



School Attendance Policy and Procedures

Scope

Teignmouth Community School is a 3-19 School based on two sites. The Primary Phase, (3-11), at Mill Lane and the Secondary Phase, (11-19), at Exeter Road. The two sites are now one school with one attendance policy.

Philosophy

Teignmouth Community School is committed to providing a full and effective educational experience for all students. Evidence shows that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is essential. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational and social disadvantage. Therefore as a School we do all that we can to maximise attendance for all students. We adopt a whole school approach, and any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed quickly.

It is the policy of the School to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career and establishes a good pattern for later life. The School will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our students. We recognise 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 utilised whenever there is concern about attendance. We believe that with good attendance children will have the opportunity to achieve their full potential.

Objectives

- to encourage full attendance and punctuality
- to record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies when necessary
- to acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance throughout the School and link this to the school rewards system
- to ensure a consistent approach throughout the School

Statutory Duty of Schools 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 Teignmouth Community

School an electronic registration system is in place. Student attendance is recorded for every lesson at Exeter Road and for morning and afternoon sessions at Mill Lane.

Principles

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

The Educational Welfare Service and school attendance

The aim of the Education Welfare Service 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 will happen if a student does not attend school regularly (and their absence is not authorised)

It is a criminal offence for a child not to attend school regularly. It is the responsibility of the parent to ensure that the child attends. A Penalty Notice may therefore be issued, requiring the payment of a fine of up to £100 per parent/carer, per child if attendance is below an acceptable level. In certain circumstances the parent/guardian may be prosecuted and will be required to attend the Magistrates Court where up to 3 months imprisonment and/or a fine of up to £2500 may be imposed. Parents/carers will be given every opportunity to improve the attendance of the child, and a written warning will be issued before any legal action is taken.

Statutory Attendance

There is a legal requirement to have an AM and a PM registration.

- **AM:** students will be registered at the beginning of the school day by their tutor/class teacher. Students arriving after the register has been taken will be considered as late (code L). The register will be closed at 9:30am. If a student arrives after this time it will be classified as an unauthorised Absence (code U)
- **PM:** registration takes place at the beginning of afternoon lesson by the class teacher.

The School will ensure that all staff are familiar with the requirements of the registration process, the procedures for recording absence, and for explaining absences.

Tutors/class teachers have the responsibility to follow up any attendance concerns, and for reporting persistent problems to the Attendance Officer/leader for the site.

Class registers must be taken at the beginning of all lessons/sessions. Accurate registration is very important and registration details can be used as evidence where parents/carers are prosecuted for school attendance offences. Attendance figures will be communicated to parents on a termly basis through reports. The Attendance Register will be printed and kept for three years by the Attendance Officer.

Leave of absence during Term Time

As from the 1st September 2013, all schools are unable to authorise requests for absence relating to holidays in term time. This has been brought about by an amendment to the Education (Pupil Registration)(England) Regulations 2006 which has removed reference to holidays and the ten day period.

These changes reinforce the government's view that every minute of every school day is vital and that students should only be granted authorised absence by the school, in exceptional circumstances e.g. illness, exclusions, or due to other unavoidable causes.

We would remind parents that unauthorised absences may well result in the instigation of parental responsibility measures which could be a penalty notice, or a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. We hope you will support your child's school by ensuring that your son/daughter obtains the maximum benefit from their time at school by attending punctually every school day throughout the academic year that the law requires, unless prevented from doing so by an unavoidable circumstances. All requests for absence must be made using the S2 form, available from School, before the absence commences. Leave of absence will only be considered for exceptional circumstances

Reporting Absences

It is the responsibility of the parents/carers to inform the School of the reason for a student's absence on the first and every day of the non-attendance. It is our expectation that parents/carers will make every effort to contact the School by 9.30am on the morning of the absence. The School will operate a First Day Calling system and the parents/carers of every absent pupil will be contacted by the school if the reason for absence is not confirmed by parent/carer.

The decision to authorise an absence will be made by the Attendance Officer who will follow the agreed policy.

Failure to notify School of the reason for a child's absence will lead to the involvement of the Educational Welfare Service and could result in penalty notices and/or prosecution.

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

- By phone to the Student Support Office or School Office. Preferably by 9.30am on the morning of each absence.
- Personal contact with Student Support Office/School Office.
- If personal contact with the school is impossible, a parental note explaining the absence must be passed to the Student Support Office/School Office on the first day back at School.
- If absences are known in advance parents/carers should telephone the school to confirm times and dates. For the Exeter Road site a note should be written in the Student Planner. Any medical/dentist/optician appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible appointments should be made at the beginning or end of the school day so that students can attend lessons before and after their appointment. Students must sign out at the Student Support office/School Office and must be able to support their request to leave school with acceptable confirmation from the parent/carer (i.e. telephone call to the school office / note in planner). If the student cannot provide this confirmation we will endeavour to contact home to check. For the purpose of safeguarding, where the request cannot be confirmed the student will not be allowed to leave School.

If a student is taken ill during the school day they must follow School procedure where a decision will be made regarding whether they should return to class or whether parents should be contacted with a view to sending them home. For the purposes of safeguarding, students will only be sent home where parent/carer consent is given on the occasion of their illness. Where it is necessary to call emergency services the First Aid procedure will be followed. (First Aid Policy).

If over the course of an academic year, student attendance becomes a concern due to illness, (usually above 10 days in total) the School will write to parents to ask them to provide medical evidence for each future absence due to illness. The evidence could be a GP appointment card, copy of a prescription, or Doctor's note. Without this evidence, any future absence will be recorded as unauthorised. It is a legal responsibility for parents to provide information relating to medical conditions. This information is not asked for routinely and the School will not be liable for any charges made for obtaining this information.

In the event that a period of illness lasts for more than 5 consecutive school days, the illness will only be authorised if it is supported by medical evidence.

A student whose attendance is 90% or below at any point in the school year is categorised by the Government as a Persistent Absentee, this is regardless of the reasons for absence or whether they are authorised or unauthorised. These students are closely monitored and parents/carers will be contacted by the School on a regular basis. It is our expectation that parents will co-operate and work closely with the School to improve attendance.

Truancy

It is the legal responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child receives an education and therefore attends all lessons as required. Parents/carers will be informed by the School if their child has been identified as truanting from the school. Persistent cases may be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice. (See above for Penalty Notices). Teignmouth Community School run regular truancy checks in co-operation with the local police. If a student is away without explanation, the Educational Welfare Officer, a representative from school, or a Community Police Officer may visit to establish the reason for the absence.

Punctuality

It is the responsibility of parents/carers to ensure their child attends full time education and arrives at school on time. Punctuality is monitored by the school and parents will be contacted if their child is not arriving to school on time.

Any student who is late to school must sign in at the school office before proceeding to their class. Students who are late are required to follow the sanction procedure. It is our expectation that the parent/carer will support and work with the School to improve punctuality. Persistent lateness may be classed as unauthorised absence. If a child is regularly late for school parents/carers may be invited to school to discuss the reasons for lateness and to agree a plan for improvement. Persistent cases will be referred to the EWO who may consider issuing a Penalty Notice.

Key Terms and Definitions

ACRONYM	TERM	DEFINITION
PA	Persistent absentee	As student who has attendance of 90% or lower regardless of the reason
EWO	Education Welfare Officer	Employee of Devon County Council with responsibility for ensuring the legal requirements associated with attendance are met.

Amendment Record

VERSION #	DATE	AMENDED BY	NATURE OF CHANGE
1.1	01/ 09/ 2013	R Willmott	Government changes relating to holidays in term time
1.2	21/09/2015	R Willmott	Change to PA category Addition of register closure time
1.3	08/03/2016	R Willmott	Added policy for single absence of 5 days or more. Register close at 9:30am
