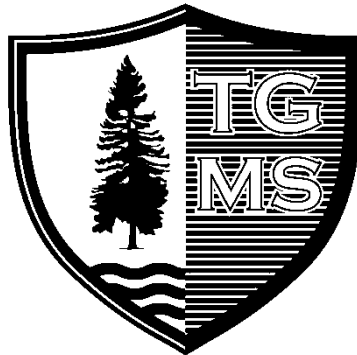




BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNCIL

Attendance Policy Tylers Green Middle School



This policy was adopted on: Summer 2023

The policy is to be reviewed by: Summer 2026

Statements of Principles

The Governors, Headteacher and staff are keen to ensure that all our children attend school regularly and punctually so that they receive the best education possible. We positively encourage excellent attendance. Research has shown clear links between school absences and academic achievement.

At Tylers Green Middle School we believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who can realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community. We regard regular attendance as 95-97%.

Pupil Attendance

98-100% = Excellent

95-97% = Broadly average

90-94% = Below average

Less than 90% = Cause for concern (persistent absentee)

We value all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties. We recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16. Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments), require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. This policy also takes into account The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Recording Attendance

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- unauthorised absence

Categorising Absence

Parents are asked to contact the school by 9.15 am by telephone (an answerphone is available) or email the school office email address on the morning of the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected return date. If there is no further communication either by phone or email on the second and subsequent days of absence, a follow-up phone call will be made by the school office. If we have not been notified of a child's absence we will contact the parents on the first day of their absence. If we are unable to ascertain a child's whereabouts, further investigations will be made as deemed necessary with appropriate authorities.

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Late Arrival: Registration is at 8:50 am. Pupils who arrive late must sign in via the Inventory system so that staff know the pupil is in the building. Pupils arriving after 8.50 am will be recorded with an 'L' code (late) in the register.

Illness: In most cases, a telephone call or a note from the parent informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

Medical/Dental Appointments: Parents are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils should attend school for part of the day. An appointment card or letter should be shown to the school if available.

Children attending Pupil Referral Units: pupils will be marked as Educated Off-site (code B) on TGMS School Registers, but present on the PRU Register.

Excluded (no alternative provision made, code E): Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school may make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Unauthorised absence: Absence will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation that has been accepted as such by the school.

Leave of Absence and Extended Leave

Parents do not have an automatic right to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday. In line with the 2013 Amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations, leave for pupils during term time may only be granted where the circumstances are exceptional. Parents should be aware that if their child is absent for 10 school days they will miss 5% of their education during that academic year.

Parents wishing to take their child out of school during term time must complete an Absence from School For Exceptional Circumstances Request Form (Appendix A – available on the school website) not less than one month before the proposed leave. Documentary evidence of leave and return dates may be required to process your request. **Retrospective requests will not be considered unless there are exceptional circumstances. Therefore, any other retrospective requests will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.**

Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- The pupil's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of SATs and public examinations
- Pupil's educational needs
- General welfare of the pupil
- Circumstances of the request
- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term time holidays taken whilst at TGMS

- When the request was made

Family holiday requests will not be authorized unless there are very exceptional circumstances; these will be assessed by the Headteacher on an individual basis.

All requests for leave of absence will receive a written response. Where a request has been granted, the written response will state:

- The expected date of return
- parents must contact the school should any delays occur

If the permission to take leave is not granted and the pupil is absent, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases, the school may refer the matter to the County Attendance Team who may issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance We acknowledge the multi-faith nature of British society and recognise that on some occasions, religious observance may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and that this necessitates consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. (Code R) It is reasonable for a parent to allow their children not to attend school on any day of religious observance if recognised by the parent's religious body. Parents must give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. If additional days to travel to and from a religious observance are requested, these cannot be authorised. Any days in excess of one day per religious observance will be categorised as unauthorised.

Roles and Responsibilities

We believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community.

Role of the School:

We are fully committed to supporting the welfare and education of our pupils and will monitor pupil attendance accordingly. Our Assistant Headteacher for Inclusion will act as our Attendance Champion, working alongside the school's Welfare Officer to support pupils and families improve their school attendance. This includes holding attendance meetings, identifying barriers, suggesting solutions, setting and monitoring attendance targets and ensuring the wider staff are fulfilling their responsibilities to promote, support and monitor their pupils' attendance.

School registers will be inspected regularly by the Headteacher and office staff; parents will be contacted in the event of:

- a) any unauthorised absence
- b) a pattern of broken weeks
- c) persistent lateness
- d) less than 90% attendance over a half term
- e) sudden absence where there is extra information that a child may be at risk.

Letters are sent to parents in accordance with guidelines provided by the County Attendance Team. More information and support can be obtained by:

- Looking at the County website-
<https://www.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/schools-and-learning/school-attendance-and-supporting-children-in-education/school-attendance-guidance/>

Role of our Parents:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instill the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctors, dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with the school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child away from school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family

For further advice and support on your child's school attendance, please follow this link:
<https://familyinfo.buckinghamshire.gov.uk/education-and-learning/improving-your-childs-school-attendance/>

Support Systems

We recognise that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make the school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and/or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required. We also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Reduced timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child-centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Legal Sanctions

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Headteacher will notify the Buckinghamshire County Attendance Team of the irregular attendance.

The County Attendance Team or school may invite parents to attend a Parenting Contract Meeting and issue a formal warning of a Penalty Notice.

Parenting Contracts (Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between the Local Authority, school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should irregular attendance continue.

Penalty Notices (Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014)

The circumstances under that penalty notices may be Issued

- irregular school attendance
- overt truancy (including pupils found during truancy sweeps)
- parentally-condoned absences
- unauthorised holidays in term-time*
- being in a public place during the first five days of an exclusion
- persistent late arrival at school. “Persistent” means at least 10 sessions of late arrival

From 1st September 2013, head teachers are unable to agree on leave of absence during term time unless they are satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances. The fundamental principles for defining ‘exceptional’ are rare, significant, unavoidable and short. And by ‘unavoidable’ it implies that an event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time.

Criteria for issuing penalty notices

To ensure consistent delivery of penalty notices the following criteria will apply:

- there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive and the school, in consultation with the county attendance team, believe this early intervention will resolve the poor attendance and stop the matter moving toward a prosecution [under section 444 of the Education Act 1996](#).
- if a head teacher does not authorise a request from a parent/carer for term time leave and the parent takes the leave. (School must advise parents of this and how the action conforms to the school’s attendance policy). There must be at least 10 continuous sessions of unauthorised term time leave taken. headteachers can only authorise absences retrospectively if there are exceptional circumstances.
- persistently late after the close of the register (coded U) and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met; this does not need to be consecutive.
- in certain circumstances, including where ten sessions of absence comprise unauthorised holidays in term time, a penalty notice can be issued without a formal warning having been issued previously.
- where a child who has been excluded is present in a public place during the first five days a penalty notice will be issued on the first occasion if appropriate.
- a penalty notice may also be issued without a formal warning if a formal warning has already

been issued to the parent/carer previously.

