



"Be the Best You Can Be"

Attendance and Punctuality Policy and Procedures 2022

Member of staff responsible	Sian Mainwaring Colette Edwards
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Legal Framework

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 makes it an offence if a parent fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school at which they are registered, if that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty Notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under s444 Education Act 1996 or s36 Children Act 1989 to enforce attendance at school where appropriate.

Section 444A of the Education Act 1996 (as inserted by section 23 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003) empowers designated Local Authority (LA) officers, Head teachers (as well as deputy and assistant head teachers authorised by them) and the Police to issue Penalty Notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school. As a result, the Local Authority has responsibility for developing a local code of conduct that will govern how all of the partners named in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, will issue Penalty Notices.

School Priority

Tottenham Infant School seeks to promote the best possible attendance because it seeks to achieve the highest possible standards in all aspects of school life. We consider good and/or regular attendance to be 96% or better. There is a clear link between good attendance and good results, and teachers will celebrate excellent attendance just as they celebrate other positive aspects of school life. Please feel free to contact the schools Attendance Officer, Colette Edwards to discuss any issues concerning your child's attendance or punctuality.

The class registers are legal documents and great care must be taken to ensure their accuracy.

Attendance	Description	Approx. days lost per year	Approx. weeks lost per year
98-100%	Excellent	0-4	Less than 1
96-98%	Expected	5-9	1-2
95-96%	Average	10-13	2-3

90-95%	Cause for Concern	14-18	3-4
Below 90%	Persistent Absence	More than 19 Equivalent to 38 sessions	More than 4

Expectations

We expect the following from all pupils:

- That they attend school every day.
- That they will arrive on time and be appropriately prepared for the school day.

We expect the following from all parents:

- To ensure their child attends each day.
- To ensure they contact the school immediately (in confidence, if necessary) whenever their child is unable to attend school. Daily contact should be maintained unless there is a covering medical certificate stating that the child is unfit for school for a specified period.
- To ensure their child arrives on time, well prepared for the day having had enough sleep and had breakfast.

Parents can expect the following from the school:

- Daily efficient and accurate recording of attendance.
- Daily monitoring of lateness.
- Contact with parents when a child fails to attend school and no reason has been given.
- Contact with parents if the child is consistently late for school.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified.
- Steps will be taken to encourage good attendance.
- A quality education.
- Recognition in the form of attendance certificates prizes will be given to children with good and excellent attendance.

This policy aims to ensure that:

- Registers are properly maintained.
- Attendance and lateness are monitored carefully.
- Irregular attendances are checked.
- Unauthorised attendances are rare.

Why is good attendance important?

At our school, the staff and pupils all know how important good attendance is for children's wellbeing and progress. In recent years much research has been carried out on the effect that poor attendance can have on children's progress at school and how well they achieve in life. For example, 90% attendance might sound quite good but what it really means is:

- Your child is absent for lessons for the equivalent of one half day every week.
- In one year, 4 whole weeks of lessons are missed.
- If your child continues to attend for only 90% of the time, in 5 years, he, or she, will miss half of the school year.

Children who do not attend school regularly often have the following problems:

- They are not able to keep up with their work.
- Children who arrive after 8:50am miss important parts of the lesson and disrupt the learning of other children in the class.

This is why Tottenham Infant School is making good attendance a school priority. By improving our attendance rates, we will improve the standards that our children achieve and provide them with better chances in life.

How parents and carers can help:

- Work together with us.
- Send your child to school every day, on time, unless they are genuinely ill.
- Avoid taking your child out of school for holiday during term time.
- Make sure that all appointments are made outside of school hours whenever possible. If this is not possible please make appointments at the end or beginning of the school day.

What will happen if my child is often absent from school?

- The school monitors the attendance of all children.
- If your child begins to show poor patterns of attendance, we will contact you to address any concerns.
- If absence continues, you will be invited to discuss the reasons for your child's absence. The Education Welfare Officer may be invited to attend and will be informed.
- If necessary, a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service and the absences investigated further.

School procedures

Registration

- The morning session begins at 8.45am. Registers are to be sent electronically to the Office by 9am.

Lateness

- Children may enter the classroom at 8.45am and registration begins at 8.55am.
- Any child entering the school after 8.55am will be deemed as late.
- Registers will be monitored for lateness and parents/carers will be contacted if there is a concern.
- Arriving at school after **9.30am** is recorded as unauthorised absence on our records (U code) and will affect your child's attendance percentage. We monitor pupils who arrive late for school and work with parents and carers to improve punctuality.
- Children arriving late to school have to be brought to the school office by an adult and signed in.
- Staff will monitor the gate until 8.55 am. After that time children need to enter school via the School Office.
- Continued lateness will result in meetings with the Attendance Officer, a member of the Senior Leadership, who may seek assistance from the Local Authority.

Absence

When a child is absent from school, it is expected that parents will inform the school of the reason for that absence on the first day and each subsequent day of absence.

- Parents/cares should telephone or email on the first day of absence to explain the reason why your child is absent from school by using 020 8829 1110 or cedwards@tottenham.enfield.sch.uk
- If your child is absent for more than one day, please keep the school informed during your child's absence.
- If your child has a medical or dental appointment, please try to make them out of school hours or at the end or beginning of the school day whenever possible.
- The Attendance Officer will record the reasons for absences in the register.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

- Only the school can officially authorise an absence if it is for a good and legitimate reason e.g. illness, bereavement, and religious observance. Even if a note is provided or a call has been made to the school, an absence is unauthorised if there is no good and proper reason to explain it e.g. birthday celebrations, taking relatives to the airport and holidays during term time. School will ask for evidence to support family requests for absence. This can include flight information, medical certificates and appointment letters.
- If parents are in any doubt about what constitutes authorised or unauthorised absence they should contact the Attendance Officer.
- A pattern of unauthorised absence will be reported to the Education Welfare Service. Any pupil with lower attendance than expected may be required to provide medical evidence.
- Pupils with four or more consecutive days of absence due to illness will be required to provide medical evidence.

Understanding the different types of absence

Authorised absence

This is defined as any absence which is unavoidable and will be considered once a reason has been provided. Reasons that may be authorised include:

- Absences due to pupil's illness - Specific reasons for illnesses are recorded on the register once provided by parents/carers. We will make referrals to our school nurse when deemed appropriate.
- Medical or dental appointments - Routine appointments should be, where possible, made outside of school hours. School should be informed before 8:45am if appointments are going to make a pupil late for school. Pupils are expected to attend school before and after routine appointments and ensure that they sign in and out at Reception.
- Religious observance – Enfield Borough Council informs the School what days it can authorise for religious observance. Parent/carers should inform the school in advance.

Unauthorised absence

This is defined as absence which is avoidable and where the child would be able to attend school if the parent/carer had not deemed otherwise. Examples of types of absence that are not considered reasonable and which will not be authorised under any circumstances are:

- Going shopping with parents – even if this is to get new shoes or uniform.
- Celebrating Birthdays.
- Staying at home because other members of the family are unwell.
- Day trips and holidays in term time.
- Arriving at school too late to get a present mark without an acceptable reason.

Persistent Absence

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's education and we need parent's fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. We monitor all absence and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the persistent absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately.

Term time leave of absence

Absence for holidays is not authorised at Tottenham Infant School. However, in exceptional circumstances requests for absence need to be made and forms are available from the School Office and must be completed prior to absence. If a pupil is absent due to a period of unauthorised leave, the school will apply to the local authority to issue a Penalty Notice.

Regrettably each year we are informed by parents that relatives living overseas are unwell and they need to travel urgently, the school will always ask for original evidence that travel arrangements have been made at the last minute. Based on this evidence the school will consider whether any of the absence can be authorised. Such absences are not authorised without evidence, and may be subject to a Penalty Notice. From time to time the school has also become aware that although a pupil has been reported as unwell to the school they are in fact on holiday. Parents will be expected to produce all medical evidence where an absence directly precedes or follows a school holiday. The school will actively pursue a Penalty Notice fine in situations where they have not been correctly informed of the reason for absence.

Family holidays during term time:

- The Headteacher does not authorise absence for family holidays during the school term.
- Parents and carers who choose to take their child out of school for holidays should be aware that such absences will be recorded as 'unauthorised' on the child's record and penalty notices will be issued.

Early Years Expectations

As attendance for children under 5 years of age is not statutory, there is not the same recourse to legal sanctions. However, the early years are a critical time to establish the good habits and routines needed throughout life and to get the key messages about the importance of attendance and punctuality at nursery and school across to parents and carers.

Regular attendance has a positive impact on all aspects of a young child's learning and development. A regular routine supports the young child to feel settled and secure. Unsettled children have higher stress levels which, in turn, prevent them from being able to benefit fully from the learning opportunities available.

Families should know that good attendance and being punctual are expected when their child takes up a place. This includes expectations around holidays, which for school-aged children are not permissible in term time.

The role of the Stakeholders

Tottenham Infant School is a community school and actively uses the London Borough of Enfield Education Welfare Service.

The school is accountable to the local authority for the level of pupil attendance, and Education Welfare officers regularly inspect the school registers and receive information about the attendance of pupils. The Education Welfare Officer will phone, visit and meet parents/carers, where poor attendance is an issue.

Rewards for Good Attendance

To encourage good attendance, we have a variety of awards and recognitions. These include:

- Certificates for individual pupils achieving 100%.
- Certificates for pupils showing significant improvement.
- The 'Bee' weekly award for best class.
- Individual stickers for pupils achieving specific individual targets.
- Announcements in Assembly.
- Honour roll in newsletters.
- For exceptional attendance parties and prizes.

PATHWAY TO IMPROVEMENT – WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM WHO

Level of attendance	Professional involved	What you can expect
95-97%	Class Teacher	Congratulations on good attendance and encourage student to achieve excellent attendance.
92-94%	Attendance Officer	Monitor reasons for absence and discuss with parent/carer ways to improve.
90-91%	Attendance Officer/Senior Leadership Team	To formally inform parent/carer that attendance is a cause for concern. Senior staff to be advised.
Under 90%	Attendance Officer/Education Welfare Officer	Pupil deemed to be a Persistent Absentee. Meeting with the Education Welfare Service. A formal plan to improve attendance to be put in place. Parent/carer to be advised of legal sanctions if attendance does not improve.

