

TITLE: ATTENDANCE POLICY

MODEL POLICY STATEMENT

This is a Local Authority model policy

Local changes have been made to the model policy by the College

The model policy used is DCC 2012

Policy Owner:	Vice Principal	Review period:	Annual
Last Review:	October 2015	Approving Committee:	Curriculum 18.11.15
Next Review:	LA Review / Annual	Latest FGB adoption:	02.12.15

IMPACT OF THIS POLICY

Improved attainment and achievement for students through improved attendance. Attendance has improved by almost 3% in the last 3 years. Current target 95.5% for 2015 / 16.

MODEL POLICY STATEMENT

1. Introduction

Tavistock College is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. As a College we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our College to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. Our College will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students. We recognize that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilized whenever there is concern about attendance.

2. Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure that parents / carers are aware of attendance / punctuality concerns
- To work with EWS and other appropriate agencies to support good attendance & Punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance through the College's rewards system
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the College
- To improve attainment and achievement of pupils through improved levels of attendance.

3. Statutory Duty of School and Parents

The Education Act 1996 requires parents/carers to ensure their children receive effective, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools and Colleges are responsible for recording student attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. At Tavistock College an electronic registration system is in place. Student attendance is recorded for every lesson.

Principles

Parents/carers are legally responsible for ensuring that their children attend school. This extends to ensuring that students arrive at College on time, properly attired, with correct equipment and in a condition to learn. The College will make every effort to promote good attendance, giving advice and support where needed.

The Education Welfare Service (EWS) & School Attendance

The EWS is a part of the Devon Local Authority (the LA). Its aim is to ensure that every child has the opportunity to benefit from a full time education by attending school regularly. The EWS can help and advise parents/carers who may be experiencing difficulties that prevent this. It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure that their

child attends school regularly and the EWS expects parents/carers to do all that is necessary to make sure this happens.

What happens if your child does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorized)?

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly and, as the parent, this is your responsibility. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring you to pay a fine of up to £120 per parent/carers, per child if their attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances you may be prosecuted and be required to attend the Magistrates Court where you could face up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2,500. You will be given every opportunity to improve your child's attendance and you will receive a written warning before any legal action is taken.

4. Statutory Attendance Responsibilities

There is a legal responsibility to have a morning and an afternoon registration mark for every student at the College.

The School will:

- Record and monitor attendance and absence. Legally we are required to do this twice a day.
- Use an electronic registration system to record and monitor attendance of all lessons during the school day to ensure the safety and welfare of all pupils.
- Record and monitor the punctuality of all students and, where necessary, inform parents of persistent lateness and apply appropriate consequences. Registers are closed at 9.05am, and 2.20pm: Pupils arriving after registers are closed will be recorded as an unauthorized absence (U).
- Only authorize pupil absence in exceptional circumstances where absence is unavoidable.
- Maintain strong home-school liaison to inform and support parents with their child's attendance. The college uses School Comms as a communication method to follow up daily absences.
- Work closely with the school Educational Welfare Officer and other appropriate agencies where there are concerns regarding attendance.
- Help to investigate, identify and resolve any issues with children and their families which prevent full attendance at Tavistock College and will do everything possible to help return students to full attendance.
- Promote the importance of attendance through weekly assemblies and celebrating students who achieve 100% attendance.
- Inform parents (in the form of a letter) on a half termly and yearly basis, of all children whose attendance falls below 95%

Parents should:

- Ensure their children arrive on time to college with the correct equipment and Full uniform.
- Be aware that any person who has the care of a child or who has parental responsibility is responsible for ensuring good attendance.
- Ensure that they are fully aware of school procedures – see appendix A

5. Reporting Absences

Up to 3 Days' Absence

- It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the College of the reason for a student's absence by 9.00 a.m. on the day of absence.
- The College will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent student will be contacted by the Attendance Officer.
- Any absence where a reason is NOT provided, will be followed up with a School Comms Message in the first instance then a letter from the Attendance Officer.

