



Attendance Policy

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George Tomlinson Primary School

Attendance Policy

At George Tomlinson we celebrate the achievements of all our children; we work in partnership with parents/carers to get the very best from each child in our care. We develop skills that allow them to reach their full potential, so that they can go out into the wider world and be useful and fulfilled members of society. We believe that good attendance at school allows them to excel academically, create great social skills and learn habits that mean that they can cope well with the rigours of the workplace.

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

School Attendance: Statutory guidance and departmental advice, DFE Aug 2013

Our Aims:

- For all children at George Tomlinson to achieve at least 96% attendance
- For all children to come to school on time

We do this by:

- Creating an atmosphere in school where children feel happy, fulfilled and valued
- Allowing parents and carers to feel that their children will be safe and cared for in school
- Making a curriculum that is broad, balanced and meaningful to both pupils and parents and carers

We encourage good attendance by:

- Rewarding good and improved attendance at the end of year in an award ceremony
- Rewarding the class with the best attendance in the school with the animals visiting their class
- Rewarding the class with the best punctuality in the school with the animals visiting their class
- Addressing reasons why children don't attend well, and supporting and working with them and their parents and carers to solve these issues
- Providing workshops and advice for parents/carers about the importance of education
- Involving, and working, with other agencies to support the families and children to attend school regularly
- Having fair and transparent systems in place
- As a last resort we work with the borough to fine parents and carers who do not respond to the help and support provided to allow the child to receive their statutory and vital education

What is Good attendance?

- 100% is brilliant but we all know that for children, especially when they first start school, this is ambitious
- 98% is good
- Children whose attendance falls below 96% is cause for concern (see procedures pg.) and the 1st letter is sent home explaining this.
- Children whose attendance falls below 95% or does not continue to improve is a serious cause for concern and the Deputy Headteacher or Headteacher meets with parents when this occurs
- 90% attendance means intervention by the borough – families will be referred to the EWO (Educational Welfare Officer)
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Rewards

We have a variety of rewards for children to earn for good and improved attendance and punctuality. This is celebrated in a termly attendance assembly. The Deputy Headteacher or member of SLT will announce the best class attendance and punctuality at our weekly celebration assembly.

Award	Per -Term	Academic Year
100%	Certificate 100% attendance prize	Gold medal Children, parent/carer and governor's tea party
98% - 99% Years 2-6	Certificate, Excellent attendance prize	Bronze Medal
96% and above Years R and 1	Certificate, Excellent attendance prize	Bronze Medal
Best improved Attendance/Punctuality	A Certificate, pencil	Silver Medal
Best class Attendance and best punctuality for the week	Class Certificate/ animals visit their class	Excellent- Good attendance.
Full House (every child in and on time on the day) 100% attendance and 100% punctuality	100 dojos to each child	

PUNCTUALITY

Our school day:

	Morning Session	Afternoon Session	End of School Day
Nursery	8.50-11.50	12-3.15	
Reception, Year 1 and 2	Starts 8.50	Starts 12pm	3.10pm
Years 3 and 4	Starts 8.50	Starts 1pm	3.15pm
Years 5 and 6	Starts 8.50	Starts 1pm	3.15pm

We open the gates at 8:30am and children enter the school with their teachers at 8.45am. We expect children to be in school by 8:50 at the latest. Children entering after this will be marked as late. After the gates are shut parents must bring their children in through the main office where they will be marked in as late. Children arriving after 9.15am will be marked in as a 'U' code which represents late after close of register. This mark will be classed as an unauthorised absence which will affect their attendance figures.

We are keen for children to attend school on time so that they don't miss out on vital early morning activities, feel part of the class, can organise themselves and be ready to learn and do not disrupt the class when they arrive.

They are only missing just...	That equals.....	Which is....	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1.5 weeks per year	Nearly half a year
20 minutes per day	1 hr 40 mins per week	Over 2.5 weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
Half an hour per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 and a half years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 and a half years

We reward good and improved punctuality, and do our best to help parents and carers to get their children to school on time by offering a local walking bus.

Registers

Registers are taken at the beginning of the morning at 8:45am and they close at 9:15. Children arriving in class after 8:50 and before 9:15 get a late (L) mark- this is put in by the office staff. Children arriving after 9:15 get an unauthorised absence (U) mark.

In the afternoon registers are taken at:

12:30pm for Reception and Nursery and they close at 12:45pm

1pm for Key stage 1 and 2 and they close at 1:15pm

How we monitor and deal with persistent latecomers

Three late marks within half a term, or in close succession, will be cause for further monitoring

Then:

1. A general letter is sent home for persistent lateness.
2. A second letter will be sent to parents/ carers should there be no improvement to the child's attendance, highlighting the effect that the lateness is having on the child's attendance record.
3. Upon continuous lateness a third letter will be sent home to invite parents/ carers to the school for a meeting with the Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer to give parents/ carers the opportunity to discuss any problem which may contribute to a lack of punctuality.
4. Depending on the outcome of the meeting a referral may be sent in order to action a School Attendance Panel (SAP) meeting.
5. The Local Authority will set guidelines for parent/ carer to follow for a period of time.

Should all of the above fail, further action may be taken, which could result in parents/ carers being prosecuted.

Children who are picked up late at the end of the day

We ask that parents/ carers inform us if they know that they are going to be delayed at the end of the school day. Children are often upset when they don't know where their parents/ carers are. Children who have not been collected by 3:30pm will be taken to After School Club and must be collected from there and they will be charged accordingly (except for exceptional circumstances). A register is kept and late collections monitored. Regular lateness may result in social services being informed.

If children are left at school until 18.00, without prior arrangement with the school, then we will inform the parent or carer by phone; then ring social services, who will collect the child.

ABSENCE

Parents/carers are requested to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not in school. Parents/ carers must inform the office on a daily basis, if they cannot anticipate how long the child will be absent from school. The appropriate code may then be entered in the attendance register. If a parent/carers fails to notify the school the attendance officer will text them. This is known as 'First Day' absence calling. If we get no

reply, a letter will be sent home requesting a reason and will be kept on file. If no explanation remains forthcoming then the absence will be recorded as an 'O' code which is classed as an unauthorised absence.

A report is sent to the Headteacher and SLT each day by 10am to inform them of the attendance of our vulnerable children who are Looked After Children, Child Protection or Child In Need. In the case of a child whom we are monitoring, we will phone as a first action to find out where the child is.

Please note that parent/carers or siblings being sick, and children not being brought to school because of it, will also be marked as an unauthorised absence.

Authorised/unauthorised absence

It is important to note that a letter or phone call from a parent/ carer does not authorise an absence, only the school's acceptance of the explanation can authorise the absence.

Medical/Sickness Absences

If we do not receive a phone call advising us of the reasons for a child's absence our attendance officer will try to contact the parents/carers, leaving a voicemail if they cannot reach them. If this continues for two days we will make a home visit on day 3 and inform the police.

Absence of 3 or more days must be supported by medical evidence.

Children who are being monitored for poor attendance, will be required to provide evidence for 1 day of medical/sickness absence.

If evidence is not received after one week of a child being absent for 5 days or more, this absence will not be authorised and will be recorded as an 'O' code, which will drastically affect a child's attendance.

Unauthorised Absence may then be subject to a Penalty Notice from the Local Authority.

Children, who accumulate 3 or more episodes of illness, in any half term, may be asked to provide medical evidence for all future absences, and will be monitored.

Procedure for sickness/unauthorised absences

- A general letter is sent home for absences of 3 days or more per any half term.
- A second letter will be sent to parents/carers highlighting the child's reduced attendance percentage.
- A third letter is sent to invite parent/carers for a meeting with the Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer to establish the cause of absences and to offer support and guidance to parents/carers.
- Depending on the outcome of the meeting a referral may be sent in order to action a School Attendance Panel (SAP) meeting.
- The SAP will set guidelines for parent/carers to follow for a period of time.
- Further Action may be taken if necessary.
- The Education Welfare Officer will keep in contact with parents/carers, if necessary sending a warning letter
- They may issue a final warning
- Parents/carers may be prosecuted by the local authority

Examples of Authorised Absence from George Tomlinson Primary School:

- Days of religious observance (3 per year for a maximum of 3 days)
- Exceptional circumstances (agreed by the Headteacher)
- Reported illness of 2 days or less – for more days evidence should be provided
- Medical/dental appointment (emergency only – evidence required)
- Hospital or Orthodontist appointment (evidence required)
- Pre-arranged visits to another school
- External curricular exams

Although these absences are authorised by the school, the above absences will affect a child's attendance percentage.

Appointments

If a child needs to go to the dentist or doctor we ask parents and carers to:

- Do their best to make the appointment after school hours
- If they can't do that, make the appointment near to the end of the school day
- Bring children into school before and after appointment times.
- Not allow their child to have the whole day off for an appointment- this may result in an unauthorised absence

Examples of Unauthorised Absence

- Leave of Absence NOT approved by school.
- Absence NOT reported on the day or supported by an acceptable written explanation upon return to school.
- Absence of 3 or more days WITHOUT medical evidence.
- Routine Doctor/Dental appointments in school hours.
- Arriving late after registers have closed.
- No Medical Evidence provided for absence 1 days or more if required to do so by the Attendance Officer (because of persistent poor attendance)

Acceptable Medical Evidence

- Medical Appointment Card confirming attendance
- Medical Appointment Letter
- Copy of Prescription showing name and date

- Prescribed medication with Pharmacist label showing name and date
- Unfit for School declaration from GP
- Hospital discharge letter
- Hospital after care plan with label showing name and date of attendance

A home visit may be required if medical evidence is unavailable for absence of children with irregular attendance. Authorisation of absence will then be at the discretion of the visiting welfare officer. (Absence may also be followed up with a Home Visit in order to ensure the safeguarding of children absent from school).

Support Available at George Tomlinson Primary School

Special arrangements can be made to help children remain in school during periods of illness or injury:

- Medication can be held and administered in school. A letter of authorisation will be required from parent/carer
- Children with injuries such as; plaster casts, crutches etc. will be allowed to leave lesson early, and get an early lunch, to avoid busy traffic around the school. They can use the lift if their classrooms are based on the upper floors. (A risk assessment is always carried out in such circumstances).
- Children with injuries will also be allocated a room (supervised by an adult) in which they will be allowed to nominate 2 friends to spend, break times and lunch times with.
- Administration of medication can be carried out in private e.g. Epi pen or insulin injections.
- An NHS School Nurse can also be available by prior appointment.
- A Care Plan meeting will be arranged on return of a long period of absence after sickness or injury. This will be to discuss concerns or support.
- Parents/carers who are unsure of their child's fitness to attend school can usually bring them in to school on the understanding that we will send them home if they prove to be too unwell to attend.

What we require from parents/carers –

- Parents/carers must make appointments outside school hours.
- Where appointments outside school hours are not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.
- Ensure children attend regularly and on time
- Notify the school on the first day of absence, or on a daily basis, if necessary.
- Only request leave in term time in exceptional circumstances - and be aware that this leave may not be granted
- Parents/ carers must not keep children away from school for reasons such as birthdays or picking people up from the airport

- Parents/carers must try their best not to keep children off school during SATs or at times of testing
- Parent/carer must not take children on holiday during term time.
(See appendix 2 for advice for parents who may have difficulty getting their children to school)

At George Tomlinson we will –

- Ensure that the Head Teacher is informed about any attendance matters and is in agreement with any action taken
- Have an expectation that full time punctual attendance will be the norm and all persistent absences/lateness will be followed up
- Monitor attendance through checking registers and the computerised attendance system
- Identify and act upon problems with attendance.

Monitoring

- The registers are monitored on a regular basis by the school's Attendance Officer. Attendance patterns are monitored weekly and necessary actions to deal with children who have irregular punctuality / attendance issues are taken. The school attendance panel meets weekly and discusses pupils who are cause for concern.

Nursery procedures

- If attendance is at or below 85% a meeting is arranged with the Nursery Lead and Early Years Lead to support and improve attendance. If it remains consistently at or below 85% Nursery children may lose their place.
- See Appendix 3 for absence procedures.

Information on attendance is passed on to the Local Authority on a termly basis.

Penalty Notices

Where a child's attendance is consistently poor (less than 90% with at least 20% of the absence being unauthorised) and all steps have been taken to rectify this by the school and the Education Welfare Officer with the child and the parents/carers, but have been unsuccessful, then the Attendance Officer and the Education Welfare Officer will after consulting with the school, consider issuing a Penalty Notice (see appendix 1). This will only be issued after taking each case into consideration and taking into account any mitigating circumstances.

Leave during term time

Leave in term time is not an entitlement and can only be granted in exceptional circumstances at the Head Teacher's discretion.

All requests for term time leave must be submitted at least 20 days in advance, by parents/carers, to enable school to have time to consider the request. Each request will be considered individually and on its own merits. The school will reply in writing within 10 school days of receiving the request. Requests that do not include a start and end date or reason for the leave cannot be considered. If a child is granted leave and does not return to school by the agreed return date or takes unauthorised leave parents/carers will be at risk of receiving a fine and/or the child may lose their place at our school.

Children whose attendance has fallen below 96% will not normally be considered for entitlement to agreed leave for exceptional circumstances.

Things we will consider when deciding whether to allow Exceptional Leave:

- We will look at previous attendance
- We will look at previous leave granted
- We will look carefully at the reasons given

Taking leave in term time is strongly discouraged, 'as it can be disruptive to children's education and there is strong evidence to indicate that significant absence from school during term time can have a negative impact upon a child's attainment and learning'. Further information on attendance can be obtained from the Education Welfare Office of Waltham Forest:

Education Welfare 0208 496 1718

Our School Policy, a copy is available by request from the school office.

Children missing from education

The Attendance Officer will liaise with the Education Welfare of Waltham Forest, Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered as missing. If we cannot locate them after two days of absence we will make a home visit on day 3 and inform the police. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and they will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

Procedures with dealing with Children Missing from Education

- If a child does not return to school after a holiday or at the start of a school term, The Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carer and all other contacts on the child's file.
- If we cannot make contact to find out where a child is, we will make a home visit on day 3 and inform the police.
- A letter will be sent home informing parent/carer that the child should return within 10 days from the first day of absence.
- A second letter will be sent home stating a date of return to school, with an additional 10 days, informing the parent/carer that the child/ren will be removed from our school roll should a total of 21 consecutive days of absence have elapsed, and all statutory checks have been completed.
- Pupils in Nursery will also be removed from roll should a total of 21 consecutive days of absence lapse

Children in public care

The SENDCo is the school's Designated Teacher for Looked After Children. The Attendance Officer will monitor their attendance and report this to the Headteacher and SLT (which includes the SENDCo) daily by 10am.

Appendix 1: Penalty Notices

The Local Education Authority has brought to the attention of every school in Waltham Forest of the new powers made available in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003.

These came into force in February 2004 and include Penalty Notices, which mean that for pupils with unauthorised absence from school (i.e. any absences for which the school has not given permission) their parents/carers may be subject to a prompt fine.

Penalty Notices will be used as a deterrent to prevent a pattern of unauthorised absence developing. They will be issued simply by post to a parent's/ carer's home after a warning and in cases of absence without acceptable cause which will include pupils caught on truancy sweeps and also those taking unauthorised holidays in school time.

When considering the use of a Penalty Notice, a letter from the school will be sent to inform parents and carers that this may happen. The Education Welfare from the Local Authority's first response will be in the form of a written warning, giving parents/carers more detail. In exceptional circumstances, however, a Penalty Notice may be used as a first response. This could be when an unauthorised absence was for an extended period and condoned by the parent/carer, for example when a parent/carer has chosen to take their child on holiday during term time without authorisation.

Support and guidance on attendance is always available, George Tomlinson will endeavour to answer any questions and give help to achieve an improvement in the child's attendance. Parents can contact Ms Sayed via the school to discuss this on 020 8556 3577.

Appendix 2 Advice for parents/carers

Are you having problems getting your child to school for some of these reasons?

- won't get out of bed in the morning
- won't go to bed at night
- can't find their uniform, books, school bag
- slow to eat breakfast
- haven't done their homework
- watching TV
- have a test or presentation to do, have an assignment to hand in
- it's their birthday.
- saying that they are feeling un-well
- having friendship problems at school

If so, a set routine can help

- have a set time to go to bed
- have a set time to get out of bed
- have uniform and school bag ready the night before
- have a set time for starting and finishing breakfast
- set a time for daily homework activities
- speak about school positively
- reassure them that school will take care of their individual needs

- speak to an adult in the school to discuss any issues
- be firm, send your child to school every school day; including their birthday and the last day of term.