



TOWNLEY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

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Policy Owner:	CEO
Policy approval: <i>i.e. Trust board or delegated to subcommittee or individual</i>	Trust Board
Cross references <i>i.e. with other Trust policies</i>	
Statutory Policy?	YES



Introduction

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.

In accordance with Keeping Children Safe in Education, 2021, we recognise that Children Missing Education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Aims and responsibilities

The School

Townley Grammar School aims to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- 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
- Act early to address patterns of absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

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

Attendance

- Registers will be taken punctually each day at 8.45am and 12.55pm (Monday) /13.55pm (Tuesday – Friday)
- If a student in Yrs 7-11 arrives after 8.30 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. They should also collect the appropriate late slip, which should be shown to the teacher.
Yellow slip (if arrive during registration time Monday: 8.30-8.50 Tuesday-Thursday: 8.30-8.45)
Red Slip (if arrive after registration time)
- If a Sixth Form student arrives after the registers close at 8.30 am, he/she must sign in with the Sixth Form Administrator and collect a late slip, which should be shown to the teacher.
Yellow slip (if arrive during registration time Monday: 8.30-8.45 Tuesday-Thursday 8.30-8.50)
Red Slip (if arrive after registration time)
- The Attendance Officer (or Sixth Form Administrator) will mark the student late on the register and record the reason for lateness
- For all late marks a standard e-mail to inform parents their daughter/son has arrived late is sent by the attendance officer (or Sixth Form Administrator)
- If a student registers after 8.45am 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



Punctuality

- In Years 7 to 11, if students are late to registration, they will receive a 15 minute late detention after school that day. Each further late mark will result in an additional late detention. If students are late after registration, they will receive a SLG detention to make up the time missed on a Friday after school
- If the student is late on more than 10 occasions, then an automatic SLG detention will be issued for an hour. If students are late a following 2 times, they will be given an hour detention each time
- If the students continue to be late after the SLG detention a formal meeting will be held with the Learning Manager and Family Liaison Officer to discuss ways to resolve the issue. The student may receive a Learning Manager Detention.
- If the student is late on more than 14 occasions ((i.e. has served 3 SLG detentions and 1 Learning Manager detention) then a formal meeting will be held with the Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Year 7-11 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. Late detentions will not be issued for major incidents and exceptional circumstances which should be communicated with the Attendance Officer on the morning of the late.
- In the Sixth Form If punctuality is poor the student will have an **initial verbal warning** from their House Tutor with 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 Head of Sixth form.
- If there is regular pattern of poor punctuality a formal meeting will be called between the Learning Manager and Head of Sixth Form, the student and their parent/carer. A one hour 'late detention' after school will be issued and held by the SLG team.
- 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

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 8.30 am by either:

- a letter signed by the parent/carer
- a telephone 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 8.30 am if the absence continues.



- The attendance officer (and 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 telephone 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 -where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- 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 situations for 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.



Requests for Leave of Absence

Requests for leave of absence require approval in advance and should be submitted at least 5 days before the planned absence. Parents may write a letter or e-mail addressed for the attention of the Headteacher. When the letter or email is received, the Headteacher, in consultation with the Attendance Officer and Learning Manager, 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.

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 will make up the time through the cluster during a SLG (Senior Leadership Group) detention. 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 through a Saturday detention with a member of SLT (Senior Leadership Team).



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
- Level of attainment and progress

Legal Sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must make the payment directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

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 the student and to take action to improve the student'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 with the local borough

Sixth Form

Attendance (either on a lesson-by-lesson basis or on a daily basis) falling below 95% (the school expects 96%) 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 Head of 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

Long-term absence due to illness

The person with overall responsibility for students who cannot come to school because of medical needs is the SENDCO. Contact with parents and monitoring of school work will be the Assistant Learning Manager (or Learning Manager 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 Learning Manager, SENDCO or member of SLT, 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 school e-mails.

The Manager of Student Services/SENCO and Learning Manager will monitor the process of reintegration after a long absence.

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.

Roles and responsibilities in school

The governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Attendance Officer and Sixth Form Administrator

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

Subject Teachers/house tutors

Academic staff are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the attendance officer.

APPENDIX 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE’s guidance on school attendance

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day