



Tudor Grange Academies Trust

Student Attendance  
and  
Punctuality Policy

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1. Promoting good attendance is the responsibility of the whole of the Tudor Grange Academies Trust (TGAT) community, thus enabling and encouraging all on roll at the Academies to achieve excellence. Attendance has a direct relationship with the attainment of individuals and groups of students and the standards thereby achieved by the Academy. Securing good attendance is a fundamental responsibility within our duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of the children in our schools (*DfE, Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2015*).
- 1.2. To enable students to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and on time every day that the Academy is open, unless the reason for absence is unavoidable, as poor attendance results in students making less progress.

## **2. Rationale**

- 2.1. Parents/guardians of registered students have a legal duty under the Education Act 1996 (Section 444) to ensure that students of compulsory school age and students who attend the Academy for post-16 education attend school on a regular and full-time basis. Permitting unauthorised absence from the Academy is an offence and parents may be referred to the Local Authority if their child's attendance is poor.
- 2.2. Attendance is important and statistics will be regularly reviewed by the Principal and all College Leaders.
- 2.3. TGAT aims to ensure that all students attend school regularly and on time to enable them to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Regular, punctual attendance is valued and positively encouraged for all students. Excellent attendance and punctuality will be recognised through the College system.

## **3. Aims**

- 3.1. To achieve 100% attendance of students within the TGAT.
- 3.2. To improve students' attainment, engagement and wellbeing through good attendance.
- 3.3. To work with parents/guardians:
  - to ensure their child attends school regularly;
  - to ensure their child is punctual to the Academy and individual lessons;
  - to support and encourage their child by attending parents' evenings and other events;
  - to contact their child's tutor in the first instance to discuss any concerns regarding their child's attendance;
  - to work in collaboration with the Academy to resolve any issues that are impacting their child's attendance and achievement.
- 3.4. To make sure attendance and punctuality is a priority for everyone associated with TGAT including parents, students, staff, and governors.

3.5. TGAT will challenge the attitude of those students, parents and staff who give a low priority to attendance and punctuality.

#### 4. Registration

4.1. The following documents specify the statutory requirements and provide guidance with regards to completing and maintaining an attendance register:

- The Education Act 1996 – section 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5);
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) of Regulations 2010;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) of Regulations 2011;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) of Regulations 2013;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) of Regulations 2016;
- DfE School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures January 2015;
- DfE School Attendance Guidance for maintained school, academies, independent school and local authorities November 2016;
- DfE Children Missing Education statutory guidance for local authorities September 2016.

4.2. Schools have a statutory duty to keep two legal documents:

- an admissions roll;
- an attendance register which must be kept accurately.

4.3. An accurate and consistent registration system is crucial both to provide a solid foundation for analysis of absence and to support any statutory interventions.

4.4. Attendance registers will be kept in accordance with statutory requirements and government guidelines.

4.5. Registers must be taken at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Registration times are **08:50** until **09:15** and **12:35** until **13:35** On each occasion the school must record whether a child is present, absent or present at an approved educational activity. No student should be marked present unless actually in the room when the register is called.

4.6. Every half day of absence has to be classified by the Academy as either authorised or unauthorised, and the regulation codes must be used.

Authorised absence is where the Principal has either given approval in advance for any student (age 4 – 19) who attends the Academy to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence.

Examples of authorised absence: days of religious observance, illness and medical appointments (where possible these must be arranged after school) all of which require written confirmation from a parent/guardian.

Unauthorised absence is when the justification is not acceptable, when a reason for the absence has not been received. Excessive lateness will also be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Examples of unauthorised absence are: shopping, birthdays or child minding.

- 4.7. Spaces must not be left in the register. It is the responsibility of the member of staff taking the register to ensure the register is complete at tutor time, and for all lessons. In the event of the electronic registration system failing a paper register must be taken and be submitted to student services immediately for inputting.
- 4.8. Students must not mark the register in any circumstances because it is a legal and auditable document.
- 4.9. All registers will be checked and absences monitored on a regular basis. This is a collective responsibility, involving tutors, college leaders, college administrators and the attendance welfare officer. TGAT has a procedure in place to resolve absences within two weeks and unexplained absences in 3 weeks.
- 4.10. If a student is absent from school their parent/guardian should contact the Academy on the first day of absence and maintain regular contact throughout the absence.
- 4.11. Reasons for absence, either verbal or supported by written notes from a parent/guardian may not always be accepted as a satisfactory reason for the absence. If this is the case, the Academy will make formal representation to the parent/guardian in writing to challenge the reason for absence they provided.
- 4.12. In exceptional circumstances the Academy will request further evidence of a student's illness. This request will be put in writing to the student's parents/guardians.
- 4.13. Parents/guardians are advised to make appointments for a dentist, doctor or optician outside school core hours whenever possible.
- 4.14. If a student is absent from school, no reason has been received, no contact can be made with the parent/guardian, and there is a cause for concern, the Attendance Welfare Officer or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit. If there is no response from the home visit and the concern persists the matter will be raised immediately with the safeguarding team.
- 4.15. If a reason for absence has been received and there is a concern regarding that reason, the Attendance Welfare Officer or a nominated member of staff will make a home visit. If there is no response from the home visit and the concern persists the matter will be raised immediately with the safeguarding team.

