



TweedLearning

— FEDERATION —

Attendance & Punctuality Policy 2026-2027

Document monitoring and evaluation

This policy has been officially adopted by the Governing Body.

Version History		
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Update	Sept 2016	Updated
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Update	April 2020	Updated – Covid Addendum added
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Approval & Authorisation			
	Name	Job title	Date
Approved by	Gary Hilton	Head Teacher	Sept 2026
Approved by		Governing Body	Sept 2026
Date of next review			Sept 2027



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Introduction

All children of statutory school age who are registered at school must, by law, attend that school regularly. Any absence from school can seriously disrupt a pupil's continuity of learning and have detrimental effects on their future progress. This guidance is in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct for Penalty Notices which was reviewed and revised in February 2015.

Aims

We aim to ensure that the children in our school attend regularly and on time. Where this is not the case, staff follow a staged procedure to encourage consistent attendance.

Attendance

The performance indicator by which we judge the success of our efforts is set each year by our average attendance figure and by comparing this with the national attendance figure. We seek to annually improve our attendance figures.

While 100% attendance is clearly the ideal, in many cases legitimate illness or other factors can prevent it. Such attendance, where it occurs, is clearly excellent. On the other hand, attendance which falls below 90% (where a child is known to be in reasonable health and there are no other extenuating circumstances) is poor and should give cause for concern (this is known as 'persistent absence'). In order to ascertain the levels of individual attendance, we ensure that a complete register check is undertaken twice every day, and where there is cause for concern, appropriate action shall be taken, initially by speaking with parents, followed by a letter. We send out termly attendance reports to parents of all children and make a point of highlighting particular aspects of attendance that may not be acceptable. We also make a point of speaking individually with parents of children whose attendance levels are a cause for concern. A standard letter (appendix 2) is also used if necessary.

Government regulations
require that:

- 'All maintained schools set an annual target to reduce absences'
- Schools notify LA of targets
- LA agree the targets and notify the DfE of all its schools' targets

We also publish our overall average attendance and our attendance figures by year group in the school newsletter on a monthly basis.

We ensure that school registers, on which returns depend, are kept accurately and that the criteria by which we judge absences as authorised or not are common and known to all class teachers.

Registers

As a legal document, registers are kept on the school premises at all times. Teachers are required to complete the register at the beginning of each session (morning and afternoon) every day, and return it to the office at the end of each registration period (9.00am and 1.05pm). Any child arriving after this time must enter school via the main entrance; the reason for this lateness (if given) is logged. These pupils are recorded in the register as being late.

Where there is an absence, teachers or the school secretary enter the appropriate symbol in the register; these are also kept at the back of each register. A sickness may be authorised by the teacher or the School Secretary only if they have received a message (written or verbal). Any notes from parents received by teachers must be sent to the school office; likewise verbal messages from parents must be recorded and also sent to the office each morning.

Where there is a definite pattern of non-attendance or where the explanation for absence is unsatisfactory, absence may not be authorised even with a message from a parent.

The school secretary enters all attendance information into the School Information Management System (SIMS). Any attendance information required can be drawn from SIMS.

Further details about completing attendance registers can be found in appendix 1.

First Day of Absence Contact

The school (usually the secretary) endeavours to make contact with the parents of children absent from school on the first day of absence. This contact is made by telephone and aims to ascertain the reason why the child is absent and when they are likely to return. The secretary will make further calls if absence is prolonged. These calls also let parents know that the absence has been noted and that the school cares about the effect this has on the child's learning. A record of these calls and the responses received is always kept. (Appendix 3) If a verbal response is not received we seek a reason by letter (appendix 6)

Holidays during Term Time

This guidance reflects the changes to the Pupil Registration Regulation which came into force in September 2013.

Amendments to the 2006 pupil regulations remove references to family holiday, extended leave and the statutory threshold of ten school days (authorised at the discretion of the headteacher). The amendments make clear that:

'Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.'

All decisions in relation to whether leave of absence is granted (authorised) or not (unauthorised) should be applied consistently and equitably.

Parents are **not entitled** to remove children for holidays, leave of absence must be applied for and the decision to authorise absence rests entirely with the headteacher. Along with the other schools in the Coquet Partnership it has been agreed that **NO HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME WILL BE AUTHORISED**. Parents should still request leave of absence for holidays in advance using a holiday request form available from the school office (appendix 4). All requests should be submitted to the school office at the earliest possible opportunity and at least 2 weeks prior to the holiday.

Possible consequences of taking a child out of school without the permission of the headteacher are also detailed in appendix 4 and appendix 8.

Punctuality

The school doors open at (staggered times for specific year groups) and all pupils are expected to be in school for registration by the designated time. Any child arriving late should enter school via the main entrance and report to the school office. The names of these pupils will be added to the Lateness Log (appendix 5). The child will then be sent to their classroom. Letters will be sent out to parents of persistent latecomers (at the discretion of the Headteacher, taking into account personal and family circumstances) See Appendix 6. These letters will be recorded in the lateness log. The school may request referral to the Education Welfare Officer where persistent lateness continues.

Roles and Responsibilities

School Secretary

- *Monitor registers on a daily basis and record absences.*
- *Make and keep a record of telephone calls to parents on the first day of their child's absence (these calls continue until an adequate response is gained)*
- *Mark reasons for absences into registers and leave a message for teachers explaining absences.*
- *Ensure that all attendance data is entered into the SIMS system on a weekly basis*
- *Calculate weekly attendance percentages for the weekly assembly*
- *Give weekly feedback to HT concerning attendance and punctuality issues.*
- *Liaise with Educational Welfare Officer where necessary*
- *Work with HT and other school staff to develop strategies to improve school attendance.*

Headteacher/Assistant Headteacher

- *Ensure that attendance and punctuality receive high profile in the school through newsletters, school reports, home/school communications, assemblies and rewards*
- *Oversee and report to Headteacher and Governors on whole school attendance and punctuality*
- *Communicate with parents where clear concerns exist about attendance or punctuality.*
- *Liaise on a regular basis with the School Secretary regarding attendance and punctuality*
- *Complete statistical returns for the LA*
- *Offer support to parents on attendance and punctuality issues*

Class Teachers

- *Have high expectations for punctuality and attendance in their classes*
- *Complete registers on a daily and weekly basis following agreed procedures*
- *Develop and share strategies to improve class attendance*

Governors

- *To carry-out termly validation of the schools practice and impact.*

What can parents do to help?

- *Let the school know as soon as possible why your child is away, usually on the first day of absence*
- *Try to make appointments and book holidays out of school time*
- *Do not allow your child to have time off school unless it is absolutely necessary.*

Attendance figures for reports:

- | | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|
| ● 99-100% | <i>Outstanding</i> |
| ● 96% -98.9% | <i>Good</i> |
| ● 90% -95.9% | <i>Requires Improvement</i> |
| ● Below 90% | <i>Unsatisfactory</i> |

Rewards for good attendance and punctuality.

We reward good attendance in a number of ways. All children who have 100% attendance in a term receive a certificate and reward in recognition of this achievement. All children achieving 100% in any school year receive a special prize in at our leavers assembly.

Appendix 1

Attendance Registers

Weekly registers are generated by the School Secretary from SIMS.

Registers should be called at the beginning of the morning session AND the afternoon session. On both occasions registers MUST be promptly returned to the school office.

On a weekly basis the secretary enters all register details into SIMS Attendance Manager.

Non-attendance must be indicated in the register with the appropriate symbol inside (see below)

Unauthorised absence is the only occasion when a register space can be left empty. Absence letters from parents should be kept for the term and dated to correspond with the relevant absence.

Definitions

Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent. **This includes holidays during term time.**

MAIN SYMBOLS TO BE USED – A full list is kept in register files.

/ - Present (am)

\ - Present (pm)

C – Other Authorised Circumstances

G – Family Holiday (Not agreed or days in excess of agreement)

H – Family Holiday (agreed)

I – Illness (Not medical or dental appointments)

L – Late

M – Medical/Dental appointments

O – Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code)

U – Late (after registers closed)

! – Non-compulsory school age absence

Tweed Learning Federation
Attendance and Punctuality

Dear Parent/Carer

At our school we consider good attendance and punctuality a major influence on our pupils' learning. In accordance with our school policy we monitor these very carefully. According to our policy for attendance and punctuality we will write to the parents of pupils whose attendance (for whatever reason) is below 90%.

It has come to our attention that over the last term _____ has attended ____% of their possible school sessions.

We aim to achieve an overall attendance figure of at least 96% each year.

Children whose attendance is less than 92% will be notified by letter from the school and their names will be passed to the Education Welfare Officer for monitoring.

Children whose attendance is less than 90% are classified as 'Persistent Absentees'. Their parents are likely to be contacted by an Education Welfare Officer from Northumberland County Council.

If your child continues to miss a significant number of lessons they are likely to fall behind the rest of the class in their academic progress. Whilst we understand that childhood illnesses are unavoidable and that you may have taken holidays, these impact heavily on children's attendance at school. It is very important to make every effort to improve your child's attendance rate, which we will be monitoring closely.

If persistent absence continues at this rate it will be necessary to arrange a meeting with you at school to discuss the issue further.

If there is anything we can do to help support you or if you have any queries regarding this letter please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Yours sincerely

Gary Hilton
(Headteacher)

Appendix 3

Tweed Learning Federation
Record of Pupil Absence

Date	Pupil Name	Class	Reason for absence	Expected date of return	Notes (including if absence letter sent home)

Tweed Learning Federation
Newfields Berwick upon Tweed TD15 1SP. Tel: 01289 306170
Email: admin@st-maryscofe.northumberland.sch.uk
Headteacher: Gary Hilton



Application for Leave of Absence of Pupil from School

Name of Child:	Class:
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Proposed first day/date of absence:

Actual day/date of proposed return to school:	Total Number of School Days:
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Reason for absence (please give details of 'exceptional circumstances' and submit any supporting evidence)
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**It is the policy of all schools in the Coquet Partnership
NOT TO AUTHORISE HOLIDAY ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME.
PLEASE SEE THE REVERSE OF THIS FORM FOR IMPORTANT INFORMATION.**

Declaration

I have read and understood the information on the reverse of this form regarding leave of absence during term time, unauthorised absence, and Penalty Notices. I am aware of the possible consequences should I take my child on leave of absence without the prior authorisation of the Head Teacher.

Signature of parent/carers:	Date:
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.....
.....
This section is for school use:

Response to your request for leave of absence during term time

Child's overall attendance during last academic year:

Child's overall attendance in the last 12 months:*
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***All schools in the Coquet Partnership have agreed that if an unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time and the pupil's attendance in the 12 month period leading up to the absence is less than 93%, an application to the Local Authority for a penalty notice will be made.**

Our overall school attendance target is 96%

Your application for leave of absence detailed above is AUTHORISED / UNAUTHORISED .
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The reason for unauthorised absence is:

Signed:	(Headteacher)	Date:
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Important Information for Parents/Carers

Research suggests that children who are absent from School may never catch up on the learning they have missed, which may ultimately affect exam and test results. As a parent/carer you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

The Education Act (1996) requires parents to ensure their child attends school regularly. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant leave of absence during term time unless:

- An application has been made in advance to the Headteacher by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives with: and
- The proprietor (Headteacher) or person authorised by the Headteacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to that application.

The Head Teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances to justify an authorised absence. It is the parents' responsibility when submitting the request to provide all the information and evidence to prove this.

BERWICK ST MARY'S CE FIRST SCHOOL DOES NOT AUTHORISE ANY HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME.

The request for authorised Leave of Absence must be made at least two weeks in advance and the Head Teacher may invite the parent/carer(s) into school to discuss the request before a decision is made.

If the Head Teacher authorises the Leave of Absence it is expected that the child's attendance will be of a satisfactory level both prior and after the date covered by the request.

If the Head Teacher refuses Leave of Absence and the absence is recorded as unauthorised, the Head Teacher may refer the matter to the Local Authority requesting that a Penalty Notice be issued.

All schools in the Berwick Partnership have agreed that if an unauthorised leave of absence is taken during term time and the pupil's attendance in the 12 month period leading up to the leave of absence is less than 93% (the equivalent of over 2 1/2 weeks of school); an application for a penalty notice will be made.

A Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full by the end of the 28 day period the Local Authority may prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies. Where there is more than one child, each parent may be issued with a Penalty Notice in respect of each child.

Children who attend school every day:

- Have the best chance of achieving well
- Are more settled
- Develop good work habits for the future
- Are better prepared for learning often enjoy school more.

Children who often miss school or are late:

- Miss important learning
- Can feel left out
- Develop poor work habits
- Suffer from low self esteem
- Are often unsettled
- Can find it hard to catch up
- Find it hard to be prepared for learning.
- Miss key concepts, special events, trips and visits.

Tweed Learning Federation
Record of Pupil Lateness

Date	Pupil Name	Class	Reason for lateness	Notes

Appendix 6.

Tweed Learning Federation
Attendance and Punctuality

Dear **PARENT NAME**

At our school we consider good attendance and punctuality a major influence on our pupils learning. In accordance with our school policy we monitor these very carefully.

It has come to our attention that over the last term **CHILDS NAME** has arrived at school late **XX** times. Potentially, late absences are marked in registers as unauthorised absences,

If persistent lateness continues we will arrange a meeting with you at school to discuss the issue further before referring the case to Northumberland County Council's Education Welfare Officer.

Our school doors open at **XX** am and we aim to register pupils shortly after this time. Please contact us if you are finding it difficult to get your child to school on time and require some extra support in this area.

Yours sincerely

Gary Hilton
(Headteacher)

Appendix 7

PENALTY NOTICES FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE TAKEN IN TERM TIME

