



Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service

Attendance Policy

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Responsibility:	Greg Portman

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Introduction

The Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service will actively seek to encourage all students to achieve a full attendance record. We will celebrate, at regular intervals, individual students achieving full attendance and improved attendance and attendance information will be provided in the student's reports and on request with all absences, authorised and unauthorised, being reported to parents/carers.

Approaches to Attendance

Our learners are often those who have become acutely dis-engaged from learning and as such are often those who have very poor records of attendance. We have a commitment to actively pursue each pupil's attendance by a system of daily phone calls at close of register. If we have 3 consecutive non-attendances without contact from parent/carer, or without an adequate explanation, then we would follow the Local Authority's attendance tracking progress guidance.

Principles

Regular and punctual school attendance is of paramount importance in ensuring that all children have full access to the curriculum. Valuable learning time is lost when children are absent or late.

Children should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence by the parent.

Children are sometime reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between TMBSS, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never a good idea 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 may make things worse.

Every half-day absence has to be classified by TMBSS, NOT THE PARENTS, as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a reason such as genuine illness of the pupil or unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which TMBSS does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes:

- **Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily**
- **Truancy before or during the school day**
- **Absences which have never been properly explained**

Parents are expected to contact the Education Centre at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be sorted out in this way, the school may invite the parents to an Attendance Review Meeting in order to try and resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of improving the child's attendance have failed, the service may then refer the case to the Local Authority and Education Welfare Officers (EWO) who will engage with the process and a range of approaches can be used to resolve the attendance issues. If the attendance problems persist the EWO's can issue court proceedings to prosecute parents or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child.

Registration

The attendance register is taken by the Centre Administrator on a morning session and again in the afternoon. The morning registered is recorded at 9.15am and the afternoon sessions are recorded at 12.15pm.

On each occasion they record whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Late Arrivals

The registers will close 15 minutes after the AM and PM sessions start. If a student who walks or is brought in by a parent/carer arrives within the 15 minutes they will be registered as a late arrival by using the 'L' code. Once the Registers have closed after 15 minutes they will be registered at 'U' code.

Absences

In the event of a student absence the administrator will:

- Ascertain the reason
- If no contact has been made by the parent/carer at close of registration, a call will be made to the parent/carer to ascertain the reason for the absence.
- If the Centre is unable to make contact with the parent/carer by the end of the day, an absence letter is sent home (Appendix 2)
- If the administrator cannot make contact with the parent, and after 3 days of absence the Education Welfare Officer will be informed (excluding pupils on CPP or CIN – see procedure below)
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct code (Appendix 1) to use before entering it on to the Services management information system (which is used to download data to the School Census)
- Update SIMS with reasons for absence.
- If we are unable to make contact with a parent/carer after 3 days a safe and well home visit will take place but each student will be looked at on a case by case basis and it may be that we do a safe and well check before the 3 days.

Holidays in Term Time

To be consistent and effective in the application of 'The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006' amendments

Responsibilities for decisions on this rests with the Head Teacher in respect to authorisation.

- Requests for authorisation of Holidays in term time should be addressed to or immediately sent to the Central Administration team.

TMBSS work with the LA Education Welfare Service and support their position on DfE guidance of September 2013.

“As of 1 September 2013 there has been a change in the School Attendance Regulations. Where there used to be the option for headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday during the term time in ‘special circumstances’ of up to ten days in a year, this has been removed.

Headteachers are now only allowed to authorise any leave of absence when an application has been made in advance and it is felt to be for an exceptional circumstance; the annual family holiday would not be deemed an exceptional circumstance”.

There is no definition of **exceptional circumstances** - any application will be considered and they will be looked at individually on merit or in the case of an event that has to be booked, the request needs to be made prior to the booking. It is recognised that on occasions a child will significantly benefit from leave of absence at this time. These are factors that will be taken into account - but are not exhaustive:

- It is highly unlikely that the event will occur again in a child’s school life
- It is necessary for the child to be in attendance at the event
- The event cannot be organised outside of the school term
- The event is necessary to the health and wellbeing of the child
- Taking part in the event will be of greater value to the child than attending school
- The child will not be disadvantaged by not being in school for the period of the event
- If a pupil is on a shared placement or taught on an infill basis, the responsibility for a decision will sit with the Head Teacher of the **home school**. However, TMBSS will be happy to provide evidence to support the application or otherwise.
- For pupils who are attending TMBSS only: further support in this area is available from the Education Welfare Officer attached to the centre, or contact the Education Access Team office on 01743254397.
- Once a decision has been made the Centre Manager will be informed and they will need to ensure that the Education Welfare Officer attached to the centre is informed.

Targeted timetables

In consultation with the Local Authority, TMBSS will occasionally decide in consultation with a parent/carer/LA officer that a targeted timetable will operate for an agreed fixed term period. These arrangements are, for example, put in place following an exclusion to reintegrate a pupil back into an education centre. These timetables would only be negotiated through Support Programmes, Annual Reviews or Attendance Support Meetings with a LA officer in attendance or through re-integration meetings. On acceptance of these timetables a Reduced Timetable Proforma and Risk Assessment (Appendix 3) will be completed and signed by parents/carers. They must have an agreed date for the return to fulltime education with arrangements kept under review.

Pupils on Dual Registration

Pupils at TMBSS are often categorised as Dual Registration pupils so they are on roll in both schools, with TMBSS acting as the host school.

For the sessions they are scheduled to attend at TMBSS, AM and PM session attendance is recorded in the TMBSS system. If the pupil is scheduled to attend sessions at the main school, it will be recorded as a 'D' (see appendix 1).

TMBSS will inform the main school weekly, by emailing an attendance report, of the pupil's attendance within an Education Centre.

If a student is attending at another school, TMBSS staff will contact the school to confirm the attendance of the student on a daily basis.

Policy for Attendance - Aims

1. To improve the overall attendance of pupils at the TMBSS
2. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the Service including parents, pupils, teachers and members of the governing body
3. To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks
4. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and pupils
5. To monitor patterns of absence and take action to seek improvement if appropriate
6. To identify authorised and unauthorised absence and take appropriate action.
7. To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data
8. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and service
9. To promote effective partnerships with the Education Welfare Service and other services and agencies
10. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence

Children subject to a Child Protection Plan and Children in Need

Children who are subject to a Child Protection Plan (CPP) and those who are identified as Children in Need (CiN) are some of our most vulnerable children. For all children, but specifically for those as described above, absence from school can be the first indicator that all is not well. For these children the usual attendance monitoring will take place with the following additional measures:

- These children will be prioritised when undertaking first day contact with parents
- The TMBSS system for addressing non-attendance will start when the attendance of these children falls below 95% in any half term period and the social worker will be informed.
- If children are absent and no contact is received from the parent/carer as to the reasons why or if the school is concerned about the reasons given, they will inform the social worker.

Looked After Children

Children who are Looked After will follow the same procedures as children on a CPP or CIN plan.

On a weekly basis, the attendance marks for a Shropshire Looked After Child will be entered onto the ePEP system.

Children educated in hospital or home settings

Pupils accessing education in the Hospital settings at The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic, Gobowen, (RJAH) and The Princess Royal, Telford (PRH) receive a broad and balanced curriculum which is modified depending on their individual medical needs. Attendance is recorded on a daily basis and relayed electronically to the main TMBSS Office.

There is ongoing liaison with pupil's mainstream school if the child has a long term planned admission, a recurrent medical condition requiring long periods in hospital or a one off long term admission this liaison continues until they are discharged.

Children receiving medical home tuition are by necessity on a reduced timetable and receiving education in their own home. Attendance is registered though the medical register. Absences are often related to hospital appointments and ill health. Home tutor monitors attendance closely through contact with parents and schools.

Monitoring of Attendance

Centre Administrators send a weekly attendance report to the Senior Leadership Team which details the student's reasons for absence.

The Head of Service and Deputy Head of Service meet on a weekly basis to look at each Centres attendance reports and see if there any issues around a student's attendance. Individual student Issues are then addressed with the Link Senior Leader and Centre Manager.

The Head of Service and Deputy Head of Service meet the Education Welfare Officer on a weekly basis to discuss students who have attendance issues and arrange the next steps that need to be taken to address the issues.

Attendance targets are set, monitored and reviewed as part of the Service Development Plan.

Appendix 1

Attendance Codes

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Codes

/ = AM

\ = PM

L – Late Arrival

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Code B: Off-site educational activity

Pupils that are present at a supervised educational activity that is off-site and approved by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code F: Extended family holiday authorised by the school

Head teachers may in exceptional circumstances agree more than 10 school days leave of absence in a school year. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

Code H: Family holiday authorised by the school

Currently head teachers may in special¹ circumstances grant leave of absence of up to ten days for the purpose of family holidays during term time. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are special circumstances which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is ill. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the seriousness of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical certificates unnecessarily (particularly retrospective certificates), especially if the illness was not treated by a doctor at the time. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance. Can also use for a student attending a funeral.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only for year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to 5 non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.



**Tuition, Medical and Behaviour
Support Service**

Shropshire Council
TMBSS
Central Administration Office
Sundorne Education Centre
218 Sundorne Road
Shrewsbury
SY1 4RG
Tel: 01743 368190
Fax: 01743 368189

Our Ref:
Your Ref:
Date:

Dear parent/carers

.....(student name) has been absent from Centre and we have been unable to contact you for a reason for the absence. We have a legal requirement to enter a reason for each pupil absence.

Date of Absence:

Please complete the slip at the bottom of the letter and return to the Education Centre by with the reason/s for the absence.

Your help in this matter is greatly appreciated. Pupils' welfare is of paramount importance to us and we believe that regular attendance throughout the year is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Yours sincerely

Centre Manager
Tuition, Medical and Behaviour Support Service

Tel:

.....

Pupil Attendance Record

Name:..... **Education Centre:**

Date/s **Reason for absence:**

.....

Signed..... **Parent / Carer**

Appendix 3

TMBSS Education Centre

Personalised Learning Plan			
Name:	DOB:	Form:	Current % Attendance:
<p>Part timetables guidance: Legally children are required to be in receipt of an efficient full-time education. Whilst there is no clear definition of 'full time' it is expected that children will be provided with education throughout the normal school day - 2 sessions a day for 190 days a year. In using part time timetables the following must be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apart from medical conditions (where evidence from a medical practitioner supports that a full day attendance is not possible) part timetables should be implemented only in very limited circumstances • Such part time timetables should have clearly defined objectives • Be for a specific and limited period of time • Part time timetables should not, other than in very exceptional cases, be implemented without written parental agreement • Once tried as an alternative measure they should rarely be used again • Coding for such programmes should reflect the period the child is not in school – CODE C to be used. 			
<p>Reasons for considering part time attendance:</p>			
Please detail any further actions required			By Whom
Timetable agreed for the period from _____ to _____			Total hours in school per week
To be reviewed by			
On:			
Signed _____ Parent(s)/Carer(s)			
Signed _____ School Representative _____ Position			
Total hours in school must be completed. Code C must be used.			Headteacher's signature:

Please send a copy of this form to: Education Access Service, Shirehall, Abbey Foregate, Shrewsbury, SY2 6ND.