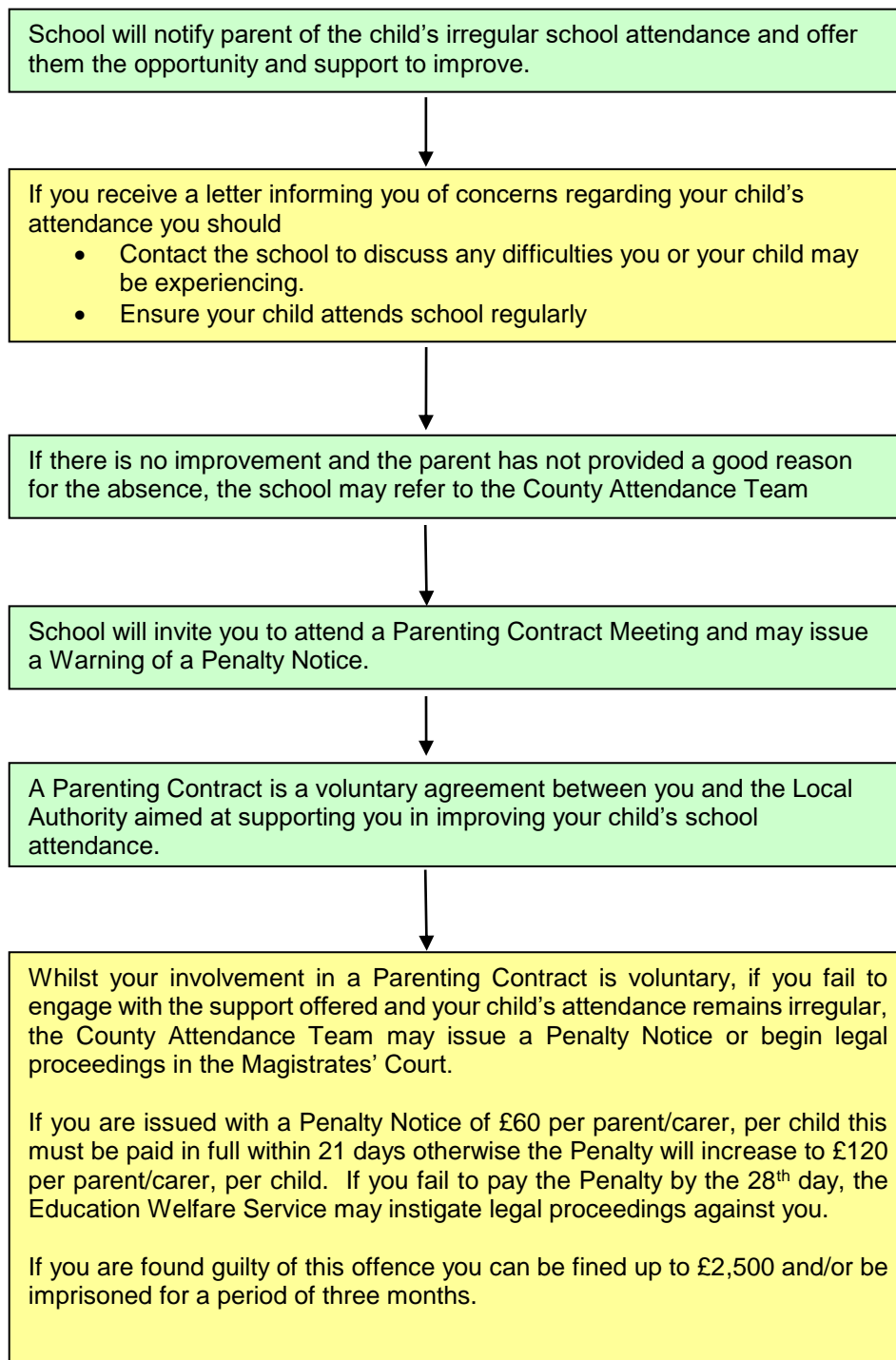
Following the landmark case of Isle of Wight council V Platt, parents who take their children out of school on holiday, even if their child has regular attendance, can be prosecuted if they do not have permission from the head teacher.

The procedure for payment of penalty notices

- payment arrangements will be provided with the penalty notice.
- payment of a penalty notice discharges the parent of liability for the attendance period in question. S/he cannot subsequently be prosecuted for the period covered by the penalty notice.
- payment of a penalty notice within 21 days is £60 and payment after 21 days, but within 28 days, is £120.
- the county attendance team will send a certificate of payment of penalty notice to the payee.
- Buckinghamshire Council retains any revenue from penalty notices to cover enforcement costs (collection or prosecution in the event of non-payment).

Prosecution: The school will provide the Local Authority with the evidence required for prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996. This is to ensure that parents realise their responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Intervention Flow Chart





Absence from School For Exceptional Circumstances Request Form

Notes to Parents / Carers

Since September 2013 the Department for Education has made amendments to the regulations about school attendance. As such, Headteachers will **no longer be allowed to authorise leave of absence for any family holiday** unless there are exceptional circumstances.

For the Headteacher to consider your request for authorised absence in term time:

- You must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives.
- Permission must be sought in advance (where possible, at least one month).
- You must fully explain the exceptional circumstances. (Examples may include catastrophic events, close family weddings and bereavement.)
- If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child's satisfactory attendance record up to the date covered by this request.
- The number of days authorised for this would be determined by the Headteacher.

To: The Headteacher of Tygers Green Middle School.

I wish to apply to have an absence authorised for.

Name of Pupil :	Name : _____ Class : _____ (Please note a separate form must be completed for each child in the family).
Proposed Dates of Absence :	From : _____ To : _____ (inclusive)
Reason for Absence :	Please fully explain the exceptional circumstances that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. (Please continue on a separate sheet, if needed.)
Signed by Parents/Carers: _____ Date : _____	
Please Print Name : _____	

Office use only		<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised Code ____
Date form received	No of school days absence requested	<input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised
		Signed _____ Headteacher

This portion to be returned to parents/carers

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil name..... **Class**.....
 Absence authorised fromto (Inclusive)

Please note, you should contact the school should any delays occur in your return.
 Absence unauthorised fromto (Inclusive)

Current attendance % as of/...../20.....

Signed (Headteacher) Date.....

IMPORTANT: Please read carefully the information below.

WARNING: Parents whose children are on a school register and fail to ensure the regular school attendance of their children, may be guilty of an offence under Section 444 or 444 (1A) of the Education Act 1996. The council may issue a Penalty Notice or take other statutory action through the courts to secure regular school attendance. As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.