## **5. Lateness**

- 5.1. Students must attend registration on time to be given a present mark. Where a student arrives after the register has closed, 9:15 and 13:35 this will be classed as an unauthorised absence and code 'U' will be used in the register.
- 5.2. It is the initial responsibility of the tutor and the College Leader to address the issue of persistent lateness with the student and their parent/guardian. Students who arrive late without a genuine reason will be given a sanction in accordance with the Academy's Behaviour and Standards policy.

5.3. In the circumstances of a student being persistently late, before the close of the register, if the Academy's sanctions are having no effect on the lateness and the parents/guardians are failing to support the Academy by ensuring that their child arrives on time at the Academy, then the parents/guardians will be informed in writing that these late arrivals will be recorded as unauthorised absences and they will be made aware of the consequences of this action.

## 6. Poor attendance

6.1. Those students whose attendance falls below 95% will be closely monitored and further action considered. Between 95% and 93% it is the responsibility of the tutor to discuss the matter with the student and the parent/guardian in consultation with the College Leader and administrative staff. Attendance of 93% and below will require further intervention, and this will involve the Attendance Welfare Officer. **All** intervention must be documented.

6.2. If a student has three individual periods of absence in any period of six weeks, the Academy's Attendance Welfare Officer will contact the parents/guardians to discuss the absences. Recognition of a pattern of absence is vital. Liaison between tutor, College Administrator and College Leader with support from the Attendance Welfare Officer will ensure a holistic approach to the cause for concern. Early involvement of the parent/guardian is paramount.

6.3. TGAT has a clear and escalating approach to intervention where there are concerns regarding a student's attendance at the Academy:

- telephone calls to parents/guardians;
- letters to parents/guardians;
- home visits;
- meetings with parents/guardians and students to discuss any issues;
- school mentoring;
- parenting/guardianship contracts;
- pastoral support plan;
- individual educational support plan;
- Personal Attendance Plan.

6.4. If there is no improvement in a student's attendance following the Academy's interventions, the Academy will refer the matter to the Local Authority for advice and possible legal action.

6.5. The legal action to be considered, in full consultation with the Academy, is:

- to prosecute a parent/guardian for failing to ensure that their child regularly attends school according to the statutory requirement through the Education Act 1996, Section 444 (1 or 1A);
- application to a magistrates court for an Education Supervision Order – to ensure that the child of compulsory school age and registered at a school attends regularly;
- application to a magistrates court for a Parenting Order – to enforce regular attendance following a successful prosecution by the Local Authority;
- to issue a Penalty Notice of a monetary fine for irregular attendance and unauthorised leave of absence.

## **7. Leave of absence during term time**

- 7.1. From the 1st September 2013 in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2013 amendment of the 2006 Regulations, TGAT will comply with the amendment in that the Principal will not authorise a leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 7.2. TGAT has a responsibility to safeguard every child on roll at the Academy and therefore a Leave of Absence form must be completed in all circumstances, at least three weeks before the planned leave, and submitted to the office for the Principal's decision.
- 7.3. A letter confirming that the Leave of Absence form has been received and stating the Principal's decision will be sent to parents within seven days of receipt of the Leave of Absence form.
- 7.4. If TGAT has already referred the student/family to the Local Authority for any form of legal action, the holiday will not be authorised even if it falls into an exceptional circumstances category.
- 7.5. The parents/guardians should be made aware that if they do take a holiday in term time and it does not fall into the category of exceptional circumstances, it will lead to the student being automatically marked as unauthorised absent. The Academy will then consider whether to refer the matter to the Local Authority to take appropriate legal action.
- 7.6. The Academy will inform parents/guardians of the possibility of the student's removal from the Academy roll, once safeguarding checks have been made and the issue has been referred to the Local Authority, if the student does not return on the agreed date and no reasonable explanation is provided.
- 7.7. Academy registers will be marked as follows:

**H (authorised absence)** for any agreed period of holiday leave. Principal's should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Principal must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Principal will determine the number of days a student can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

**G (unauthorised absence)** if the holiday absences has not been authorised by the school, or for days taken in excess of an agreed period. If the Academy does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday, but the parents/guardians still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow academies to give retrospective approval. If the parents/guardians did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

## **8. Overseas extended trips**

- 8.1. Parents/guardians may wish to take their child/children on an extended overseas trip during term time. Such visits may be particularly important to parents/guardians who want to ensure that their child/children meet members of their extended family overseas. Whilst it is important to recognise the educational and cultural significance of such visits, the leave of absence during term time rules (Section 7) also apply to these circumstances.

