Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedure

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Approval level: Governors
Tier:
Staff responsible for review: Senior Leader with Responsibility for Attendance
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1.0 Rationale

Students who have higher levels of attendance are far more likely to be successful both during their time at school and in the future. We want all students to unlock their unique potential and understand that high levels of attendance and good punctuality are key to this.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that all students attend school regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

1.1 Impact of attendance

As a parent/carer you want the best for your child. Having a good education is an important factor in opening up more opportunities in adult life. The impact of good attendance cannot be understated.
- Poor examination results limit young people's options and poor attendance suggests to colleges and employers that these students are unreliable.
- Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary academy, secondary academy, and higher education, employment or training.

There is a clearly documented link between high attendance and high achievement.
- Of students who miss less than 5% of school, 73% achieve 5 good passes including English and maths
- Of students who miss between 10% and 20% of school, only 35% manage to achieve 5 good passes including English and maths.
- Of students who miss more than 50% of school, only 3% manage to achieve 5 good passes including English and maths.

This is true at Todmorden High School where attendance had the following impact on the average grade in maths and average progress last year. The pattern in English grades was similar.

Attendance	Average maths grade	Progress across all GCSEs and KS4 courses
96+%	5	Approximately half a grade higher across every GCSE compared to national average progress.
91-95%	4	Average progress attainment in every GCSE subject.
75-90%	3	Approximately a third of a grade lower across every GCSE compared to national average progress.
Below 75%	2	Over 1.5 grades lower across every GCSE compared to national average progress.

2.0 Aims

We want to support attendance through our ARCH values;

- Support ambition for student by having a minimum attendance target for all students of 95%, this is to maximise their attainment at GCSE.
- Build strong relationships with students and their families based on mutual respect.
- Show care and work in partnership with students and their families to provide additional support for these students to improve their attendance and unlock their unique potential.
- Having open and honest conversations with students and their families where attendance needs to improve.

We understand that there are many reasons why students don't attend school regularly enough and the reasons for this are both wide and complex. We will work with all families to support an improvement in attendance.

3.0 Legislation and guidance

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

This policy meets the requirements of the working together to improve school attendance (2024) from the Department for Education (DfE) and refers to statutory guidance on school attendance and parental responsibility. This policy draws on information from the following legislation which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance.

- The most recent version of Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, Dec 2023)
- The most recent version of Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE-2023)
- Statutory guidance for academies and colleges (DfE Sept 2023)
- Working together to improve school attendance (DfE)
- The Education (school day and school year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools
- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

4.0 Roles and responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities listed below are not exhaustive, but indicate that good attendance requires the efforts from all stakeholders throughout the school. These roles and responsibilities outline the monitoring, analysis and strategies the school is using to promote attendance.

4.1 Students
Students are expected to:
- Attend school every day on time.
- Attend every lesson of every day on time.
- Not leave school site without permission.
- Follow the correct procedures regarding absence.

We ask students to also:
- Show care for their peers by encouraging good attendance and punctuality.
- Monitor their attendance and punctuality.
- Show resilience. Only take days off when they are genuinely too ill to attend school.
- Inform a trusted adult in school if there are additional reasons / factors that are having an impact on their attendance.

4.2 Parents / carers
Parents / carers are expected to:
- Ensure their child attends regularly. This means every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill.
- Report any absence by calling the absence line before 8.30am on 01706 813558 stating the name, form and reason for absence.
- Ensure, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Avoid taking holidays in term-time.

We ask parents / carers to also:
- Praise and reward good attendance.
- Establish good attendance habits by acting as role models.
- Establish good routines at home to support high levels of attendance. This includes bedtime and morning routines to ensure students are getting enough sleep.
- Be aware of the timings of the school day and your child's timetable to avoid issues e.g. ensuring PE kit is brought in on the correct day.
- Talk regularly with your child about school and where necessary raise concerns with your child's learning manager.
- Engage in any additional support that is recommended to help improve the attendance of your child.

4.3 Class teachers
Class teachers will:
- Ensure that registers are taken in the first 10 minutes of a lesson.
- Record lateness to lesson and the number of minutes late.

- Alert the attendance team if there is a suspicious absence.
- Build positive relationships with students they teach to support positive attendance and punctuality.
- Greet students at the doors of their classrooms and follow school routines to promote a safe and engaging learning environment.

4.4 Form tutors

Form tutors will:

- Ensure that morning registers are taken in the first 10 minutes of focus time.
- Record lateness to focus time and the number of minutes late.
- Celebrate good attendance within their form groups.
- Offer supportive challenge regarding attendance and punctuality to students in their forms.
- Monitor attendance of students in their form and support students to track their own attendance and punctuality and take personal responsibility.
- Ensure that students are well equipped and ready to be successful for the rest of the school day.
- Maintain open channels of communication between all stakeholders to support students.
- Work closely with the pastoral team.
- Focus on students with attendance in excess of 94%, providing initial support when a decrease in attendance is noticed.

