

TPAT Attendance Strategy 2023/2024

Tiered Response to Pupil Absence

Section 1: Introduction

High attendance in school is a vital foundation for children's education and wellbeing. All TPAT schools have a culture of high attendance which is supported and reinforced by all staff. We recognise that habits of high attendance have been disrupted by the ongoing impact of the Covid 19 pandemic. It is of crucial importance that all schools offer our pupils, and their families, appropriate, timely and effective support so that children attend school on every possible occasion. We use broken weeks as our key indicator to prioritise support for pupils who are persistently absent. This is because this is more likely to indicate a pattern of concern rather than one off periods of absence for health or other reasons. Our Attendance Strategy is phased around a series of support Tiers which target support for children and families in a timely and effective way. Underpinning our tiered approach is our belief that all children are entitled to the educational, social and personal opportunities which are available to them in school and which they are best able to access with regular school attendance.

Section 2: Attendance Tiered Support

Universal Support

1. All school staff provide support for all children to promote the value and importance of high attendance. When children are absent from school for any reason, all staff but specifically class teachers will welcome children back to school (on the first occasion they are present) and provide support for children to catch up on missed work. All TPAT schools have clear systems to support children to manage 'catch up' on their return to school and to ensure that this work is phased so it is manageable.
2. Class teachers are the first port of call for parents/carers and liaise with/ meet with parents with regards to pupil absence, return to school and catch-up work.
3. Class teachers keep an accurate register of attendance and absence, in line with statutory requirements. Reasons for absence are recorded and coded accurately.
4. Class teachers 'check in' with children who have been absent/late to school to explore reasons and provide support at the earliest opportunity to do so.
5. Administrators are trained to respond to enquiries about absence. This includes signposting information about making requests for exceptional leave of absence during term time, and advising parents on reporting absence and the reasons of absence. Administrators are trained to use their professional curiosity to ensure reasons for absence are clear and consistent with the school's absence policy. Where appropriate, Administrators refer parents for Tier 1 support.

6. All TPAT schools have a culture of high attendance. This is consistently and frequently reinforced by all school staff, by the effective use of school display, and through assembly. Staff are required to model our high attendance culture through their own actions.

Tier 1 Support

Tier 1 support. This includes

- Phone calls to parents referred to Tier 1 by other staff e.g. Administrator/Attendance Officer/class teacher.
- Targeted, 'first day' support phone calls to parents reporting pupil absence who are on the priority Tier 1 call list (based on broken weeks or other vulnerability).
- Completing a Pupil Attendance Contract with parents/carers, if applicable.
- Absence monitoring and information gathering with regards to absence patterns and barriers to attendance.
- Escalation to Tier 2 (threshold is 3 broken weeks within a half term or 5 broken weeks within one term).
- *NB Tier 1 support continues when a child is referred to Tier 2 and 3 levels of support.*

Tier 2 Support

Tier 2 support. The threshold for Tier 2 support is 3 broken weeks within a half term or 5 broken weeks within one term. Tier 2 actions include:

- Phone call to parents (with letter) confirming their child is being offered Tier 2 support.
- Meeting with parents to discuss barriers to attendance and provide support (Pupil Support Plan)
- Following up meeting (Pupil Support Plan Review) at an appropriate time interval which is typically 4 weeks
- Issue of request for medical information and/or evidence to support with health-related barriers.
- Use of Attendance Support Card to reinforce value of attendance with pupil, if applicable
- Consideration for statutory intervention (threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence)

Tier 3 Support

Tier 3 support.

- Statutory investigation and formal warning notice of prosecution
- NB Schools continue with Tier 1 and 2 attendance support including Pupil Support Plan and review cycles, absence reporting and recording
- If appropriate, the school will refer to TPAT Attendance & Inclusion Lead for an Education Planning Meeting

Tier 4 Support

Our Tier 4 support is provided by the TPAT Attendance & Inclusion Lead. They will consult with the school's Headteacher re possible EPM outcome (ESO/PO/Prosecution and Section 19 statutory duties). NB schools will continue to provide support at Tiers 1, 2, whilst legal action/ prosecution is in process.

Section 3: Implementing the Tiered Support

School Attendance Staff.

The school's attendance staff consists of:

- Administrator/Attendance Officer
- DSL/Headteacher

The staff meets fortnightly to review pupils, causes for concern, progress, appropriate escalation and to ensure all appropriate intervention and support is in place. Intervention is planned and recorded in line with the tiered response using an appropriate tracking and recording system.

School analysis of absence and persistent absence for all pupils, and for different groups, compared with published local and national averages must be ongoing and included within the tracking and recording system.

Section 4: Roles and Responsibilities

Class Teachers:

Class teachers are responsible for recording pupils' attendance on a daily basis (each lesson), using the correct absence and attendance codes, and submitting this information to the attendance officer.

Where attendance concerns are raised (either by themselves or by the Administrator/Attendance Officer], class teachers will 'check-in' with the pupil to explore reasons for absence and offer support. Class teachers may also contact/meet with parents/carers whose child has a falling level of attendance and is noted to be a concern by the Administrator/Attendance Officer/Headteacher.

Administrator/School Attendance Officer:

- Monitors AM/PM registers and ensures present/absence codes have been entered and are correct. Providing an accurate account of all code changes where applicable.
- Monitors attendance and absence data at school, cohort and individual pupil levels using the broken weeks and persistent absence reports.
- Issues an initial Tier 1 attendance support letter at 2 broken weeks in a half term, 3 in a term.
- Is the first point of contact for parents reporting absence and coordinates appropriate follow up for unexplained absence.

- Holds Tier 1 support calls with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues, prioritising vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils as directed by the Headteacher.
- Refers pupils meeting threshold for Tier 2 support (3 broken weeks in a half term, or 5 broken weeks within a term) to the HT as appropriate, providing details of the Tier 1 support. This referral will be discussed in the fortnightly Attendance Team meeting.
- Co-ordinates requests for Term-time Leave of Absence, liaising with the Headteacher as appropriate.
- Completes Children Missing Education referrals to the Local Authority where appropriate (this includes liaison with the DSL and Headteacher).
- Refers requests for Penalty Notices for absence that exceeds the threshold as per Cornwall Council Code of Conduct to the Headteacher for authorisation. NB Penalty Notices are used where no barriers to attendance are noted and/or there has been no engagement from parents NB Tier 2 is not necessary where there is no parental engagement and the absence is not considered entrenched.
- Refers requests for Penalty Notices for Leave of absence that has not been approved and exceeds the threshold as per Cornwall Council code of Conduct.

School support as identified by the HT:

Designated school support focus on identifying and resolving barriers to attendance at Tier 2. Where appropriate, the school support will refer attendance concerns that may indicate a wider safeguarding concern to the DSL.

School support are the point of contact for parents/carers who are concerned about their child's attendance. They meet with parents/carers to discuss concerns and support, and will draw up the Pupil Support Plan, aimed at removing barriers, providing solutions and improving attendance and wellbeing. School support also liaises with external agencies and makes referrals for external support as required e.g. for Early Help. We offer a minimum of at least one Pupil Support Plan meeting and review meeting (at 4 weeks) before proceeding to Tier 3.

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL):

DSLs attend the fortnightly Attendance Team Meeting to share relevant information (as appropriate) and advise on safeguarding matters relating to pupils whose attendance is a concern.

Headteacher:

The Headteacher chairs the fortnightly Attendance Team meetings and approves escalation within the Tiered approach. The Headteacher directs the school's approach to supporting the attendance of vulnerable and disadvantaged pupils ensuring intervention and resources are appropriately prioritised and targeted. The Headteacher approves 'no further authorised absence' correspondence and meets regularly with, and liaises with the TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead in relation to statutory intervention and EPM outcomes and actions. The Headteacher implements the school's Attendance Strategy and leads the school's culture of high attendance ensuring that attendance is frequently and regularly highlighted to all members of the school community as being of central and vital importance to children's education and wellbeing. The Headteacher provides training and support for class teachers, and members of the Attendance Team as appropriate. The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring and evaluating the work and effectiveness of the Attendance Team and for reporting on attendance to the LGB and Trust (as appropriate).

Headteacher responsibility - Tier 3:

- Arranges for staff home visit and issues the first warning notice of prosecution
- Ensures a home visit report is completed which considers any additional information in relation to barriers to attendance
- Serves notice of improvement or refers back to school support for unaddressed barriers to attendance
- Ensures the Administrator provides a weekly update on attendance of all referred pupils
- Reviews attendance at 5 weeks. Where attendance has improved the HT will agree a further improvement period (usually 5 weeks). Where there has been some limited improvement, the HT will notify parent/carers of the deferral for Education Planning Meeting (EPM) request and will agree further improvement period (usually 5 weeks). Where there has been no improvement either at the first notice of improvement conclusion and/or deferred period, the HT will consult with the Attendance and Inclusion lead to proceed to an EPM.
- Ensures EPM reports and minutes are provided
- Serves Final Warning Notice of prosecution (where applicable) in discussion with the Attendance and Inclusion Lead
- Completes Section 9 witness statements and ensures preparation of court papers for Cornwall Council legal services to consider court action

Headteacher continued:

The Headteacher is responsible for considering all leave of absence requests and deciding whether or not to approve requests where the reason provided is exceptional. They hold responsibility for resourcing the Tiered Approach and for ensuring that all staff within the school receive appropriate training and support to deliver this response. Headteachers are responsible, along with Chairs, for ensuring that the LGB receives appropriately detailed reports on student attendance to be able to fulfil their duties to monitor the work and effectiveness of the school. Headteachers are responsible for liaising with the TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead with regards to the Trust's Attendance Strategy and for monitoring the effectiveness of their school's actions to implement this strategy in order to support all students to attend school regularly.

TPAT Attendance and Inclusion Lead:

- Provides regular meetings for Headteacher and Administrators/Attendance Officers, providing advice and keeping teams updated on guidance, process and sharing good practice
- Supports the Headteacher with the Statutory process, providing appropriate training, advice and guidance
- Chairs EPM's and liaises with Headteachers in relation to desired outcomes
- Audits tiered response process and feeds back on timescale/progress and outcomes to Headteachers and the Trust
- Guides and advise Headteachers and Attendance Officers on complex case management
- Liaises with services and LA to ensure clarity on duty and responsibility (where necessary)
- Devises strategy and monitors school attendance data and reports to the Trust.

Section 5: Attendance Record Keeping.

It is essential that all schools keep accurate and up to date records of the support offered to pupils and families to improve attendance and reduce absence. Schools are required to maintain the following records:

- Class teacher check ins with pupils and recorded outcomes (e.g. copies of emails retained for file on student record and/or details of conversation saved on CPOMS)
- Record of all requests for exceptional leave of absence during school term time, and decision and reasons for decision by Headteacher
- Administrator/Attendance Officer professional curiosity and challenge to parent/carers in relation to absence e.g. emails, letters and meeting/phone call summary records
- Administrator/Attendance Officer referrals to Tier 2 agreed at Attendance Team meetings e.g. within summary record of meeting, Tier tracker/ intervention record. The meeting record will also record views of DSL with regard to student safeguarding.
- School support meetings with parents/carers e.g. summary record of discussion and actions using PSP form and including agreed review date within or at 4 weeks.
- School support review meetings (within or at 4 weeks) e.g. summary record of discussion and actions including decision to extend PSP for further cycle or request to Headteacher for the issue of the 'request for medical information and/or evidence to support with health related barriers'.
- Where appropriate, record of comms with Attendance and Inclusion Lead at 10 unauthorised sessions, ensuring checklist is complete and attaching chronology of intervention and reports
- Records of actions following statutory intervention process
 - First warning notice of prosecution
 - Home visit to explain first warning and serve notice of improvement period
 - Review notice of improvement period
 - Extension to Notice of improvement period
 - EPM
 - Final warning notice of Prosecution including agreement of unauthorised sessions that will instigate court papers
 - Legal action – sect 9 statement and evidence bundle for Council legal services