

Attendance Policy & Guidance

1. PRINCIPLES

Tring School acknowledges that regular attendance is a major factor in ensuring all students take full advantage of the learning experiences made available to them and thus achieve their full academic potential.

As a School we want the whole school community; governors, staff, parents and students to be committed to high standards of attendance and punctuality.

Tring School acknowledges the need to ensure that accurate and up-to-date attendance statistics are kept. The responsibility for good attendance is shared between the school, parents and students. Each of these groups is required to understand the expectations which the policy makes of them. Our strategic objective is to aim for an overall rate of 95% across the school.

2. AIMS

With regard to attendance Tring School aims to:

- 1) To provide a safe learning environment
- 2) To continually look to find ways to improve the overall percentage of students at school.
- 3) To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school including students, parents, teachers and governors.
- 4) To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
- 5) To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
- 6) To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data.
- 7) To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- 8) To implement a system of rewards and sanctions for attendance.
- 9) To promote effective partnerships with the Education Social Work Service and with other services and agencies.
- 10) To recognise the needs of the individual student when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

3. PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Parents are expected to ensure that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed, equipped and in a fit condition to learn
- 2) Parents of registered students have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 to ensure that children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular and full time basis
- 3) Parents are responsible for informing the school of the reason for any absence (by letter, phone call, text or personal visit), on each day of absence. On returning to school, a note/letter must accompany the student and given to their form tutor
- 4) Parents can expect the school to keep them fully informed of their child's progress
- 5) Parents should avoid, if at all possible, making medical/dental appointments for pupils during school hours.

Telephone Numbers

There are often times when we need to contact parents about a number of things, including absence, so we need to have your contact numbers at all times. Please help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up to date number – if we don't then something important may be missed.

4. STUDENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) All students are expected to attend school and all of their lessons
- 2) All students are expected to be punctual to school and to all lessons
- 3) Students should remember to hand in notes to their Form Tutors giving reasons for absence on the first day after absence
- 4) Students are expected to be ready to learn

5. SCHOOL RESPONSIBILITIES

- 1) Ensure a legal register is taken at designated times during the school day (a.m. & p.m.)
- 2) Keep accurate records relating to student attendance and monitor data closely to ensure appropriate communications and intervention work is implemented where necessary
- 3) Provide students with a safe and stimulating educational environment
- 4) Communicate with parents regarding attendance issues on a whole school level and on an individual basis
- 5) Work in close partnership with the school's Attendance Improvement Officer
- 6) Recognise and reward excellent attendance rates of students

6. MONITORING ATTENDANCE

Responsibility for day to day monitoring of attendance falls to tutors, subject teachers and the Student Support Administrator. Staff who are engaged in the position of form tutor (permanently or temporarily), should ensure that registers are accurately completed as they are **a legal document and are used for health and safety purposes**. Key Stage Co-ordinators and Heads of Year will have an overview of attendance within their Year Group, and will liaise closely over attendance issues with the Assistant Headteacher responsible for Student Support Services. Key Stage Co-ordinators, Heads of Year and Student Support Managers will work closely with the AIO and Student Support Administrator – meeting as prescribed by the AIO, to monitor the attendance of all pupils in Years 7 – 11.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for the Attendance Policy and for liaising with the Governing Body, to whom a report on attendance will be made termly. The general responsibility for daily implementation of the policy lies with the Assistant Head teacher responsible for Student Support Services, together with Key Stage Co-ordinators, Heads of Year and Student Support Managers, will contact parents and co-ordinate contact with outside agencies.

GUIDANCE ON ATTENDANCE

1. UNDERSTANDING TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a legitimate reason like:

- 1) Sickness
- 2) Days of religious observance
- 3) Exceptional family circumstances – bereavement

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to the Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. The Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher Student Support Services, will make the final decision regarding the classification of an absence. Unauthorised absences include:

- 1) parents/carers keeping students off school unnecessarily
- 2) truancy before or during the school day
- 3) absences which have never been properly explained
- 4) children who arrive at school too late to get a mark (after 9.30)
- 5) shopping
- 6) looking after other children
- 7) birthdays
- 8) day trips and holidays (unless deemed an exceptional circumstance by the Headteacher) in term time.
- 9) a pet going to the vet/death of a pet

Whilst any student may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the student. If a student is reluctant to attend, it is never better to

cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually make things worse.

2. PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when their attendance rate falls below 80% at any time of the school year, **for whatever reason**. Absenteeism of this level will considerably damage any child's educational prospects and we will need parent's fullest support and cooperation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk or moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully by our Student Support Administrator and Key Stage Co-ordinators. Parents will need to come into school and meet with the Key Stage Co-ordinator/Student Support manager (and possibly the A.I.O (Attendance Improvement Officer) on a regular basis to discuss their child's attendance and the progress being made.