4.4 Learning managers

Learning managers will:

- Monitor the attendance of the year group as a whole and key cohorts within including the close watch cohort (CWC), disadvantaged students and male students. This includes using attendance data to identify trends and patterns.
- Promote good attendance within the year group. This will include, but is not limited to:
  - o Promotion in assemblies and focus time.
  - o Use of rewards.
  - o Working closely with parents / carers to build positive relationships.
- Provide additional attendance support where student attendance is between 91% and 94%.
- Support the attendance officer and safeguarding officer by completing home visits when appropriate.
- Work with the attendance officer and safeguarding officer to ensure support is being provided to the right students.
- Raise any safeguarding concerns linked to attendance.

4.5 Attendance administrator

Attendance administrators will:

- Record any planned absences on the MIS (Arbor)

- Follow up any unauthorised absence with a first day call (making contact with home when there is an absence).
- Contact families on the third day of an absence.
- Maintain the admission register by ensuring registers are completed accurately by following up any anomalies. To ensure all students are safe and accounted for.
- Communicate with parents when a student needs to leave site, either planned or unplanned.
- Register any students that arrive to school following focus time in the morning.

4.5 Attendance officer

The attendance officer at Todmorden High School is Niamh Clark-Hutchinson. The attendance office will:

- Monitor and analyse attendance patterns and trends to provide regular reports to the senior leadership team and raise any concerns about attendance.
- Provide regular, planned updates to parents / carers about student attendance to raise the profile of attendance.
- Implement additional attendance support where student attendance drops below 94% on a tiered system.
    - When student attendance drops below 94%, inform the family and offer support.
    - When student attendance drops below 92% inform the students family to offer additional support.
- Set sanctions for poor punctuality and provide rewards for good attendance and punctuality.
- Ensure attendance procedures are being followed by all staff in school by quality assuring the attendance register.
- Work with the safeguarding lead to discuss additional support based on specific need for persistently and severely absent students on a case-by-case basis.
- Monitor any part-time timetables and ensure these are regularly reviewed.
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.
- Work with the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and hold termly targeting support meetings.
- Share information with the EWO on a fortnightly basis to identify students reaching attendance thresholds outlined in DfE guidance.
- Work with the local authority to follow and implement any legal interventions that may be necessary to improve attendance this includes:
    - Attendance contracts
    - Education supervision orders
    - Attendance prosecution
    - Parenting orders
    - Penalty notices
- Devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data, for example a year group or other specific cohort with higher- than-average absence than the rest of the school population.
- Evaluate the impact of any strategy being implemented.

4.6 Safeguarding officer and DSL

The safeguarding officer will:

- Ensure safeguarding procedures are followed to maximise student attendance.
- Work with the attendance lead to discuss additional support based on specific need for persistently and severely absent students on a case-by-case basis.
- Work with the attendance officer and wider pastoral team to support students and their families in improving attendance. This might include:
  - o Identification of additional need.
  - o Referrals to external agencies and partnership work.
  - o Student and parental meetings.
  - o Home visits.

4.7 Senior leadership team

The senior leader in charge of attendance at Todmorden High School is Emily Rawlinson. The senior leadership team will:

- Provide a clear vision for attendance improvement.
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends. This should include analysis of pupils and cohorts and identifying patterns in uses of certain codes, days of poor attendance and where appropriate, subjects which have low lesson attendance.
- Benchmark their attendance data (at whole school, year group and cohort level) against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement.
- Ensure the strategies being implemented are effective in supporting students and families to improve attendance.
- Support the attendance officer when necessary.

4.8 The headteacher

The headteacher will:

- Oversee the implementation of this policy and promote the importance of attendance and punctuality across the school.
- Challenge and support all staff, students and parents to maximise attendance.
- Monitor the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issue fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

4.9 The governing body

The governing body will:

- Recognise the importance of school attendance and promote it across the school's ethos and policies.
- Ensure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly review attendance data, discuss, and challenge trends, and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on the individual pupils or cohorts who need it most.
- Ensure school staff receive adequate training on attendance.
- Provide a link governor that focusses on attendance.

4.10 The local authority

The local authority will:

- Rigorously track local attendance data to devise a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):
  - Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
  - Targeting Support Meetings: hold regular conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
  - Multi-disciplinary support for families: provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.
  - Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.
- Share the Local Code of Conduct for issuing fixed penalty notices and issue these fixed penalty notices where necessary.

5.0 Recording Attendance

5.1 Attendance Register

We will keep an attendance register in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. This information will be retained for a period of at least 6 years in line with national guidance.

Student attendance will be taken at the beginning of the school day, during focus time and once during the afternoon session, the start of period 3. Marks will be recorded as per the DfE attendance codes.

