



# Three Towers

An Alternative Provision Academy

*Expanding Horizons*

## Attendance at School Policy

2024 - 2025

Adopted: January 2025

Reviewed: September 2025 then annually or in line with statutory guidance changes

*This policy has been written to comply with DfE Statutory Guidance “Working Together to Improve Attendance”. The guidance records physical attendance on site at school and does not reflect attendance and engagement in lessons. As such this policy should be read alongside our “Attendance and Engagement in Lessons” document.*

## 1 Introduction

At Three Towers (TTAPA), we believe that regular and punctual school attendance is the best way for learners to make the most of the educational opportunities available to them. Valuable learning time can be lost when children are late to, or absent from lessons. Good attendance and engagement are important in ensuring consistency of care and support as well as supporting progress to be made in achievement and learning.

We know that all learners begin here with a poor school attendance record – almost all with persistent absence, and at secondary age with severe absence. All too frequently they have become, or are at risk of becoming, significantly “switched off” from learning and have a negative view of school and education generally. These patterns of poor attendance and/or punctuality become habits which unless they are broken result in learners not achieving their full potential and as they get older not having the important skills that will make them ‘work ready.’

We also accept that there are numerous and often complex barriers to attendance: for some this is due to SEND needs; others due to physical and/or mental health needs or to having lengthy, unavoidable periods of absence. Some learners find it harder than others to attend school for a huge variety of reasons – many of these reasons have little to do with school itself but are often symptomatic of deeper barriers to learning e.g. safeguarding issues, family difficulties, substance misuse and addiction. Our school acknowledges each learner as an individual and this policy takes into account each child and family’s circumstances.

Ideally learners should be physically present on site and in lessons, on time, every day that Three Towers is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. However, we recognise that for some learners physical attendance at school is not always possible and a reasonable adjustment is made for them to access their lessons in a different way, for example remotely, where learners access live, synchronous teaching via TEAMS.

We will continue to prioritise providing a welcoming, caring, safe and supportive environment whether onsite or remotely, as well as strong and trusting relationships with learners and parents/carers so each member of our school community is respected, feels valued and safe and can thrive. These trusting relationships are so important as any problems with regular attendance are best resolved between school, the learner and the parents/carers.

If a learner is reluctant to attend, we advise parents/carers not to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. A culture of openness about our thoughts and intentions will encourage good attendance. We promote a culture of working together to achieve the best outcomes for our learners.

We aim to re-engage learners and improve their attendance in preparation for the next phase of their learning journey. We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance recognising the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, pastoral/SEND support, and the effective use of resources such as learner premium – can have on improving learner attendance.

We consider the promotion of good attendance as a key priority in terms of maximising the potential of our learners and are committed to working in partnership with learners, parents/carers, referring schools, the Local Authority (LA) and relevant agencies to ensure that we continue to improve the attendance of all our learners. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

We take our responsibilities to monitor and promote the regular attendance of all learners seriously. We acknowledge that irregular attendance disrupts continuity of learning, undermines educational progress, leads to underachievement and low attainment and impedes a child / young person's ability to develop socially and emotionally.

Therefore, we are committed to:

- high expectations of attendance, promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits;
- intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health, safety and wellbeing of our learners;
- building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance;
- treating learners as an individual and responding to non-attendance depending on their particular circumstances;
- working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies;
- providing our learners with an effective and appropriately personalised educational experience which embraces fairness and equality of opportunity for all;
- celebrating achievement and progress, so we actively promote and encourage maximum attendance for all our learners;
- ensuring parents follow the framework set in Section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that “the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”;
- ensuring our Attendance & Absence Management Policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and learners;
- regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify learners or cohorts that require more support.

The school's Attendance & Engagement Officers are:

**Mr D Heyes and Mr M Ratcliffe** who can be contacted at [attendance@ttapa.net](mailto:attendance@ttapa.net)

The named member of the core leadership team (CLT) for attendance is:

**Mrs C Arstall** who can be contacted via [hindleyoffice@ttapa.net](mailto:hindleyoffice@ttapa.net)

## 2 Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory

guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all learners;
- promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance;
- reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- ensuring every learner has access to an appropriate full-time education;
- acting early to address patterns of absence;
- building strong relationships with families to make sure learners have the support in place to attend school.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

### 3 Legislation & Guidance

This policy is based on the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#) and [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#);
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#);
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#);
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#);
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#).