8.2. The Education Regulations 2006 state that where a student has been granted an extended 'leave of absence' and subsequently fails to return to school within 10 school days of the expiry of the agreed period of absence, and the failure is not due to sickness or any other unavoidable causes, his/her name may be deleted from the admissions register. This would only be considered following consultation with the Local Authority Children Missing Education Officer, and once the missing child's procedure has been followed.

## **9. Travellers**

There is provision within the legislation to permit Travellers to remove their child/children from full-time education whilst they are travelling, however this can only be done after the completion of 200 sessions (100 days) in an academic year. The parent/guardian should be encouraged to attend school and discuss the pending period of absence with the tutor/College Leader prior to removing the child. It is at the discretion of the Principal whether or not to authorise this absence. Should permission be granted, 'T' will be entered into the student register system.

**Leave of Absence Request Form**

This form should be completed and submitted to your child's College Administrator at least 3 weeks before the start of the proposed leave of absence. Separate forms should be completed for each child.

Parents/guardians are reminded that Leave of Absence taken without permission, or not returning on the stated date may result in the issuing of an education penalty fine by the Local Authority of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child on prosecution in the magistrates' court.

Parents are also reminded that due to the changes in government regulations from September 2013 that Leave of Absence for the purpose of holidays in term time can no longer be granted except in exceptional circumstances.

Name of child	
Form and College	
Name of parent/guardian	
Address	
Telephone number	
Email	
Start date of proposed leave of absence	
End date of proposed leave of absence	
Place of destination	
Contact name and number of someone who is not travelling with you in case of emergency	
Reasons for request: <i>(Please state why you consider there are exceptional circumstance)</i>	

Signed \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Leave of Absence Request Acceptance Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Request for leave for (Student's name - D.O.B) during the period (date) to (date).

Thank you for your request for a leave of absence for the purpose of (give details).

I have considered your request and can advise that I am willing to grant a leave of absence for (Student name) between the above dates.

(Student name) will therefore be expected to return to the Academy on (date), at the normal time.

Please be aware that should your child fail to return to the Academy on that date, any further absence from school will be unauthorised. This could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority which may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances arising which will prevent your child returning on the above date, please contact the Academy immediately.

Yours sincerely

Principal

## **Leave of Absence Request Partial Acceptance Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Request for leave for (Student's name - D.O.B) during the period (date) to (date).

Thank you for your request for leave of absence for the purpose of (give details).

I have considered your request and can confirm that I am not able to grant a leave of absence for (Student name) for the whole of the period requested. Whilst I understand your reasons for making this request, I have to be mindful of my duties to maintain the good attendance of all our students. I do not consider your reasons for removing (Student name) from school on this occasion to be exceptional circumstances sufficient that I am able to grant term time leave. I am sorry for any distress this may cause you or your family.

Permission is granted (Student name) to be absent from (date) until (date) only.

(Student name) will therefore be expected to return to the Academy on (date), at the normal time.

Please be aware that should your child fail to return to the Academy on that date, any further absence from school will be unauthorised. This could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority which may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

In the event of unforeseen circumstances arising which will prevent your child returning on the above date, please contact the Academy immediately.

Yours sincerely

Principal

## **Leave of Absence Request Denial Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Request for leave for (Student's name - D.O.B) during the period (date) to (date).

Thank you for your request for a leave of absence for the purpose of (give details).

I have considered your request and regret to inform you that I am not willing to grant a leave of absence on this occasion. Whilst I understand your reasons for making this request, I have to be mindful of my duties to maintain the good attendance of all our students. I do not consider your reasons for removing (Student name) from school on this occasion to be exceptional circumstances sufficient that I am able to grant term time leave. I am sorry for any distress this may cause you or your family.

(Student name) full attendance at school during the above period is therefore required as normal, and I must advise you if he/she does not attend school during this period the absences will be recorded as unauthorised and could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority and this may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

Yours sincerely

Principal

## **Suspected Unauthorised Absence Letter**

Our reference:

Parent / Guardian Address

Date

Dear

Re: Students Name – D.O.B

Unauthorised Absence from the Academy between (dates)

I am writing to you with regard to (Student name) absences from the Academy between the above dates as it has come to our attention that he/she was absent as a result of a leave of absence taken without permission.

As the Academy had not given permission for (Student name) to be absent from the Academy during these dates, and authorisation cannot be granted in retrospect we are recording the absences as unauthorised and this could result in us referring the matter to the Local Authority which may result in a Penalty Notice of £60 (rising to £120 if not paid within 21 days) per parent per child.

I would like to take this opportunity to remind you that in accordance with current regulations, leave of absence can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. A request for a leave of absence can be granted if the Academy is satisfied there are exceptional circumstances that have led to this request. Please contact the Academy if we can be of any assistance in the future regarding requests for leave of absence.

Yours sincerely

Principal