



TST Attendance Statement of Intent

All schools within Tenterden Schools Trust have their own attendance policy that reflects their context and age range. All of our schools are committed to meeting our obligations with regard to school attendance through a whole-school culture and ethos that values excellent attendance and punctuality. We see, first hand, the positive impacts that excellent attendance and punctuality have on young people in terms of their social, emotional and academic progress. As a Multi Academy Trust, we believe every pupil should have access to the full-time education to which they are entitled and we will work with our schools and families to actively improve attendance and reduce patterns of absence. Our schools build strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to regularly attend school.

Please be aware that recent changes in the law have raised the expectations on attendance and we all need to play our part in ensuring that every effort is taken to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality. Each individual school's attendance policy will detail the roles and responsibilities of all parties with the expectation that we all contribute to improving attendance.

Please also note that holidays (leave of absence) are not to be taken during term time. Any leave of absence needs prior approval by the Headteacher/Principal and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. TST schools will refer families, who hit the threshold for unauthorised absence, to the Local Authority who can issue a penalty notice.

Many thanks in advance for your cooperation.

Stuart Reeves, CEO Tenterden Schools Trust
August 2024

Attendance responsibilities and expectations

The following has been taken from DfE Statutory Guidance ‘Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance’ and TST expectations.

All pupils

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|---|---|--|
| Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies. | Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parents understand. | Take an active role in attendance improvement, support their school(s) to prioritise attendance, and work together with leaders to set whole school cultures. | Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services. |
| Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness). | Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance. | Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties. | Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance. |
| Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance. | Accurately complete admission and attendance registers. | Ensure school staff receive training on attendance. | Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice. |
| Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible. | Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance. | | Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice. |
| | Regularly monitor data to identify patterns and trends and understand which pupils and pupil cohorts to focus on. | | |
| | Have robust daily processes to follow up absence. | | |

Pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|--|---|---|--|
| Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. | Proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of persistent absence. | Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. | Hold a regular conversation with every school to identify, discuss and signpost or provide access to services for pupils who are persistently or severely absent or at risk of becoming so. |
| Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support. | Work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance. | | Where there are out of school barriers, provide each identified pupil and their family with access to services they need in the first instance. |
| | If the issue persists, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the local authority and other partners. If a case meets the local threshold for formal early help/family support, this includes conducting the early help assessment and acting as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the local authority and partners. | | If the issue persists, and there are multiple needs consider whether the threshold for early help is met and facilitate access where it is. Regardless, take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the school and other partners. Provide the lead practitioner in cases where threshold is met and all partners agree that a local authority service is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the local authority, continue to work with the school and partners. |
| | Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost and support access to any required services in the first instance and act as lead practitioner if attendance is the only issue and/or the local threshold for formal early help is not met. | | |

Persistently absent pupils

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|--|--|---|--|
| Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. | Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: | Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. | Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent and: |
| Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention. | Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners. | | Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders. |
| | Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future. | | Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. |
| | Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, work with the local authority on legal intervention. | | Where support is not working, being engaged with or appropriate, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort). |
| | Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through a referral to statutory children's social care. | | |
| | Work with other schools in the local area, such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings. | | |

Severely absent pupils

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance.</p> | <p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and:</p> | <p>Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it.</p> | <p>Continue support as for persistently absent pupils and: All services should make this group the top priority for support. This may include a whole family plan, consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision.</p> |
| <p>Proactively engage with the formal support offered – including any parenting contract or voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention.</p> | <p>Agree a joint approach for all severely absent pupils with the local authority.</p> | | <p>Be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues, ensuring joint working between the school, children's social care services and other statutory safeguarding partners. Where appropriate, this could include conducting a full children's social care assessment and building attendance into children in need and child protection plans.</p> |

Support for cohorts of pupils with lower attendance than their peers

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| Not applicable. | Proactively use data to identify cohorts with, or at risk of, low attendance and develop strategies to support them. | Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. | Track local attendance data to prioritise support and unblock area wide attendance barriers where they impact numerous schools. |
| | Work with other schools in the local area and the local authority to share effective practice where there are common barriers to attendance. | | |

Support for pupils with medical conditions or SEND with poor attendance

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|--|---|---|---|
| Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. | Maintain the same ambition for attendance and work with pupils and parents to maximise attendance. | Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. | Work closely with relevant services and partners, for example special educational needs, educational psychologists, and mental health services, to ensure joined up support for families. |
| Proactively engage with the support offered. | Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed. | | Ensure suitable education, such as alternative provision, is arranged for children of compulsory school age who because of health reasons would not otherwise receive a suitable education. |
| | Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals. | | |
| | Regularly monitor data for such groups, including at board and governing body meetings and with local authorities. | | |

Support for pupils with a social worker

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|--|---|---|--|
| Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. | Work in partnership with the local authority at a strategic and individual level, sharing data on attendance including, at an individual level, informing the pupil's social worker if there are any unexplained absences and if their name is to be deleted from the register. | Regularly review attendance data and help school leaders focus support on the pupils who need it. | Ensure that all Children's Social Care practitioners understand the importance of good attendance for pupil's educational progress, for their welfare and their wider development – and understand their role in improving it. |
| Proactively engage with the support offered. | Understand how the welfare, safeguarding, and child protection issues that they are experiencing, or have experienced, can have an impact on attendance – whilst maintaining a culture of high aspiration for the cohort. | | Develop whole system approaches, with social care, to support the attendance of children in need. |
| | Provide additional academic support and make reasonable adjustments to help them, recognising that even when statutory social care intervention has ended, there can be a lasting impact on children's educational outcomes. | | <p>Through the work of Virtual School Heads, they should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Undertake systemic monitoring and data sharing of the attendance of children with a social worker in their area: developing and implementing targeted cohort level interventions to improve attendance. ● Provide advice, challenge and training to schools on how to promote and secure good attendance for children with a social worker. |
| | Know who the pupils who have, or who have had, a social worker are. | | |

Looked after and previously looked after children

| Parents are expected to: | Schools are expected to: | Academy trustees and governing bodies are expected to: | Local authorities are expected to: |
|---|--|--|--|
| <p>Work with the school and local authority to help them understand the child's barriers to attendance – including the development of Personal Education Plans.</p> | <p>Have high expectations for the cohort – with expert support and leadership provided by the designated teacher for looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> | <p>Designate a member of staff to have responsibility for the promotion of the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after pupils.</p> | <p>(LA that looks after the child:) Appoint an expert Virtual School Head (VSH) – will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Monitor, report on, and evaluate the education outcomes of looked after children, including their attendance, as if they attended a single school - wherever they live or are educated. ● Ensure schools know when they have a pupil looked after by the authority on their role and that information is shared with the school on issues that may impact on their attendance. ● Ensure that all looked-after pupils have high quality, up to date, effective Personal Education Plans developed in partnership with schools, social workers and carers – including, where necessary, clear interventions and use of pupil premium plus funding to support good attendance. ● Provide expert advice and information on the education of previously looked-after pupils to schools and parents – including their attendance. |
| <p>Proactively engage with the support offered.</p> | <p>Work in partnership with the local authority Virtual School Head to develop and deliver high quality Personal Education Plans for looked- after children that support good attendance.</p> | <p>Monitor and review attendance of the cohort and consider how school policies, including behaviour policies, are sensitive to their needs and support good attendance.</p> | <p>Promote the educational achievement of looked-after and previously looked-after children – doing everything possible to minimise disruption to education when a pupil enters care.</p> |
| | <p>Work directly with parents to develop good home-school links that support good attendance. For previously looked-after pupils this could include discussion on use of the Pupil Premium Plus funding managed by the school.</p> | | |

