

Attendance Policy

Turves Green Primary School

Date: October 2024

To be reviewed as necessary.

1. Aim of this policy

To support excellent levels of attendance for all pupils to enable fulfilment of their potential at Turves Green Primary School.

This policy has been prepared with regard to the Academy's statutory duties relating to attendance, including those set out in the Department for Education's statutory guidance entitled ***Working together to improve school attendance*** (2024), which is referred to in this policy as the "DfE Attendance Guidance".

2. Key principles

- High levels of attendance and punctuality levels are promoted and rewarded.
- It is the responsibility of everybody in the school and the academy to improve attendance and punctuality.
- Where attendance or punctuality fall short of expected standards, steps will be taken to address this and sanctions may be applied.
- Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school. Turves Green Primary School will work with pupils, parents and other local partners to remove any barriers to attendance.
- Subject to the terms of this policy, any day-to-day attendance issues or more general attendance concerns that parents or pupils have should be discussed with the pastoral manager.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 Turves Green Primary School:

Turves Green Primary School will:

- Develop and maintain a whole academy culture that promotes the benefit of high attendance including:
 - recognition of good attendance in assemblies
 - reporting attendance to parents
 - promoting and discussing attendance in classrooms
 - ensuring that lessons are engaging and inclusive
 - creating an inclusive, caring environment which means that children want to be in school
 - attendance display board in the school hall
 - certificates posted home termly for children with 97% or above attendance for the term
 - half termly meetings with class teachers and the Pastoral Manager to discuss class attendance and support
 - fortnightly meetings between Pastoral Manager and the Inclusion Lead/ SENDCO
- Work with pupils and their families, building strong relationships, to support high levels of attendance and punctuality and understand any barriers to attendance.
- Investigate unexplained or unjustified absence, applying sanctions where appropriate.
- Take into account individual needs when implementing this policy, including having regard to the Academy's obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- Share information, including returns information required to be shared in accordance with regulations¹ and the DfE Attendance Guidance, and work collaboratively with the local authority, other schools in the area and other partners including, where required, making appropriate referrals in accordance with local procedures, legislation and guidance.
- Regularly monitor, review and analyse attendance and absence data including to identify pupils or cohorts that require attendance support and to set targets for the future.
- Ensure that all pupils can access full-time education putting strategies in place where there is evidence to suggest that this is not the case.

- Ensure that the trust board and school's leadership team work together to monitor attendance levels and the effectiveness of this policy.
- Ensure that all legislation and guidance are complied with and reflected in our policies and procedures, including the DfE Attendance Guidance.
- Have in place appropriate safeguarding responses for children who are at risk of missing education, having regard to the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education.
- Provide information requested by the Secretary of State, including termly absence data collected by the Department for Education.
- Regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels.
- Support pupils who are returning to education following long term absence.
- Ensure that effective systems to record and report attendance data are in place, including accurate completion of admission and attendance registers using an electronic management information system.
- Assign overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Academy to designated senior leaders, known as the Senior Attendance Champions.
- Observe and fulfil the responsibilities set out in guidance issued by the Department for Education ([Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)) to the extent not covered above or elsewhere in this policy.

3.2 Parents and carers

We expect parents and carers to:

- ensure that their child arrives at school on time, in the correct uniform
- promote the importance of regular attendance at home
- follow the correct procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school
- avoid unnecessary absences
- keep school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- not take their child out of education for holidays during term time
- inform the school in advance of any proposed change of address for their child(ren), along with the name of the parent with whom the child shall live
- observe and fulfil their responsibilities set out in the guidance issued by the Department for Education: [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) .

3.3 Pupils

We expect pupils to:

- Attend school regularly and on time.

3.4 Senior Attendance Champion:

The Senior Attendance Champions (“**SAC**”) at Turves Green Primary School are D.William (Headteacher), G.Harker-Daniels (Head of School), L.Alden (Assistant Headteacher), L.Belcher (Pastoral Manager).

The SAC has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance at the Turves Green Primary School and will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and ensure that these are followed by all staff
- evaluate and monitor attendance expectations and processes
- have a strong grasp of absence data to identify trends and implement strategies
- ensure that key attendance messages are communicated to parents and pupils
- provide data and reports to support the work of the board of trustees.

3.5 The board of trustees

The board of trustees will:

- Take an active role in attendance improvement, recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the trust and Excelsior Multi Academy’s ethos and policies.
- Ensure the Excelsior Multi Academy Trust’s leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss and challenge trends and help Academy leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure Excelsior Multi Academy staff receive adequate training on attendance, including dedicated training for staff with specific attendance responsibilities and any additional training that would help support pupils or cohorts overcome common barriers to attendance.
- Share effective practice on attendance management and improvement across its academies.
- require the Academy to report to the governors on the Academy’s attendance at regular interval
- Have a dedicated attendance lead who will drive improvement across the trust and act as a central point for academies with attendance queries.

4. Registration

- 4.1 Turves Green Primary School maintains an attendance register and uses this to record each pupil’s attendance at the start of the school day and again in the afternoon.

Registration session	Start time	End time
Morning	8:40am	8:50am Registers close 9:10am
Afternoon	12:35pm 1:05	1:05 (EYFS and KS1) 1:35 (KS2)

4.2 Pupils who arrive after the registration session ends will be marked as late. Where pupils arrive after the register closes, then the pupil will be marked as 'late after the register closes'.

4.3 The register is marked using the national statutory attendance and absence codes which can be found in the DfE Attendance Guidance.

5. Late arrival

5.1 If a pupil arrives at school after registration period has ended, they come through the office, where names are recorded and the appropriate code added to the electronic register. In the absence of a satisfactory explanation, the register will be marked as unauthorised absence.