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)
- [Guidance for sharing daily pupil attendance data \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

This policy complies with our funding agreement and articles of association.

### 4 Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

#### Lates

- arrival at school after the agreed arrival time but before the register has closed.

**Our registers close 30 minutes after the agreed arrival time (or start time for learners on a bespoke timetable or attendance support plan)**

#### Absence:

- arrival at school after the register has closed;
- not attending school/provision for any reason.

**Authorised absence** is absence is classified as authorised when the learner has been absent from school and the Headteacher is satisfied that there has been an unavoidable reason, such as:

- an absence for sickness for which the headteacher has authorised;

- medical or dental appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day for which the headteacher has authorised;
- religious or cultural observances which the headteacher has authorised;
- an absence due to a family emergency.

**Unauthorised absence** is any absence that the Headteacher has not given permission for or where an explanation has not been provided by the parent/carer, such as:

- arrival at school after the register has closed;
- absences which have not been properly explained;
- truancy or absconding (leaving site) during the school day;
- parents/carers keeping a learner off school unnecessarily or without reason e.g. shopping trips, looking after other children or birthdays;
- absences for day trips/holidays in term-time which have not been authorised by the headteacher in advance.

**Persistent absence** is when a learner misses between 10% and 49.9% of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

**Severe absence** is when a learner misses more than 50% of schooling across the academic year for any reason.

**Missing from education** means that a learner is not on the register of a school and not receiving suitable education in a setting other than a school.

## 5 Roles and Responsibilities

All adults – staff, including supply staff, governors and volunteers - within the Three Towers community are responsible for:

- following this policy, implementing it fairly and consistently, and ensuring that learners do too;
- setting a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality;
- actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to learners and their parents/carers;
- form positive relationships with learners and parents/carers;
- use their professional judgment and knowledge of individual learners to inform decisions as to whether welfare concerns should be escalated.

**5.1 The Local Governing Committee (LGC)** is responsible for:

- setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, learners and parents/carers;
- ensuring school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
  - ensuring our school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority;
  - ensuring that we work effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate;
- recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across our policies and ethos;
- ensuring our attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for learners who need it most by prioritising staff and resources;

- ensuring we have high aspirations for all learners, but adapts processes and support to learners' individual needs;
- regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping leaders focus improvement efforts on individual learners or cohorts who need it most;
- working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge;
- monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of our processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting learners needs;
- where the school is struggling with attendance, support leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance;
- ensuring all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - the importance of good attendance;
  - that absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues;
  - the school's legal requirements for keeping registers;
  - the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific learners, where appropriate;
- ensuring dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data;
- holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 5.2 The headteacher is responsible for:

- the day-to-day implementation and management of this policy at the school;
- communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to learners and parents through all available channels;
- appointing a member of the Core leadership Team (CLT) as the school's Attendance Champion;
- issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the Attendance Champion to be able to do so;
- sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
  - notifying the local authority when a learner's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of agreed transition times;
  - providing the local authority with the details of learners who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days;
  - providing the local authority with the details of learners who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness.

### 5.3 The Attendance Champion (named member of CLT for attendance) is responsible for:

- leading, championing and improving attendance across the school;
- setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance;
- evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes;



- establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff;
- monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies;
- supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual learners;
- having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis;
- regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance and reporting it to governors;
- liaising with learners, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed.

#### 5.4 The Attendance and Engagement Officer (AEO) is responsible for:

- monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 10);
- benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- using a compassionate approach when listening to learners and parents/carers regarding barriers to attendance;
- building close and productive relationships with parents to discuss and tackle attendance issues;
- creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with learners and their parents/carers;
- delivering targeted intervention and support to learners and families;
- document interventions used to a standard required should legal proceedings be instigated (on CPOMS);
- providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the Attendance Champion;
- working with other agencies to improve attendance and support learners and their families;
- working with the Local Authority to tackle severe and persistent absence, including:
  - following up on children missing from education;
  - working with the council's Attendance Enforcement Team through statutory interventions in cases of severe absence where other support has not succeeded;
  - advising when to issue fixed-penalty notices;
  - document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated (on CPOMS);
- conduct welfare visits as and when required.

#### 5.4 The Heads of House (HoH) are responsible for:

- supporting the implementation and management of this policy;
- liaise with other identified staff, including the AEO regarding attendance issues/patterns eg learners hitting attendance trigger points;
- ensuring information regarding start dates and times is shared with the Admin team/relevant staff;
- follow up on any issues with phone calls or referrals to the AEO;
- work in partnership with parents/carers to support the identification of difficulties and strategies to overcome issues around attendance;

- share information regarding attendance at other meetings such as CP Conferences and Early Help Meetings;
- contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions.

#### 5.5 The SENDCo is responsible for:

- working with the parents of learners with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for learners with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where learners with SEND face in-school barriers;
- communicating with the local authority when a learner with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the learner's needs.

#### 5.6 The designated teacher for looked-after children is responsible for:

- working with virtual school team, social workers and the parents/carer of learners who are, or have been, looked after children to develop specific support approaches for attendance, including where school transport is regularly being missed and where learners may face in-school barriers;
- communicating with the local authority when a looked-after or previously looked-after learner has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the learner's needs.

#### 5.7 Admin staff will:

- maintain our admissions register as required by statutory guidance;
- update registers with late arrivals and those on bespoke timetables/hours;
- take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system;
- transfer calls from parents/carers to either the AEO or the HoH where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance;
- make follow up phone calls to parents/carers of absent children and record on Arbor;
- share any information that may need to be followed up/visits arranged etc with relevant HoH;
- alert relevant HoH to any potential safeguarding information and record on CPOMS;
- identify any potential issues emerging with a learner;
- support with identifying patterns and trends for absence and sharing this information with the HoH and the AEO;
- *for dual-registered learners only – contact their mainstream school and inform them of any absences.*

5.8 Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance for each lesson using the correct codes (present / or absent N) in the lesson register on Arbor.

#### 5.9 Parents/carers are responsible for:

- the attendance of their child at school – ensuring that their child attends every day/ timetabled session on time;
- promoting good attendance with their children;
- providing accurate and up-to-date contact details;
- providing school at least 2 emergency contact numbers for their child;



- updating school if any of the above contact details change.

*Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:*

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;
- all those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person;
- those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them).

#### 5.10 Learners are responsible for:

- attending their lessons and any agreed school activities/offsite provisions arranged by school;
- arriving to school and lessons on time.

## 6 Attendance Expectations

Good attendance is a learned behaviour and we encourage this at all opportunities. Attending well and on time prepares our learners for their future education and employment.

### 6.1 Learners are expected to:

- attend for their agreed timetable hours. (These are reviewed regularly);
- be punctual and arrive on time to school/online/offsite provision;
- attend every lesson and be on time for those lessons.

### 6.2 Parents are expected to:

- contact us as soon as possible, ideally before 9:00am on the first day, if their child is absent to let us know the reason why and the expected date of return.  
This can be by telephoning school and leaving a voicemail message or by emailing [absences@ttapa.net](mailto:absences@ttapa.net)
- contact us again if the expected date of return changes or your child has been absent more than 3 days in order to provide an update;
- avoid unnecessary absences by making appointments for the doctors, dentists, etc. outside of school hours wherever possible;
- avoid taking their child out of school during term-time, where this is unavoidable, and only in exceptional circumstances send an 'Application for leave of absence' to the Headteacher who will consider the application and agree on the length of the absence, this would only be in exceptional circumstances;
- **not** keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home, or to look after other members of the family;
- talk positively to their child about school and why they should attend;
- take a keen interest in their child's work and educational progress;
- support school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home;
- instil the value of education and regular school attendance and punctuality within the home environment;
- encourage a positive routine at home that enables regular and punctual attendance;
- encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations;
- inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact their child's attendance;

- ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties and work with agencies that can support them;
- keep to any attendance contracts that they make with the school and/or local authority.

The school day starts and ends at different times depending on the Key Stage and/or provision that the learner is accessing. This is explained during the induction meeting, and any subsequent meetings when timetables are reviewed.

- Learners must arrive by their agreed start time on each school day;
- The register for the first session will be taken at the agreed start time for each learner and will be kept open for a further 30 minutes after this time to allow for the impact of transport issues, particularly for those learners travelling across the borough;
- The register for the second session will be taken at 12:05pm and will be kept open until 12:10pm.