5.1 Unplanned absence

If your child is going to be absent from school, then please call the absence line before 8.30am on 01706 813558 stating the name, form and reason for absence. This needs to be done every day of an unplanned absence.

Absence due to illness, physical or mental, will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt the school may ask for additional evidence to support this such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate

form of evidence. This will not be requested unnecessarily. If this documentation is not provided, the absence may be recorded as unauthorised.

5.2 Planned absence

If a leave of absence is required during term-time this should be requested (in writing) as soon as it is anticipated, and where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. Evidence will be required to support any leave of absence.

Wherever possible, we ask that medical and dental appointments be made out of school time. We do appreciate that there are exceptions so if your child does need to come out of school for an appointment, we respectfully ask that you provide a copy of their appointment card or letter for our records.

5.3 Following up and unexplained absence

When a child is absent and a reason has not been provided, we have a safeguarding duty of care to investigate the absence.

On the first day of absence the school will be in contact with parents / carers to ascertain the reason for the absence. It the school cannot make contact with the child's parent / carer then the school may:

- Contact the parent / carer at work.
- Phone other contacts available.
- Make a home visit.
- Update the attendance register with the correct attendance code.
- Contact the police / additional services if necessary.

5.4 Reporting attendance to parents / carers

We will report attendance data to parents / carers in the following ways:

- Via the Class Charts app.
- Within meetings with parents / carers when necessary.
- Attendance and punctuality data will be reported half-termly or when it becomes a concern.
- Within data check reports provided twice a year.

If you would like a copy of your child's attendance certificate, please contact your child's learning manager.

6.0 Punctuality

School will monitor punctuality and address any concerns or patterns that are identified. When students are late to a lesson at THS they miss the silent retrieval activity, this is a key part of the lesson designed to support the learning of key content.

It is worth noting that punctuality is tightly linked to attendance, if a student is 10 minutes late twice in a day, this equates to the following:

20 minutes per day, 100 minutes per week, 600 minutes or 10 lessons or 2 days per half-term. In reality this would limit their attendance to 93%, before any absences from school are accounted for.

6.1 The U code - 'late after registers closed'

Students are expected to be on school site by 8:35am. The morning session mark is taken during focus time. The afternoon session is taken during the P3 register.
If a student is more than 30 minutes late i.e. they arrive on site after 9:05 or after 12:50 then they will be awarded a U code.

The U code affects the overall attendance of a student and they do not get a present mark for that session. It is classified as unauthorised absence.

6.2 The L code – 'late to lesson'

If a student is late to lesson or focus time they will receive a 'L' mark and the teacher will record the number of minutes the student is late.

Where a student is late to 2 or more lessons in a day, they will be sanctioned with an afterschool detention.

7.0 Strategies for promoting attendance

Everyone who contributes to a child's education has a responsibility for the promotion of the benefits of good attendance and the removal of any barriers to ensure good attendance.

The school will work closely with all students and their families where attendance is below our attendance target.

Additional support will be provided to students who are persistently absent (PA) where their attendance is below 90% (an absence rate of at least one day per fortnight) and severely absent (SA) where their attendance is below 50%.

The school will follow the DfE guidance as a basis for the support.

Expect Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

Monitor Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

Listen and understand When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

Facilitate support Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

Formalise support Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract or education supervision order.

Enforce Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

9.0 Leave of absence requests

The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a pupil during term time if it is considered there are specific circumstances. This must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Each application will then be considered individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Common valid reasons for authorised absence include:
- Illness / medical or dental appointments.
- Religious observance.

If a leave of absence is required during term-time this should be requested (in writing) as soon as it is anticipated, and where possible, at least 4 weeks before the absence. Evidence will be required to support any leave of absence.

10.0 Attendance Prosecution

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly at a school at which they are registered, or at a place where alternative provision is provided for them, their parents may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the local authority.

The school and /or the local authority will work with the student and their family to prevent this from happening. This could be in the form of; warning letters, support meetings, attendance contracts, penalty notices and education supervision orders (ESOs).

Prosecution in the Magistrate's Court is the last resort where all other voluntary and formal support or legal intervention has failed or where support has been deemed inappropriate in the circumstances of the individual case. Where it is decided to pursue prosecution, only local authorities can prosecute parents and they must fund all associated costs, including in the preparation of court documentation.

In addition, you risk losing your child's place at the school if they are absent for 20 consecutive days or more.

10.1 Penalty Notices (fines)

Penalty notices are issued to parents as an alternative to prosecution where they have failed to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered. This includes an unauthorised holiday during term time.

Unauthorised holidays during term time will receive the following penalties:
- The 1st instance of a holiday will incur a fine of £160 per student (£80 if paid within 2 weeks)
- The 2nd instance of a holiday will incur a fine of £160 per student.
- A 3rd instance of a holiday will result in attendance prosecution.

This is within a 3-year period. Where a holiday is contested, it is up to the family to provide evidence that they were in the country.

The threshold for absences to generate a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion