

The Blue Tangerine Federation

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS SCHOOLS

POLICIES, GUIDANCE AND PROCEDURES



Pupil Attendance Policy

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Staff Responsibility: Stephen Houlton-Allen

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Changes Since the Last Version:	
Section	Details of change
1	Removal of details of FHEC

Contents

1.	Aims	2
2.	Legislation and guidance.....	2
3.	Federation procedures	2
4.	Authorised and unauthorised absence	4
5.	Attendance monitoring.....	5
6.	Roles and responsibilities.....	6
7.	Children with health needs who cannot attend school	6
8.	Monitoring arrangements.....	7
9.	Links to other policies	7
	Appendix 1: attendance codes.....	8

1. Aims

The Blue Tangerine Federation is committed to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Ensuring suitable education is arranged for students on roll who cannot attend school due to health needs

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold. It also based on guidance provided by our local authority.

3. Federation procedures

3.1. Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the morning session of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

3.2. Unplanned absences

Parents/Carers must notify the relevant school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 09:00 or as soon as practically possible.

St Luke's School	The Collett School
01582 626727 absence@stlukes.herts.sch.uk	01442 398988 admin@collett.herts.sch.uk

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3. Medical or dental appointments

We strongly encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours whenever possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Missing school for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Parents/Carers must notify the relevant school in writing (via letter or emailing the appropriate address, above) about the appointment on the school day before the appointment. Evidence of the appointment must subsequently be provided. This may be in the form of:

- A copy of the appointment notification letter
- Other letter from doctor/nurse
- Signed and dated card from the doctor/nurse/dentist/other

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4. Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

At St Luke's and The Collett schools a student will be marked as Late if they arrive after 09:00 but before 09:30.

3.5. Following up absence

The schools will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

In the event of an unexpected and unexplained absence, reception will:

1st day of unexplained absence	Phone the primary contact number if we have not heard from you by 09:30, to ascertain the reason for absence.
	Phone the primary contact number and may choose to call additional contact numbers on record

	if we have not heard from you by 12:00.
2nd consecutive day of unexplained absence	<p>Phone the primary contact number and call additional contact numbers on record if we have not heard from you by 09:30.</p> <p>The Head of School and DSL will be notified.</p> <p>Phone the primary contact number and call additional contact numbers on record if we have not heard from you by 12:00.</p>
3rd consecutive day of unexplained absence	<p>Phone the primary contact number and call additional contact numbers on record if we have not heard from you by 09:30.</p> <p>A staff member may make a home visit to ensure the welfare of the pupil and parent/carer.</p> <p>Notify Children’s Services and / or the police if we have tried the above and still not been able to ensure the welfare of the student and parent/carer.</p>

It is therefore important that telephone numbers are constantly updated with the school as soon as there is a change of number.

Under the DfE School Attendance Guidance revised in July 2019, a contact number for more than one person should be provided for every student.

3.6. Reporting to parents

A copy of the student’s attendance record will be sent home annually with the end-of-year written report.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1. Approval for term-time absence

The Head of School will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Head of School’s discretion.

The Head of School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the student’s parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents’ religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision

4.2. Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

5. Attendance monitoring

The Designated Safeguarding Lead monitors student absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). Parents are also expected to call the school each subsequent morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.

If a student's absence goes above 5% from the end of the beginning of the academic year in September to October onward, we may contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a student's absence continue to rise, we will consider involving an Attendance Improvement Officer.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national averages for mainstream and special schools, and share this with governors.

We run internal reports to track the attendance of individual students, identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern, and monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.

6. Roles and responsibilities

6.1. The governing body

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for each school and the whole federation on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Executive Head, Heads of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead to account for the implementation of this policy.

6.2. The Executive Head, Heads of School and Designated Safeguarding Lead

The Designated Safeguarding Lead is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the federation under the supervision of the Executive Head and Heads of School, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The Designated Safeguarding Lead also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students. The Executive Head issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Further information on penalty notices is available at <http://www.thegrid.org.uk/info/welfare/attendance.shtml>

The Designated Safeguarding Lead:

- Monitors attendance data at a federation, school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Executive Head and Heads of School
- Works with Attendance Improvement Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Executive Head when to issue fixed-penalty notices

6.3. Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance two times a day on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

6.4. Reception and office staff

Reception and office staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system. They will also follow the procedure for following up absences (see 3.5.)

7. Children with health needs who cannot attend school

'Ensuring a good education for children who cannot attend school because of health needs (2013)' states that the Local Authorities must provide suitable full-time education for children of compulsory school age who, because of illness, would otherwise not receive suitable education. The above guidance also states that Local Authorities should provide this education as soon as it is clear that the child will be absent from school for 15 days or more consecutively or cumulatively.

7.1. If the federation makes arrangements

Initially, the federation will attempt to make arrangements to deliver suitable education for children with health needs who cannot attend school.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead and Head of Interventions/Head of School will be responsible for making and monitoring educational arrangements.

- Arrangements may include:
 - Sending work home
 - Phone calls from staff
 - Home visits from staff
- The federation will consult with parents and children about these arrangements through phone calls or meetings.
- The federation will seek advice from ESMA (Educational Support for Medical Absence) for children who live in Hertfordshire and will liaise with the relevant Local Authority for students who live outside of Hertfordshire.
- The federation will always work towards reintegrating the child back into school or other education provision as quickly as possible.

7.2. If the local authority makes arrangements

If the federation can't make suitable arrangements, the local authority within which the child lives will become responsible for arranging suitable education for these children.

- The Designated Safeguarding Lead will liaise with the relevant department of the Local Authority to initiate the Local Authorities involvement. This will be initiated if it is expected that the child will be absent from school for 15 days or more due to their health need.

In cases where the local authority makes arrangements, the federation will:

- Work constructively with the local authority, providers, relevant agencies and parents to ensure the best outcomes for the student
- Share information with the local authority and relevant health services as required
- Help make sure that the provision offered to the student is as effective as possible and that the child can be reintegrated back into school successfully
- When reintegration is anticipated, work with the local authority to:
 - Plan for consistent provision during and after the period of education outside the school, allowing the student to access the same curriculum and materials that they would have used in school as far as possible
 - Enable the student to stay in touch with school life (e.g. through newsletters, emails, invitations to school events or internet links to lessons from their school)
 - Create individually tailored reintegration plans for each child returning to school
 - Consider whether any reasonable adjustments need to be made

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Designated Safeguarding Lead. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing body.

9. Links to other policies

This policy is linked to our Safeguarding and Child Protection and policy.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day