5.2. A letter is sent to parents of children who have arrived late three times. These parents are asked to attend a meeting with the Pastoral Manager if there are further sessions of lateness.

5.3. Persistent lateness will be dealt with by the Pastoral Manager and the Headteacher.

6. Reasons for absence and how to report or request authorisation

6.1 **Authorised absence** - absence will only be authorised where school has given approval in advance for a pupil to not be in attendance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for the absence.

6.2 **Unauthorised absence** – absence will be marked as unauthorised where school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

6.3 Reporting absence from Turves Green Primary School

6.3.1 Where a pupil is to be absent from school without prior permission, the parent/carer should inform school by telephone before 8:30am on the morning of the day of the first absence and let us know when they expect them to return. If the return date is not confirmed on the first day of absence, parents/carers must contact school on each day of absence.

6.3.2 If no contact is made by a parent/carer, a phone call will be made to parent/carer by office staff or the pastoral manager. The reason will be recorded.

6.3.3 In cases where school needs clarification to accurately record the absence in the attendance register, the parents/cares may be asked to provide medical evidence, such as a note from the child's doctor to support an absence for illness. If

satisfactory evidence is not provided, the absence may be marked as unauthorised.

6.4 . Appointments

6.4.1 Medical, dental and other essential appointments for a pupil should take place outside of school hours where this is reasonably possible.

6.4.2 Where an appointment must take place during school time, the pupil should attend the school for as much of the day as possible and as much prior notice as possible should be given to school by the parent/carer. Evidence of appointments will be requested e.g. appointment slip in order to authorise the absence.

6.5 Leave of absence (including holidays during term time)

6.5.1 The Academy will grant permission for a pupil to be absent from school in the circumstances described in paragraph 37 of the DfE Attendance Guidance which can be summarised as follows:

- taking part in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- attendance at an interview for entry into another educational setting or future employment
- study leave for public examinations
- temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- other exceptional circumstances.

6.5.2 Parents and carers should make every effort to avoid taking pupil out of education for holidays or other extended leave during term time. Turves Green Primary School will only authorise a leave of absence during term time where there are exceptional circumstances.

6.5.3 To request a leave of absence, parents/carers must make the request in advance and in writing addressed to the Head of School and, wherever possible, at least 4 school weeks ahead of the planned leave.

6.5.4 Where a leave of absence is requested as above, the Headteacher will consider the specific facts and circumstances relating to the request. The decision:

- will be confirmed in writing
- is solely at the Headteacher's discretion and
- is final.

6.5.5 Where permission is granted, the Headteacher will confirm the number of days and dates of absence which are authorised.

6.5.6 If permission is not granted and the parents/carers proceed to take their child out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a penalty notice or be subject to prosecution by the local authority.

6.6 Religious observance

6.6.1 We recognise that pupils of certain faiths may need to participate in days of religious observance. Where a day of religious observance:

- falls during school time and
 - has been exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil belongs, the absence from school will be authorised.

6.6.2 We ask that parents/carers notify the school by writing to the pupil's class teacher in advance where absence is required due to religious observance.

6.7 Coronavirus (Covid-19)

6.7.1 There may be circumstances in which pupils cannot attend school due to Covid-19. The Academy will adhere to any current guidance issued by the Department for Education relating to the recording of attendance in relation to Covid-19.

6.7.2 If a pupil tests positive for coronavirus, their absence will be recorded as illness.

7. Addressing poor attendance and punctuality

7.1 Turves Green Primary School will use data to target attendance improvement efforts to the pupils or groups of pupils who need it most. In doing so, Turves Green Primary School, led by the SAC, will:

- Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns, proactively using data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and relevant leaders
- identify pupils who need support from wider partners as soon as possible and deliver this support in a targeted manner
- conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and fully year data to identify patterns and trends
- benchmark school's attendance data at each level against local, regional and national level
- monitor the impact of strategies and actions to improve attendance on particular pupils and particular groups
- In coordination with the Pastoral Manager, hold regular meetings with the parents or carers of pupils who school and/or local authority consider to be vulnerable

7.2 Our procedures for managing unexplained absences can be found here

[FAST-track to Attendance legal information for parents \(excelsiormat.org\)](https://www.excelsiormat.org)

7.3 Where absence or punctuality is a cause for concern, for example because there is:

- a pattern of unauthorised absence
- a question over the reasons provided for a particular absence or late arrival

- persistent lateness

We will make contact with the parents/carers with a view to working together to support improved attendance and/or punctuality.

7.4 In cases where the school has been unable to establish a clear reason for absence and/or has welfare concerns about the pupil, a home welfare check may be carried out.

7.5 Absence will be classed as persistent where it falls below 90% across the academic year. Absence at this level is very likely to hinder educational prospects and we expect full parental co-operation and support to urgently address these cases. Intervention steps may include implementation of an attendance action plan, referral to other agencies and/or seeking to put in place an attendance contract.

7.6 Where out of school barriers to attendance are identified, we will signpost and support access to any additional services.

7.7 Where parents/carers have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age is regularly attending Turves Green Primary School and wider support in accordance with this policy is not appropriate or effective, a penalty notice may be issued. A penalty notice is a financial penalty (£120, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days) imposed on parents which is intended to change behaviour without the need for criminal prosecution. The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence.

7.8 When a penalty notice is issued, this will have regard to:

- the National Framework for penalty notices as set out on page 57 and 58 of the DfE Attendance Guidance; and
- the local authority's Code of Conduct for issuing penalty notices.

7.9 In the event that a penalty notice is issued but is not paid within 28 days, the local authority will decide whether to proceed to prosecution. The local authority also has separate powers to prosecute parents if their child of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly.