

# TITUS SALT SCHOOL



## Policy 03-002

### Attendance and Punctuality



*At Titus Salt School, good attendance and punctuality is considered a high priority for all pupils. Our staff work with pupils, parents/carers and outside agencies to encourage and support full attendance.*

### 1.0 Why is good attendance and punctuality important?

There is a strong link between attendance and achievement. Research from the DfE has shown that pupils with above 95% attendance are significantly more likely to obtain five or more GCSEs including English and Mathematics, or the equivalent, at the end of Year 11. Employers are also keen to know if school leavers are reliable and punctual attenders. Regular attendance helps pupils' learning and develops good work habits. It also helps build stable relationships with staff and fellow pupils.

### 2.0 SIMS

Attendance and punctuality are monitored via the SIMS electronic registration system. Legal registers are taken during form time (08:50-09:05) and at the start of the final lesson after lunch (14:00). These registers are **legally binding** documents under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations (1995). Registers are also taken at the beginning of each lesson throughout the day. This provides an accurate picture of attendance and punctuality. The collected data is used in a variety of ways:

- To provide whole school attendance figures for the Department of Children's Services and Ofsted/DfE data
- To provide year group and class data which can be used to reward and acknowledge good attendance and punctuality
- To provide individual records which help us identify and reward good attendance and punctuality or intervene to improve low attendance and poor punctuality
- To inform of any truancy from school or lessons
- To show any patterns of poor attendance or lateness so that action is taken to address these issues
- To allow for detailed analysis of attendance and punctuality by groups of pupils. This analysis includes but is not exclusive to gender, disadvantaged, SEN, ethnicity.

### 3.0 Roles and responsibilities

**All staff** have a part to play in monitoring and promoting attendance and punctuality. The pastoral teams, along with administrative staff, take a significant role in monitoring and supporting attendance and punctuality.

The Attendance Manager and Attendance Officer supervise attendance in all year groups, line managed by the identified member of the school Senior Leadership



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Team. The Attendance Officer works alongside Year Leaders and Assistant Year Leaders to identify target groups of pupils whose attendance needs monitoring. They organise attendance rewards and run daily detentions for pupils who are late to school, late to lessons and who truant.

Form Tutors generally decide whether an absence is authorised for a pupil whose attendance is over 96%, except where they wish for further evidence from the Attendance Team. Notes from parents/carers are required for all absences.

All pupils whose attendance falls below 96% are monitored to identify patterns in attendance and to allow for individual casework. Persistent absentees, those pupils whose attendance is below 90% , are monitored on a daily basis.

The Attendance Manager meets weekly with the Assistant Year Leaders for each year group (Years 7-13) and provides reports to support these meetings, identifying pupils' attendance percentages and their most recent attendance marks. During these meetings the Attendance Manager/Assistant Year Leaders discuss each pupil who has an attendance percentage lower than the school target of 96%. There are a range of interventions which may be utilised, such as:

- sending an attendance concern letter to parents/carers
- meeting with a pupil to set an attendance action plan
- a home visit by the Attendance Manager
- meeting with parents/carers in school
- referral to the Education Social Worker Service (ESW) for more concerning attendance issues.

Records of interventions are accessible to all pastoral staff and records of home visits or meetings are linked to pupil records on SIMS. Letters of concern for attendance are generated manually through the SIMS system. There are three levels of letter:

- initial concern (letter 1)
- request for medical evidence in order to authorise future absence (letter 2)
- warning parents/carers of referral to the ESW service who will co-ordinate legal action when deemed appropriate (letter 3).

Form Tutors receive a full register report of their form members' attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis. Form Tutors are required to give a reason for absence, record any absence notes they have received and return the amended copies to the Attendance Officer who then amends pupil records in SIMS.

Subject Leaders also play a role in identifying and addressing records of poor attendance and punctuality in their subjects. Post-16 attendance and punctuality is monitored rigorously by Form Tutors and the Post-16 Leadership Team. Persistent absence can lead to the loss of place in post-16.

Staff are required to take their register within the first 15 minutes of a lesson so attendance data can be checked before our school communication system contacts parents/carers.



### **Registration procedures**

Where registers have not been taken the Attendance Officer checks the missing register report and sends an automated message to staff reminding them to take their register. Where staff cannot access SIMS, they are required to fill in a paper register manually and send it to Pupil Services; the member of staff must only use this method when there is no access to SIMS. Class registers **must always** be taken, as this data is used to inform parents/carers and is subject to the Data Protection Act (1998). This act is for the regulation of the processing of information relating to individuals, including the obtaining, holding, use or disclosure of such information (HMSO, 1998).

The Attendance Manager makes contact with parents/carers, conducts home visits and takes referrals from Year Teams and the Attendance Officer to undertake individual casework for pupils whose attendance is causing concern. The Attendance Manager also works alongside the Education Social Worker (ESW) to organise attendance monitoring initiatives.

#### **4.0 Absence**

The school has a dedicated attendance telephone line. Parents/carers are required to give reasons for absence on the first day of absence. An automated communication system operates after closure of registers in the morning each day for any pupil absent without an explanation. This system contacts parents/carers to inform or find out why a pupil is absent.

The decision on whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised rests with school, not parents/carers. Authorised reasons for absence include illness, medical/ dental appointments, study leave, educational visits, work experience, religious observance, approved sporting activity, attending an interview, being educated off-site and other exceptional circumstances. An absence is unauthorised if no reason for absence has been provided, if a pupil has truanted, if an unsatisfactory reason for absence has been provided or if a request for absence has not been approved.

"Absence can only be authorised by a member of school staff acting on behalf of the Headteacher and not by parents/carers. This includes absence for which a note has been provided." (Every School Day Counts, Bradford Education (p12)).

#### **5.0 Holidays in Term Time**

The school does not authorise holidays in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances; authorisation is at the discretion of the Headteacher. Parents/carers must apply in writing to the school and will be advised by letter of the decision. Where a holiday is taken without permission the school retains the right to refer this to the local authority for a penalty notice to be issued. Penalty notices are issued per parent, per child. For example; for two parents/carers with two children a total of four penalty notices would be issued.



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Each notice requires payment of £60, if paid within 21 days. If not paid within 21 days the payment doubles to £120. There is then a further seven days to pay. If the notice remains unpaid the local authority will commence prosecution proceedings under Sections 46-53 of the Education Act 2002 (previously - Section 444 (1) of the Education Act 1996).

### 6.0 Lunchtime

Pupils in Years 7-10 stay on site during the lunch period unless parents/carers have informed school that they want their child to go home for lunch. A lunch pass is issued to pupils who have permission to go home. Pupils in Year 11 may go off-site at the discretion of their Year Leader or Assistant Year Leader.

### 7.0 Truancy

Truancy is identified in a number of ways. SIMS registers absence from individual sessions and lessons. Absence from school may be without the knowledge of parents/carers or false information may have been provided on the attendance line. Parental condoned absence is also classed as truancy. When truancy is identified, the pupil is counselled and is subject to sanctions identified in the whole school behaviour policy. Parents are always contacted when truancy is identified.

### 8.0 Rewards

Attendance prize draws are run for pupils with over 96% attendance in any half term. In addition, rewards such as trips and gift vouchers are available. Form groups are encouraged by inter-class competition to achieve the highest/most improved attendance in their year group. Attendance displays are updated weekly with the best forms for attendance in each year group.

### 9.0 Auditing Attendance and Punctuality

The school carries out an annual audit of all areas of organisation that relate to attendance and punctuality. This audit monitors the effectiveness of the school's organisation as it relates to:

- leadership and management
- everyday policies; rewards, sanctions and the promotion of high attendance and good punctuality
- dealing with consistently poor attendance and punctuality
- pupil support systems
- curriculum
- behaviour
- links with partners and other agencies.

The audit identifies areas of success and improvement so that these can be publicised and recognised by everyone. Analysis of the audit leads to a post-audit action plan that addresses areas for further development and feeds into the School Improvement Plan.



## 10.0 Related Policies and Documentation

- 03-003 Behaviour Policy
- The Education Act 2002.

## 11.0 Policy and Review

This policy has been developed in line with DfE Guidance ([www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence](http://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence)) and advice from the Department of Children's Services. It will be reviewed regularly following the annual audit and the school's behaviour and attendance monitoring programme. The effectiveness of the policy is monitored by members of the Senior Leadership Team who take responsibility for co-ordinating its implementation. A termly analysis of attendance, with specific reference to disadvantaged pupils, is monitored by the school's Behaviour and Welfare Committee.