3. ATTENDANCE IMPROVEMENT OFFICER (AIO)

As a school, we expect parents to contact school at an early stage if their child is experiencing difficulty in attending school. Only then, can staff help to resolve any problems within school. A united approach to this type of problem is extremely beneficial and is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Attendance Improvement Officer from the Local Authority. Tring School works in partnership with the allocated AIO to improve attendance for individual students and the whole school. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Alternatively, parents or students may wish to contact the AIO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

4. FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

If a student has at least 21 sessions (1 session = a half day) unauthorised absence in the previous and/or current term, including holidays where permission has been denied, the Headteacher or Assistant Headteacher i/c Student Support Services, can apply for a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued by the LA. A fine of £50 is issued if paid within 28 days or £100 if paid within 42 days. Parents can discharge potential liability for conviction by paying the penalty. Failure to pay the fine may result in prosecution for the offence. Should the fine not be paid in full within 42 days, the Local Authority may prosecute the parents for their child's irregular attendance.

5. HOLIDAYS DURING TERM TIME

The school's Governors took the decision at the start of the 2007 academic year to not accept holidays as a legitimate reason for students to miss school, all parents were written

to at the time. There is no automatic entitlement in law, for students to take time off school to go on holiday.

Taking holidays in term time will affect a student's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to work with us, by not to take students away in school time. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Fixed Penalty Notice.

6. TRUANCY

Truancy is recorded as an unauthorised absence. A number of systems are put in place to inform students that this behaviour is unacceptable. A record will be made in the student's school file.

The school follows the following procedures for following up truancy:

- 1) The Student Support Administrator or Manager will phone a parent to inform of the truancy and the student will spend the next school day in the Internal Exclusion Room
- 2) The local Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) is informed of the truancy
- 3) The student will be placed on an Attendance Report and will make up the work they have missed. Support will be offered to the student who has truanted from lessons if necessary
- 4) The PCSO and AIO will work with the school on serious cases of repeated truancy

7. REGISTRATION

Registers will be marked by tutors at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session, ie. at 8.40am and 2.15pm respectively. Registers will be marked using optical mark reader (OMR) sheets. Registers **should not** be returned to reception until the end of the registration period.

Registers will "close" at 9.00am and 2.20pm respectively. If a pupil fails to arrive before the registers "close" he/she will be marked "absent". Students who arrive after the registers close should report to the school office and sign the school Late Book. (On "assembly days", tutors should take their registers with them to assembly and close them at the conclusion of the assembly).

All class teachers should check attendance at the start of each lesson and consult with the appropriate tutor where an absence gives cause for concern. Class teachers, too, should insist on punctuality. Persistent or wilful lateness should usually result in sanctions being applied.

Once a week tutors will complete an optical mark reader (OMR) absence report form and will classify absences according to the codes provided.

8. LATENESS

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If a student misses the start of the day they can miss work and may miss vital information delivered by their Form Tutor. Students arriving late to

lessons also disrupt lessons and learning. This can be embarrassing for the student and can also encourage further absence. There is also an administrative burden on the school.

9. MANAGING LATENESS

The school day starts at 8.35am and we expect students to be in their Tutor Group at that time to register at 8.40.

Registers are marked between 8.40 – 8.42am and students will receive a late mark if they are not in by that time.

At 9.30am the registers are closed. In accordance with regulations, if a student arrives after that time they will receive a mark that shows them to be on- site, but this will **not** count as a present mark and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence.

Sanctions:

The school will use a range of sanctions to change the behaviour patterns of those students who are regularly late to school.

10. LEAVING AND RETURNING TO SCHOOL DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

If a student needs to leave the school during the school day the following procedures must be adhered to:

- 1) Student's will require a note from a parent or an official appointment card (medical) ...and this
- 2) must be shown to the Form Tutor at morning registration and a Permission to Leave School Slip must be completed and signed by the form tutor , and subsequently to the relevant subject teacher to leave their lesson, and the Front Office to sign out (**a health and safety must**)

On returning to school the student must:

- 1) sign in at the Front Office
- 2) the Front Office staff will provide this information in the event of a fire drill

11. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING ATTENDANCE

- 1) Tring School will offer an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed. The school's ethos must demonstrate that students feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken.
- 2) A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs.
- 3) Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/practice.
- 4) Good attendance certificates will be presented at the end of each school term in **Year Assemblies**.
- 5) Students whose attendance is a cause of concern will be set targets for improvement. The form tutor will monitor and review these targets.
- 6) Parents will be reminded regularly (via Newsletters, information booklets, parents' evenings, etc) of the importance of good attendance.

- 7) Students who are absent for any extended period of time will (when appropriate) have work sent home to them and will be re-integrated back into school upon their return.
- 8) The school will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies (eg. Education Welfare Service, **Education Support Team for Medical Absence**, Educational Psychological Service, **Children, Schools and Families**) when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- 9) Visits will be made to feeder primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible secondary transfer. Discussions with primary school teachers will seek to identify those pupils who may require extra support during this process.
- 10) Attendance checks will be made regularly to ensure that students who register attend lessons.

12. REWARDS FOR STUDENTS

- 1) Students with high attendance (100%) will be celebrated and published on the school newsletter
- 2) Their success will also be celebrated in assemblies, on our website and on the House boards in the Dining Hall
- 3) A Hertfordshire CSF certificate will be awarded at the end of the Summer Term
- 4) Students will receive prizes termly in assemblies
- 5) Tutor Group league tables will reward the top group in each year group termly

**Tring School
Governing Body
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Reviewed Annually by Students & Families Committee**