## 7 Attendance registers

All learners are placed on our school roll. TTAPA uses ARBOR to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether learners are:

- present;
- attending an approved educational activity (see section 9.1);
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (see section 9.2)
- absent.

TTAPA uses the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. These codes are summarised in [Appendix 1](#).

When TTAPA has planned in advance to be fully closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant learners who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

In line with the new statutory guidance, learners who are accessing their learning remotely for any reason, including as a reasonable adjustment for health/disability reasons must be marked as absent from school because they are not physically present in the school building. However, their attendance in their online lessons is recorded and tracked using ClassCharts. If a learner is online and engaging in the lesson then they are marked as present for that lesson; conversely if they are not online when expected they are marked as absent.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include:

- the original entry;
- the amended entry;
- the reason for the amendment
- the date on which the amendment was made; and
- the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

We share our daily attendance data with the DfE directly from the management information system.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for six years.

**7.1 Class registers** are taken at the start of each lesson, whether onsite or remote, to ensure that learner are attending all timetabled lessons. Attendance and engagement in each lesson is recorded in ClassCharts and is tracked and analysed as it gives a more accurate reflection of our learners actual attendance.

These registers will be analysed alongside the statutory session (morning/afternoon) registers in line with the section of this policy. **Refer to our Attendance & Engagement in Lessons document.**

## **8 Absence Procedures**

Parents/carers are required to contact the school office via telephone ideally before 8:15am and no later than **8:45am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day.

Early notification of absence is particularly important for learners who travel to school in a taxi or who have a home visit booked, so that these can be cancelled and resources used elsewhere.

Where a learner is absent, and their parent has not contacted the school by **the close of the morning register** to report the absence, administrative staff will contact the parent via telephone call or text message as soon as is practicable on the first day that the learner does not attend school.

We will always follow up any absences in order to:

- ascertain the reason for the absence;
- ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken;
- identify whether the absence is authorised or not;
- identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

If the learner/family is on a child protection plan, is recognised as a child in need, is looked-after or has a social worker, then the relevant professionals will be informed of absence.

Where a learner is absent for more than three school days in a row and there has been no contact from home, one of the Attendance and Engagement Officers (AEO) will attempt to make contact either by phone call, text, email or a home visit. If they are unsuccessful and/or the absence continues they will act to ensure the learners wellbeing further by making a social care referral or requesting that the police undertake a welfare visit.

The school will not routinely request medical evidence in most circumstances where a learner is absent due to illness in the short term; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there are repeated bouts of illness or when there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents/carers to speak to one of the AEOs. On a regular basis, we will share with the local authority the details of all learners who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without approval/authorisation.

If a learner's attendance becomes a concern, one of the AEOs will arrange a formal meeting with the learner and their parent/carer.

Where a learner has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the learner from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the learner after making reasonable enquiries.

### 8.1 Unplanned absence

The learner's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible, ideally before 8:15am and no later than **8:45am** by:

- telephoning the school and speaking with the office staff;
- leaving a voicemail message on the absence line; or
- emailing [absences@ttapa.net](mailto:absences@ttapa.net)

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 5 days, or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### 8.2 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised, as long as the learner's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This can be done by either:

- telephoning the school and speaking with the office staff;
- leaving a voicemail message on the absence line; or
- emailing [absences@ttapa.net](mailto:absences@ttapa.net)

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical/dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the learner should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The learner's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to [Section 9](#) to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### 8.3 Lateness and punctuality

A learner who arrives late:

- before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code;
- after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the U code.

Three Towers has high expectations around punctuality to school. When a learner is late their parent/carer will be informed in a text message sent by the school office. Punctuality is closely monitored and encourage parents/carers to contact us as soon as possible to discuss any issues that could be impacting punctuality.

If there are ongoing concerns around a learner's punctuality a meeting with the AEO manager and/or Head of House will be arranged to find solutions and set targets for improvement.

#### 8.4 Following up unexplained absence

Where any learner we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- contact the learner's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the learner's emergency contacts, the school will request a reason through a text message in the first instance. This could be followed up through a welfare check or wider agency response depending on the status of the learner/family involved.
- identify whether the absence is authorised or not;
- identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the learner was absent;
- contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving social care and/or requesting a police welfare check;
- where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the learner's youth offending team officer/social worker/school attendance officer (for dual registered learners);
- where necessary, offer support to the learner and/or their parents/carers to improve attendance;
- identify whether the learner needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals;
- where support is not appropriate, not successful, or not engaged with, we will refer to the Attendance Enforcement Team of the local authority. We will follow Wigan Council's procedures and may issue a notice to improve, penalty notice or other legal intervention.

#### 8.6 Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels termly in our formal written reports and through discussions at or Learning Review Days.

We monitor those learners whose attendance/absence is causing concern on a weekly basis and supportive meetings may be held with one of the AEOs or jointly with one of our AEOs and a representative from the local authority.

### 9 Authorised and Unauthorised absence

#### 9.1 Attending a place other than school (Refer to Appendix 1, Section 2)

The headteacher will allow learners to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities or to attend other schools or settings as outlined in their timetable. These are not classed as absences from school, merely they learner is not present on the school site.

Examples include but are not limited to:

- attending an offsite approved educational activity;
- attending another school at which the learner is also registered (dual registration);

- attending visit or trip arranged by the school;
- attending provision arranged by the local authority;
- attending a sporting activity;
- attending work experience;
- exceptional circumstances - any other unavoidable cause for the learner not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed.

## 9.2 Approved term-time leave of absence (Appendix 1 Section 3)

The headteacher can and does only grant leave of absence in advance if the request meets the “exceptional circumstances” set out in the [2024 school attendance regulations](#). These circumstances are:

- taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad.
  - We will ensure that all learners engaging in performances or activities, whether they receive payment or not which require them to be absent from school, understand that they will be required to obtain a licence from the LA;
  - Additional arrangements may be made to ensure learners do not fall behind in their education – this may involve online teaching;
  - Where a licence has been granted by the LA and it specifies dates of absence, no further authorisation will be needed from the school. Where an application does not specify dates, and it has been approved by the LA, it is at the discretion of the headteacher to authorise the leave of absence for each day. Where a licence has not been obtained, the headteacher will not authorise any absence for a performance or activity.
- attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational provision/setting;
- a bespoke amended timetable;
- medical/dental appointments;
- study leave – where the learner is studying for a public examination;
- exceptional circumstances\*.

Any request should be submitted in writing to the headteacher as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any **leave of absence request form** (See Appendix 2).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher’s discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent for.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, it is unlikely a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

Leave of absence will **not** be granted:

- for a learner to take part in protest activity during school hours; or
- Immediately before and during assessment periods.



The headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a learner out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

*\* Pregnant Learners - leave for maternity is treated like any other leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Schools are expected to act reasonably and grant a sufficient period of leave from school, taking into consideration the specific facts and circumstances of each case. Our school approves leave of absence from 6 weeks before the due date until after the 6 week postnatal check-up unless advised otherwise by medical professionals.*

9.3 Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** (Appendix 1 Section 4) include but are not limited to:

- suspension or exclusion from school (and no alternative provision has been made);
- illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments;
- religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parent(s) belong(s). We will define this as a day where the learner's parents/carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. We may seek advice from the parent's/carer's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart;
- parent(s)/carer(s) travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh gypsies, Irish and Scottish travellers, showmen (fairground people) and circus people, bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and new travellers. If a learner is travelling with their parent/carer as a result of their trade or business and is therefore unable to attend, we will assure ourselves that this is a genuine reason. Proof will not be sought without genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the reason for absence given. The parent will be encouraged to ensure that the learner can attend a school where they are travelling to and be dual registered at that school. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the learner is attending educational provision.

9.4 Unable to attend due to unavoidable cause (Appendix 1 Section 5) includes when a learner is unable to attend because:

- there is a lack of access arrangements;
- transport normally provided is not available and the school is not within walking distance;
- there is widespread disruption to travel;
- part of the school premises is closed, and the learner cannot be practicably accommodated;
- the whole school site has been closed unexpectedly;
- the learner is in criminal justice detention;
- public health guidance or law legislates that attendance is respectively not advised or prohibited;

- any other avoidable cause makes attendance impossible.

The use of the seven 'Y' codes for exceptional circumstances will be collected in the school census for statistical purposes. Code Q will be used in circumstances where there are a lack of access arrangements.

### 9.5 Absences due to complex barriers to attendance

We recognise that learners with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and have incorporated robust procedures to support our learners who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy, Accessibility Plan, Equality Objectives and Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions Policy, we ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled learners to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. We will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where there are concerns that a learner's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents/carers will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a learner that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy will be followed.