More than 3 Consecutive Days' Absence

- Parent/carer ~~must~~ contact Attendance Officer on 3rd day of absence giving expected date of return.
- Where there has been no parental/carer notification after 3 consecutive days, HOY should contact parents/carer.
- Where there has been an absence of more than 4 consecutive days and parents/carers have not made contact or cannot be contacted by school, EWO should be informed.
- In the case of 5 or more days of illness, the college should be notified so that teachers can set work. Medical evidence will need to be provided to the school in order for the College to authorise the absence. The EWO will be notified if the absence is unauthorised.

Methods of Reporting Absences

In any case of absence, parents/carers should contact the College by one of the following methods:

- By phone to the Attendance Officer.
- Personal contact with Attendance Officer who will note the reason for absence on SIMs. Attendance Officer will notify the tutor of absence and reason.
- If you are unable to contact the Attendance Officer, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the Attendance Officer on the first day back at College.
- Notification by fax and e-mail cannot be accepted, we do however accept messages via School Coms

6. Authorised Absence

Reasons for Absence

Be aware that absence from school will only be authorised if it is for the following

reasons:

- Genuine illness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (but try to make these after school if at all possible) We are not able to authorize a whole day's absence for this unless and S2 Absence Form is completed in advance.
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional circumstances, such as bereavement or marriage of an immediate family member
- Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces
- External examinations
- When Traveler children go on the road with their parents

Absences during Term Time

NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS

The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an 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. 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(rens') attendance being satisfactory up to the date covered by this request.

Warning: If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Absences will only be authorised if there are considered to be exceptional circumstances AND none of the following apply;

- The holiday is within the first 3 weeks of any term.
- The pupil is in Yr 10 or 11
- Yr 7 pupils in their first term at Tavistock College
- The pupil's attendance is 95% or less (and there is no underlying medical problem affecting this)
- The holiday period exceeds 10 school days

Absence Request Form S2 must be submitted a minimum of four weeks in advance to the College (available from Reception). The absence will only be authorised at the Principal's discretion.

If an absence is authorised by the school it remains conditional upon attendance being 95% or over, up until the date of absence. If the school withdraws the authorisation due to the attendance dropping to an unacceptable level, the parent/carer will be informed of this in writing.

If a parent/carer is refused an absence request and the student is still taken out of school by the parent/carer, you may be issued with a penalty notice for the unauthorised absence.

7. Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the Attendance Officer if their child has been

identified as truanting from the college. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice

8. When Attendance causes Concern (see Appendix A Section 7)

Our attendance target for the year is 95% and we expect all pupils to achieve at least this or above. This rate has been agreed by Babcock LDP as an acceptable target for secondary schools across Devon for the academic year 2014/2015.

- Tutors will set targets to encourage good attendance and to address any concerns
- Contact will be made with parents to advise them of poor attendance
- Pupils may be put on daily report
- A referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service and you may be contacted by the EWO with regard to your child's attendance. You could be asked to attend either an attendance meeting or legal meeting in school to look at how the issue can be resolved.

9. Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at college on time. Punctuality is monitored by the College and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to College on time. If a child persistently arrives after the registers close, cases will be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Appendix A – Staff Guidance and Procedures

1 Roles and Responsibilities

Role of Governing Body: Reviews policy, receives termly report via Principal's Report to Governors. A Governor will have specific responsibility for attendance.

Role of Year Line Manager (Vice Principal): Line Manager monitors adherence to procedures by tracking samples of students with known punctuality/absence problems once every term. Where procedures are not being followed, Line Manager interviews HoY and sets targets for improvement, from data supplied by Attendance Officer, Year Line Manager monitors attendance figures from year group and liaises with HoY / Attendance Officer / EWO as appropriate. Responsible for oversight and implementation of policy.

Assistant Principal (Data and Assessment :) advice on technical aspects of data collection and analysis

Attendance Officer: Administration of attendance and punctuality data within the framework of the policy, first day contacts, production of statutory attendance data, production of fortnightly attendance data for each year group, production of data for SLT / Governors on a half-termly basis.

Tutor: Keeping an accurate register and follow up of absences and lateness within the systems and procedures in this policy

Heads of Year: Monthly monitoring of year group attendance data with EWO/Attendance Officer, quality assurance of effectiveness of tutors in delivering the policy, and follow up procedures for students with high levels of truancy, unauthorised absence and lateness

Subject Teacher: take appropriate action with students who are persistently late to lessons.

Education Welfare Officer (EWO): Implementation of LA procedures in enforcing attendance and assisting year teams with advising students and parents of the legal consequences of failing to meet these obligations. The EWO is the attendance enforcement arm of the LA. Through meetings in school or at home, the EWO will assess the non-attender's problems in the family and school context. This is a valuable resource in linking with other agencies. The EWO will support the school with meetings regarding attendance concerns.

2 Attendance Procedures

- There should be a clear start to registration at 8.40 when all tutors take their registers; students will be encouraged to value the registration session each morning with their tutor and group; and staff will make students feel valued.
- Teachers will take a class register for every lesson they teach to safeguard all children and alert the school immediately to any missing child
- Tutors and Heads of Year will reinforce the importance of good attendance and punctuality through assemblies and tutor time
- The Attendance Officer has responsibility for following up any concerns for attendance, informing parents where there are concerns regarding attendance, and for reporting persistent problems to the Head of Year and EWO.
- The Heads of Year will actively promote 100% attendance and will praise students with improving attendance.
- Regular information will be sent to parents through the reporting cycle informing them of attendance levels. Annual Report to parents/carers includes summative information on attendance as well as comment on punctuality.
- Parents should inform the school by telephone by 9.00 a.m. on the first day their child is absent
- Parents will be contacted by School Coms on the first day of absence whenever any student is absent without reason, or persistently late, and will be reminded, if necessary, of their legal responsibility for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.
- The Attendance Officer will regularly review the progress of any student causing concern and will consult with the Head of Year and the Education Welfare Service to develop and maintain good practice for attendance.

3 Distribution of Data

The Attendance Officer will produce the following attendance and punctuality data:

For HoY & Year Teams:

a) Weekly am/pm reports identifying all students with below 95% attendance, in year Group

b) Reports monthly (or 5 or more lates) on persistent lateness to college in the mornings and lesson lateness (2 or more per week). HoY to inform tutors at tutor briefings

For EWO Fortnightly - all students below 90% and all students with any unauthorised absences.

For SLT

- a) Monthly attendance percentage report sheet including all attendance codes
- b) Monthly report on lateness
- c) Monthly report on EWO referrals
- d) PA monitoring (HOY/SLT)

4 **User Codes and Reconciliation of Registers**

- If a student is absent, use Code N (unless there is already a code which has been entered. Do not overtype absence codes unless the student is present) If no reason is provided for the absence after 10 days, the absence will be unauthorized and a 'O' code will be entered on the registers.
- If a student is late during registration use Code L and enter the number of minutes late. If a student is late after registration use 'U' code and enter the number of minutes late on Sims. Parents will be informed via School Coms.
- Only the national attendance codes issued can be used.
- Tutors should reconcile registers each day.
- Tutors must reconcile registers fully for Termly Census (dates in College calendar).

5 **Absence from College**

- **Authorisation of absences from College by the tutor:**
 - Tutor to insist on a written, signed note from parent/carer on students return, unless parents/carer has informed the College Attendance Officer by another acceptable means.
 - Tutor to record on electronic registration system using appropriate code.
 - Tutors to hand in absence notes/records at end of every term (or at the end of the year) to the Attendance Officer. These will be archived for 3 years.
- **Follow up procedures for unauthorised absence from College:**
 - a) School Comms will be used by Attendance Officer in first instance to try to clear all absences.
 - b) Tutor checks previous days attendance and pursues any reasons for non-attendance.
 - c) If no reason for absence has been given, the Attendance Officer will send home an absence letter for completion by the parent / carer.
 - d) Tutor monitors absences from the weekly attendance records using the SIMS system
 - e) Attendance Officer provides HoY & EWO with names of students who have any unauthorised absences. HoY to meet with parents/carers of any child with 5 unauthorised absences. If there are further unauthorised absences after this meeting, the EWO will contact the parents/carers and could invite them into school for a legal meeting.
 - f) Attendance Officer provides HoY and EWO with names of students with less than 90% attendance (counted from the start of academic year). HoY and EWO to decide appropriate intervention.
 - g) Students with less than 90% attendance are discussed by HoY and EWO at fortnightly meeting. HoY will have an attendance meeting with parents/carers where attendance is a concern. EWO will consider student for referral.

Points 'd' to 'g' above all monitored every two weeks at HoY/ Attendance Officer meeting which the EWO attends

- h Concern letters sent home via HoY/Attendance Officer. HoY also invites parents to attend a meeting to discuss attendance issues.

6 Truancy

- **Truancy from Lessons**
 - Students out of lessons without authorisation will be considered as truanting. Parents will receive a telephone call or letter to notify them. It is the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that their children attend full time education and therefore attend all lessons.
 - A detention will be set for all instances of truancy.
 - Teachers who suspect truancy from lesson(s) should email or phone the Attendance Officer.
 - In cases of confirmed / suspected truancy from lessons the Attendance Officer will alert the Year Team.
 - School Coms will be used to inform parents/carers in cases of confirmed truancy.
 - Attendance Officer / Year Team will notify police in cases of off-site truancy where a young person is considered to be at risk of harm.
 - Year Team and EWO will meet with parents/carers to discuss truancy and Penalty Notice sanctions. Targets will be set and monitored.
 - If truancy continues to persist Head of Year will refer student to EWO who may consider instigating legal procedures.
- **Truancy from Assembly/Tutor Time**
 - Tutor informs parents with standard letter. Pupil will receive an unauthorised mark in the register and information will be passed on to HoY and EWO.

7 Agreed Attendance Intervention Levels

All figures are calculated from the beginning of the academic year. Attendance data will be produced for HoYs on a weekly basis and discussed with EWO on a fortnightly basis

At 95%: Tutor to speak to pupil and monitor attendance on a half termly basis, First letter may be sent by Attendance Officer if agreed with Head of Year and EWO.

At 90%: Discussed at fortnightly meeting with Head of Year, attendance officer and EWO. Second letter 1 or 2 may be sent if agreed. Individual Attendance Action Plan to be put in place if appropriate. **EWO to** consider referral and a legal meeting may be held if appropriate.

HoY may decide to place pupils on attendance report for low attendance, truanting from lessons or persistent lateness, until improvement targets have been achieved.

More than 20 sessions of illness: Discussed at monthly meeting with HOY, attendance officer and EWO. School may request supporting medical evidence of absence, or future absences will not be

authorized by the school.

8 Rewards and Interventions

100% Full attendance certificates to be issued (termly)

Above 98% Good attendance certificates to be issued (termly)

Less than 95% Concern letters sent to all parents/carers to inform them of their child's attendance (half-termly)

- If little or no improvement is made after a first letter is sent, a decision will be made as to whether to send a second concern letter or refer to the Education Welfare Service.

9 Punctuality

• Lateness to College in the Morning

- Registration is at 0840. Students arriving after 0840 are marked as late (Code L).
- Students arriving in College after 9.05 a.m. must be marked in at Reception
- Anyone arriving after 9.05 a.m. (2.20 p.m.) will be marked as unauthorised absence (Code U – Late after Registers have closed). Parents / carers will be contacted by Attendance Officer. The HoY will meet with parents/carers. If a child has 10 'U' marks, a legal meeting may be held by the EWO.
- Students who are persistently late after 9.05 a.m. (Code U) will be referred by the Attendance Officer to the HoY / EWO (after 5 incidents). The EWO will consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

• Follow up procedures for lateness to College in the Morning:

- Attendance Officer will alert HoY to any student who has 5 or more lates in any half term. HoY must contact parents and student is put on attendance / punctuality report. After 18 or more lates Attendance Officer alerts HoY & EWO.

• Follow up procedures for lateness to lessons:

- Attendance Officer will alert HoY to any student who has 12 or more lates. HoY must contact parents and student is put on attendance / punctuality report. After 18 or more lates Attendance Officer alerts HoY & EWO.
- Persistent lateness will be monitored by weekly reports issued by Year Team & standard letter to parent/carer
- If there continues to be a problem, HoY will contact parent/carer and set targets for improvement.

• Subject Teacher

- Mark with Code L and record number of minutes late.
- Persistent lateness to lessons-subject teacher contacts parents/carers using standard letter, implements departmental sanctions and informs tutor.

Absence requests in term time

