to medical needs for more than 15 school days, the School will inform the Education Welfare Officer.

The Manager of Student Services, in consultation with the parents and, if necessary, the Education Welfare Officer, will assess the student's capabilities, educational progress and programmes of work. The Assistant Learning Manager should make arrangements for work and materials to be delivered to and collected from the student and ensure that the student is informed about school events.

The Assistant Learning Manager must liaise with the Examinations Officer to make arrangements for public exams. The tutor should encourage and facilitate contact with peers through visits, e-mails and text messages.

The Manager of Student Services will monitor the process of reintegration after a long absence.

#### **10. University, College and Employment References**

Townley Grammar School has a policy of writing positive testimonials and references, acknowledging and recognising the fullest possible range of student's progress and achievement. However, Universities, Colleges and Employers do need to know about the attendance and punctuality records of potential applicants as this is important when they are deciding on their suitability to gain a place/employment. Townley Grammar School may, at its discretion or when required, provide attendance and punctuality information on references and testimonials, either in the form of percentage statistics and/or as a written statement.

**APPLICATION FOR STUDENT LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR DISCRETIONARY FAMILY REASONS**

Full name of daughter/son	House
_____	
Address	
_____	
_____	
Reason for application and dates	
_____	
_____	
_____	
Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)	I/we have read the guidance leaflet issued with this form.
_____	Print Name _____
Date _____	

Office use only – application seen by	
Headteacher <input type="checkbox"/> / Assistant Learning Manager <input type="checkbox"/> / Attendance Officer or Sixth Form administrator <input type="checkbox"/>	
Agreement reached: YES/NO	
Other outcome: _____	
_____	Date: _____

- |  |
|--|
| <p>The Headteacher will consider the following points before authorising leave</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Your daughter's/son's previous attendance history.</li> <li>2. The age of the daughter/son</li> <li>3. Your daughter's/son's stage of education.</li> <li>4. The time of year</li> <li>5. The nature of the trip (an exceptional experience)</li> </ol> |
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## **Townley Grammar School**

### **AUTHORISED ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL**

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Authorised absence will only be granted where proper procedures have been followed and the permission given. Leave of absence will not be granted retrospectively.

Where the School and the parents fail to reach an agreement and the student is then absent from school the absence must be marked as unauthorised and notified to the Educational Welfare Officer.

Where parents keep a student away for longer than agreed then the extra time should also be marked as unauthorised.

Leave will not be granted for family holidays, long weekend package tours nor for days immediately before end of term or at the start of a new term where this is not justified on any of the grounds outlined above.

Parents are asked to complete the application form for discretional leave (over)