All learners are supported with their mental health as part of our standard offer.

As a commissioned provider for medical needs and Section 19 cases, we have a range of options to use to support those learners to access education in a controlled way that meets their needs. Any action plan we co-produce with families is designed to help any learners with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. The plans are personalised to support individual needs but may include, for example:

- identifying learners' unmet needs through the Early Help Process;
- using an internal or external specialist;
- enabling a learner to have a bespoke timetable, including a blended learning offer where appropriate;
- temporary late starts or early finishes;
- phased returns to school where there has been a long absence;
- one-to-one lessons.

Such plans are monitored and reviewed regularly until the learner is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

### 9.6 Unauthorised absence

This is any absence for which a legitimate/acceptable explanation has not been provided.

## 10 Attendance Monitoring and Analysis

As well as meeting our statutory responsibilities, it is important that schools monitor attendance and patterns of attendance as part of our safeguarding procedures.

### 10.1 Attendance Monitoring

Due to the type of provision we are, our cohort changes weekly and therefore we do not track generic groups such as year groups or cohorts; instead we track at an individual learner level. We do this by:

- roll call (legal register taken at the start of each session) marks are checked daily and a tracking sheet is completed to identify when a learner is absent and parents / carers are notified as soon as possible of the absence;
- parents/carers of learners who arrive late are contacted to let them know arrival time at school;
- staff are on “Meet and Greet” duty every morning to monitor lateness and attendance patterns;
- the attendance of **all** learners is tracked from when they start at TTAPA against an attendance baseline, calculated from attendance records provided by the referring school;
- tracking sheet used weekly to spot trends and changes in attendance;
- learners with concerning patterns of absence are discussed at our internal placement panel and plans put in place to improve attendance;
- AEOs meet fortnightly with the CLT leads on attendance, including the Attendance Champion to discuss individual learners as well as any emerging trends in absence;
- AEOs monitor any learners with patterns of repeated and/or continuous absence, and follow up with home visits;
- termly meeting with a member of the LA’s Attendance and Enforcement Team to discuss attendance cases. Where a learner has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the learner’s needs, the school will inform the local authority.

In addition, lesson attendance is taken and monitored by class teacher and Heads of Department using Class Charts.

CPOMS is used to maintain a log of communication/home visits/meetings etc for learners where school are offering support around attendance

As required legislation, TTAPA has granted the DfE access to its management information system so the data can be accessed regularly and securely; and we share specific learner information with the DfE and other agencies on request. All data sharing is done in line with GDPR requirements.

As an alternative provision academy there are no databases against which to benchmark our attendance. The DfE publish annual national data for Alternative Provision (AP) twice a year, but this do not offer a reliable benchmark as the nature of APs nationally, regionally and even locally are very different, for example but not limited to, commissioning arrangements; long or short-term interventions; part time or full time etc.

## 10.2 Attendance Data Analysis

We collect a variety of attendance and absence information which we then:

- analyse at an individual learner level to identify if they are making progress and/or to identify any concerns suggesting that a learner and/or their families need support with school attendance;

- look at learners' historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns;
- analyse the impact on attendance of U codes as well as C codes, particularly C2;
- compare current data with "on entry" data to see if learners have improved since starting TTAPA;
- compare week-on-week data to look at improvements/ analyse trends.

### 10.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

We use our data to:

- provide regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with learners and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and learner premium leads);
- celebrate improvements and issue rewards for improved attendance;
- find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- develop attendance action plans, including setting attendance targets for individual learners to address patterns of absence (of all severities);
- provide targeted support through the Early Help system to the learners we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, and their families;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies;
- share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners including the Virtual School Team, social care and health professionals e.g. CAMHS to keep them informed regarding specific learners.

### 10.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Almost all learners referred to TTAPA are persistent absentee, largely because of suspensions and/or reduced timetables used by their previous school; or in the case of medical needs/Section 19 referrals due to health issues. Reducing persistent absence is one part of our strategy for improving attendance, although this is not always going to be possible despite everyone's best efforts.

As a school, we always consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education so our main focus is on reducing severe absence especially for those learners who have attendance of between 0% and 35%. By doing this and re-engaging with learners and their families, we hope to then see further improvements.

We:

- maintain daily contact with parents/carers when a learner is absent;
- do direct work with learners who are severely absent to promote engagement;
- use praise and incentives to reward improvements;
- offer a bespoke learning package, including but not limited to:
  - vocational placements;
  - work experience;
  - blended learning – including both of the above plus either onsite or lessons;
  - offsite sessions with a tutor (exceptional circumstances);
  - amended hours;

- hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of severely absent learners to:
  - discuss attendance and engagement at school;
  - listen, and understand barriers to attendance, including medical/health issues;
  - explain the help that is available;
  - explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence;
  - review any existing actions or interventions
- AEOs undertake weekly home visits, sometime with other external agencies e.g. social care or members of the LA's Attendance Enforcement Team;
- use Early Help when needed to provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- attended meetings with external agencies and liaise with other professionals to identify concerns and put plans in place to improve attendance;
- consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these learners. In doing so, we will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence;
- use of attendance enforcement;
- implement sanctions, where necessary.

## 11 Sanctions

TTAPA will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will always be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

### 11.1 Penalty notices

The headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If we issue a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, we will consider the individual case, including:

- whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks);
- whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that learner;
- whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution;
- whether any obligations that we have under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

**A penalty notice may also be issued where parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the learner must not be present in a public place on that day).**

Each parent/carer who is liable for the learner's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the one/ones who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent/carer must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same learner, they must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent/carer in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

### 11.2 Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents/carers do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give them a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the learner attends school.

They will include:

- details of the learner's attendance record and of the offences;
- the benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents/carers under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#);
- details of the support provided so far;
- opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with;
- a clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance does not improve within the stated improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis;
- a clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period;
- the grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

## 12 Promoting Attendance and Punctuality

- ClassCharts points are awarded for excellent or improved attendance across the half term;
- attendance display board to promote good attendance on each site;
- "Meet and Greet" to check in with learners each morning and staff supervised departure to end the day on a positive;
- participation in reward trips – these are considered a privilege and we set minimum attendance levels for learners to be invited to take part, taking into account health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences;

### 12.1 Working with Families to improve attendance



We work hard to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents/carers and families which in turn builds trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with learners and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. We also liaise with other agencies working with learners and their families to support attendance, e.g. social care.

We endeavour to maintain **three** sets of emergency contact details for each learner wherever possible so that we have additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a child where the learner is absent without notification or authorisation.

We ensure that parents/carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to education, regularly informing them about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality.

Whenever there are issues, our AEOs work collaboratively with the learner and their family to improve attendance, taking into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and approaching families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the learner's experience in school, we will work to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, we work with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage families to access support that they may need.

However, in certain cases where support has been offered but there has been no engagement or improvement we escalate these to the LA's attendance enforcement team. They may lead early help and put action plans in place. If these targets are not met the case is then discussed with the council's legal team to decide whether it is appropriate for prosecution

### **13 Policy Monitoring & Evaluation Arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and/or at least annually by the headteacher and Attendance Champion. After every review, the policy will be approved by the LGC.

### **14 Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Behaviour & Relationships Policy;
- Complaints Procedures Policy;
- Children Missing from Education Policy;
- Safeguarding & Child Protection Policy;
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy;
- Supporting Learners with Medical Conditions Policy.

**Appendix 1: Attendance Codes** (taken from the DfE's [guidance on school attendance](#))

Code	Definition	Explanation
<b>Section 1: Attending School (present)</b>		
/	Present (am)	Learner is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Learner is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Learner arrives after the agreed arrival time but before register has closed
<b>Section 2: Attending a place other than the school absent from the <i>school site</i> but not classified as absences</b>		
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Learner is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Learner is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Learner is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Learner is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
v	Attending an educational visit or trip	Learner is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Learner is on an approved work experience placement
<b>Section 3: Absent - leave of absence authorised by the Headteacher</b>		
C	Exceptional circumstances	Learner has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Learner is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
C2	Part-time timetable	Learner is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
J1	Interview	Learner has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
M	Medical/dental appointment	Learner is at a medical or dental appointment
S	Study leave	Learner has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Learner of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Section 4: Absent - other authorised reasons approved by the Headteacher</b>		
E	Suspended or excluded	Learner has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Learner is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
R	Religious observance	Learner is taking part in a day of religious observance

<b>T</b>	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Learner is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
<b>Section 5: Absent - unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause</b>		
<b>Q</b>	Lack of access arrangements	Learner is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
<b>Y1</b>	Transport not available	Learner is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
<b>Y2</b>	Widespread disruption to travel	Learner is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
<b>Y3</b>	Part of school premises closed	Learner is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
<b>Y4</b>	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every learner absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
<b>Y5</b>	Criminal justice detention	Learner is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ in police detention;</li> <li>➤ remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing; or</li> <li>➤ detained under a sentence of detention.</li> </ul>
<b>Y6</b>	Public health guidance or law	Learner's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
<b>Y7</b>	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
<b>Section 6: Absent - unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Holiday not granted by the school	Learner is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
<b>O</b>	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Arrived in school after registration closed	Learner has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
<b>Section 7: Administrative codes</b>		
<b>Z</b>	Prospective learner not on admission register	Learner has not joined school yet but has been registered
<b>#</b>	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays. Also used to record cohorts who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years e.g. induction days

## Appendix 2: Leave of Absence Request Form

**Before requesting Leave in term time, you need to think about:**

- the lessons your child will miss.
- the difficulty they will have catching up;
- the effect it will have on how well they do in school.
- the fact that the school can refuse permission for you to take your child out of school during term time.

**For your information:**

*You do NOT have the right to take your child out of school during term time without the permission of the Headteacher. The school will not authorise absence during the first half of the summer term for any pupils in Year 6 and Year 11, even if it is exceptional, as learners are sitting external exams with fixed dates eg SATs and GCSEs.*

*Permission should be requested on the form overleaf and returned to the school office.*

*Leave of absence will only be granted for exceptional circumstances in accordance with Government Legislation. A Fixed Penalty fine **may** be issued if this leave of absence is not authorised. Parents currently must pay £80 if they pay within 21 days or £160 if they pay within 28 days. This charge is per parent/carer per child. If the fixed penalty notice remains unpaid this could lead to prosecution in the Magistrate's Court. If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent for the same pupil within 3 years of the first notice, the second notice is charged at a flat rate of £160 per parent per pupil, if paid within 28 days. A third penalty notice must not be issued within a 3 year period. Therefore, in cases where the threshold is met for a third (or subsequent) times within those 3 years, a penalty notice cannot be issued and alternative action will be taken instead. This will often include considering prosecution*

Name of Learner		Year	
Parent/Carer Name			

First day of absence		Last day of absence	
Return to school on			
Explain the reasons for the request below			
Signed*		Date	

*\* This form should be signed by the parent/carer the learner usually lives with*

### RESPONSE TO REQUEST

Name of Learner		Year	
Outcome of request	Approved / Not approved	Fixed penalty notice to be issued	Yes / No
Additional comments			
Signed		Date	

### Appendix 3: Attendance Improvement Plan

#### ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Name of Learner				
Year Group		Tutor		Head of House
Parent/Carer Name				

Date of meeting				
Attendees				
Date of Reviews	Interim		Final	

#### DETAILS/LATEST ATTENDANCE SUMMARY

Attendance Record	Initial Meeting	Interim Review	Final Review
Attendance			
Number of Unauthorised Absence			
Number of Authorised Absence			
Number of Lates			

#### Initial Meeting

<p><b>School views:</b></p>          
<p><b>Parent views:</b></p>          
<p><b>Learner views:</b></p>          

## Attendance Contract

### School:

- Will not authorise absences unless satisfied of the validity.
- If no improvement is made in attendance, this case will be referred to the next intervention level potentially leading to legal proceedings.

### Parent/carer:

- To ensure attendance targets are achieved and sustained.
- Contact school should there be any further absences and provide medical evidence where possible.
- No further unauthorised absences on attendance record
- Provide evidence to school to enable the authorisation of absences. (appointment card, copy of prescription/ medical or similar)

### Learner:

- To improve attendance.
- No further absences on attendance record.
- To arrive on time.
- Discuss with AEO, Head of House or other named adult if they have any further problems in the school.

Signed Learner:

Signed Parent/Carer:

Signed School:

### Interim Review

#### School views:

#### Parent views:



**Learner views:**

Signed Learner:

Signed Parent/Carer:

Signed School:

**Final Review**

**School views:**

**Parent views:**

**Learner views:**

Signed Learner:

Signed Parent/Carer:

Signed School:

