



## **Mill Lane School Attendance Policy and Procedures**

### **Scope**

Teignmouth Community School, Mill Lane, is a 2-11 aged school.

### **Philosophy**

Teignmouth Community School is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all pupils. Evidence shows that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is essential. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. Therefore, as a school we do all that we can to maximise attendance for all pupils. We adopt a whole school approach, and any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed quickly.

It is the policy of the school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. The school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. We believe that with good attendance children will have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

### **Objectives**

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies when necessary
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance throughout the school and link this to the school rewards system
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

### **Statutory Duty of Schools and Parents**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. At Teignmouth Community

School an electronic registration system is in place.

### Principles

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that pupils arrive at school on time, properly attired, with correct equipment and in a condition to learn. The school will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

### The Educational Welfare Service and school attendance

The aim of the Education Welfare Service is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full-time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

### What will happen if a pupil does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child attends. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring the payment of a fine of up to £60 per parent/carer, per child if attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances the parent/guardian may be prosecuted and will be required to attend the Magistrates Court where up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500 may be imposed. Parents/carers will be given every opportunity to improve the attendance of the child, and a written warning will be issued before any legal action is taken.

96% Phone to explore if there are any concerns around attendance

95% Green letter

92-93% Amber letter offering a meeting in school.

Early Help will be offered. During the meeting a clear plan will be drawn up to help resolve concerns and increase attendance.

91-92% Red Letter including asking for Medical Evidence

89% Referral to the Education Welfare Service where criteria has been met.

*(School need to keep a clear chronology of attendance concerns including actions taken as this will need to be evidenced if the referral to the Education Welfare Service is needed. All letters and actions will need to be actioned in a timely manner depending on the support and needs of the pupil)*

Consideration is always given to any medical or educational needs of the child. This will be explored with you during the attendance processes. We must stress that our aim will always be

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to support you and your child in improving attendance. However we understand that sometimes this does not work, therefore we will need to have a discussion with the Education Welfare Service to explore the next steps.

### **Statutory Attendance**

There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration.

School gate/classroom opens at 8.45am.

Morning Registers will be taken at 9.00am.

Afternoon Registers will be taken at 1pm for Key Stage 1 and Early Years and 1.30pm for Key Stage 2.

- ✓ **AM:** pupils will be registered at the beginning of the school day by their class teacher. Pupils arriving after the register has been taken will be considered as late (code L). The register will be closed at 9:30am. If a student arrives after this time it will be classified as an Unauthorised Absence (code U)
- ✓ **PM:** registration takes place at the beginning of afternoon lesson by the class teacher.

The school will ensure that all staff are familiar with the requirements of the registration process, the procedures for recording absence, and for explaining absences. Class teachers have the responsibility to follow up any attendance concerns, and for reporting persistent problems to the Attendance Officer/leader for the site.

Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences. Attendance figures will be communicated to parents on a termly basis through reports.

### **Leave of absence during Term Time**

As from the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013, all schools are unable to authorise requests for absence relating to holidays in term time. This has been brought about by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 which has removed reference to holidays and the ten day period.

These changes reinforce the government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that pupils should only be granted authorised absence by the school, in exceptional circumstances e.g. illness, exclusions, or due to other unavoidable causes.

Unauthorised absences may result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. We hope you will support your child's school by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually every school day throughout the academic year that the law requires, unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstances. All requests for absence must be made using the S2 form, available from school, giving school sufficient time to consider any request before the absence commences. Leave of absence will only be considered for exceptional circumstances.

### **Reporting Absences**

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the school of the reason for a pupil's absence on the first and every day of the non-attendance. It is our expectation that parents/carers will make every effort to contact the school by 9.30am on the morning of the absence. The school will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted by the school if the reason for absence is not confirmed by parent/carer.

The decision to authorise an absence will be made by the school who will follow the attendance policy.

Failure to notify school of the reason for a child's absence will result in an unauthorised absence. Where attendance and/or punctuality becomes a concern the school will engage support from The Education Welfare Service. This may lead to formal

proceedings against parents/carers. More serious cases can lead to court proceedings which may result in a fine and/or custodial prison sentence for the parent/carer.

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the school by one of the following methods:

- ✓ By phone to the school office by 9.30am on the morning of each absence.
- ✓ Personal contact with school office.
- ✓ Email to [attendanceml@teignmouthschool.co.uk](mailto:attendanceml@teignmouthschool.co.uk)
- ✓ For absences known in advance parents/carers should contact the school to confirm times and dates. Medical/dentist/optician appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible appointments should be made at the beginning or end of the school day so that students can attend lessons before and after their appointment. Pupil's must sign out at the school office with a parent present.

If a pupil is taken ill during the school day they must follow school procedure. We do not give permission for pupils to contact home themselves. A decision will be made regarding whether the pupil should return to class or whether parents/carers should be contacted to make appropriate arrangements to go home. For the purposes of safeguarding, pupils will only be sent home where parent/carer consent is given on the occasion of their illness. Where it is necessary to call emergency services the First Aid procedure will be followed. (See First Aid Policy)

If a pupil's attendance becomes a concern due to illness, (usually 3 or more separate periods of absence within a four/five week period) the school will contact parents to verify if there are any concerns with the pupils health and to confirm if they are being seen by an appropriate health care professional. There are three possible responses by the school which are:

1. Unauthorise the absences and any further absence due to the lack of a justifiable medical reason.

2. Authorise the absence and consider arranging a meeting with parents and appropriate Health Care professional to consider whether and Individual Health Care Plan (IHCP) is required.
3. Consider any safeguarding concerns that may need a further referral to outside agencies.

It is a responsibility for parents to provide information relating to medical conditions which affect a pupil's attendance to school. This information is not asked for routinely and the school will not be liable for any charges made for obtaining this information.

A student whose attendance is 90% or below at any point in the school year is categorised by the Government as a Persistent Absentee. This is regardless of the reasons for absence or whether they are authorised or unauthorised. These students are closely monitored and parents/carers will be contacted by the school on a regular basis. It is our expectation that parents will co-operate and work closely with the school to improve their child's school attendance.

### **Truancy**

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child receives an education and therefore attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the school if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the Education Welfare Service who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice. (See above for Penalty Notices). If a pupil is away without explanation and no contact made, the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO), a representative from school, or a Community Police Officer may do a home visit to establish the reason for the absence.

### **Punctuality**

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to school on time.

Any pupil who is late to school must sign in at the school office before proceeding to their class. Pupils who are late are required to follow the sanction procedure. It is our expectation that the parent/carer will support and work with the school to improve punctuality. Persistent lateness may be classed as unauthorised absence. If a child is regularly late for school parents/carers may be invited to school to discuss the reasons for lateness and to agree a plan for improvement. Persistent cases will be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

## Key Terms and Definitions

ACRONYM	TERM	DEFINITION
PA	Persistent absentee	As student who has attendance of 90% or lower regardless of the reason
EWO	Education Welfare Officer	Employee of Devon County Council with responsibility for ensuring the legal requirements associated with attendance are met.

## Amendment Record

VERSION #	DATE	AMENDED BY	NATURE OF CHANGE
1.1	01/ 09/ 2013	R Willmott	Government changes relating to holidays in term time
1.2	21/09/2015	R Willmott	Change to PA category Addition of register closure time
1.3	08/03/2016	R Willmott	Added policy for single absence of 5 days or more. Register close at 9:30am
1.4	01/10/2019	R Willmott	Update of rewards for all years. Update of the consideration process when a student has a number of "Medical Absence"
1.5	2/12/2021	A Thomas	Update of e-mail system to report absence. Update of home visit when no contact is made. Primary policy only.