Attendance Policy

Approved by TCES Operational Board on behalf of

Thomas Keaney, CEO and Schools' Proprietor

Date of next formal review, Sept 2024

This policy applies to TCES National Online School

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Introduction

At the TCES National Online School we support young people with complex SEN, SEMH and often neurodiverse needs on a journey from isolation to independence. Students are most usually referred to TCES National Online School because they have self-excluded from their previous education provider or have experienced extreme anxiety when forced to attend (EBSA) or they may have been out of school for some time prior to referral (some of our students have been out of education or non-attending for two years or more).

We understand that some of our pupils arrive with us with a history of low attendance, bringing with them traumatic experiences of school. We believe that low attendance is a form of communication and requires a multi-disciplinary approach from education, clinical, pastoral, and safeguarding teams. At initial engagement we may adopt a staged integration. We will aim for full attendance as soon as possible. We expect all professionals to take responsibility for our pupil's journey to accessing full time education and apply our core value of 'High Expectations'.

It is vital for our pupils to gain the greatest benefit from their education, achieved by supporting them in attending school regularly. We believe that for our attendance vision to be effective it must be consistently applied throughout the whole school, by its staff, pupils', families, and carers whilst we embody our 'Never Give Up' approach for our pupils.

Aims of the Policy

We recognise that:

- All students of statutory school age have an equal right to access an education.
- No student should be deprived of their opportunity to receive an education that meets their needs and personal development.
- Missing out on lessons leaves students vulnerable to falling behind.
- In the first instance, it is the responsibility of students and their parents to ensure attendance at school as required by law.
- Many students and their parents may need to be supported and rewarded at some stage in meeting their attendance obligations and responsibilities.
- Situations beyond the control of students and/or parents may impact on attendance. We will, with the agreement and support of parents, work in partnership with external agencies to resolve these.
- The vast majority of students want to attend school to learn, to socialise with their peer group and to prepare themselves fully to take their place in society as well-rounded and responsible citizens with the skills, knowledge and understanding necessary to contribute to the life and culture of their communities.

We expect the following from all our students

- That they attend the online school (their timetabled lessons) every school day.
- That they be prompt logging onto lessons and be appropriately prepared for the day.
- That they will tell a member of staff about any problem or reason that may prevent them from attending school.

We expect the following from Parents/Carers

- To ensure their children attend the online school regularly and punctually.
- To ensure that they contact the school as soon as is reasonably practical whenever their child is unable to attend.
- To ensure that their children are well prepared for the school day.
- To contact the school in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may affect their child's performance in school.

Parents/Carers and students can expect the following from school

- Regular, efficient, and accurate recording of attendance.
- Early contact with parents when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason.
- Immediate and confidential action on any problem notified to us. (Confidential means that the member of staff notified will not disclose that information to anybody other than the school leadership team and the student's teacher without the consent of the student or their parent).
- Recognition and reward for good attendance.
- Incentives to continue to improve attendance.
- A quality education.

Liaison with Local Authorities

- We will supply a termly report to each Authority on the students placed by them at the school.
- We will discuss with nominated representatives from the Authority any issues of concern over attendance.
- We will liaise with the Authority's EWS where there is persistent non-attendance or significant concerns over attendance.
- We expect Authorities to support any initiatives we undertake to improve a student's attendance.

Student attendance and registers

It is a statutory and a contractual obligation for our online school to record, track and improve student attendance. We do this by completing the daily school registers, which is then followed up by in depth analysis at the weekly Inclusion Committee and SLT meetings. Declining attendance must always be taken extremely seriously, as it can and may signal a much larger concern with a student.

Attendance Codes

The attendance codes used are the same attendance codes used in every UK school. TCES National Online School do not differ from the national expectation. The codes are split into different categories and the registers must be completed accurately every day.

Register Code	Description
/	Present AM
\	Present PM
L	Late (before registers closed) marked as present
C	Authorised absence as student is absent due to other authorised circumstances
E	Authorised absence as student is excluded, with no alternative provision made
H	Authorised absence due to agreed family holiday
I	Illness (NOT appointments)
I01	Authorised absence due to illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)
I02	Authorised absence due to illness: confirmed case of coronavirus (COVID-19)
M	Authorised absence due to medical/dental appointments
R	Authorised absence due to religious observance
S	Authorised absence due to study leave
T	Authorised absence due to traveller absence
B	Approved education activity as student being educated off site (NOT dual registration)
J	Approved educational activity as student is attending an interview
P	Approved educational activity as student is attending an approved sporting activity
V	Approved education activity as student is away on an educational visit or trip
W	Approved educational activity as student is attending work experience

G	Unauthorised absence as student is on a family holiday, NOT agreed, or is taking days in excess of an agreed family holiday
N	Unauthorised absence as student missed sessions for a reason that has not yet been provided
O	Unauthorised absence as student missed sessions for an unauthorised absence not covered by any other code/description
U	Unauthorised absence as student arrived after registers closed
D	Dual registered (at another establishment - NOT counted in possible attendance
X	Not required to be in school
X01	Non-compulsory school age absence - not counted in possible attendances
X02	Student self-isolating with Coronavirus (COVID-19) symptoms
X05	Students required to self-isolate as part of quarantine requirement (after arriving in the UK from a non-exempt country or territory)
X06	Student not in school because they have been advised specifically by their doctor or public health authority that they are clinically extremely vulnerable and should not attend
X07	Student advised specifically not to attend school as part of restrictions to education set out in Government advice
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances - not counted in possible attendances
Z	Student not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances
#	Planned whole or partial school closure - NOT counted in possible attendances

Colour	Description
	Present
	Authorised Absence
	Approved Educational Activity - Counted as Present
	Unauthorised Absence
	Not Counted in Attendance Calculations

All students of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet a student's individual needs. The specific medical, SEN and Social, Emotional Mental Health needs of our pupils mean that most of our students will have met with considerable difficulty in attending education prior to starting at TCES National Online School. An individual timetable for each pupil may exist to support that pupil through the transition from social isolation to independence; from non-attendance to full attendance to reintegration at an online school.

In agreeing to a part-time timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and therefore must record it as authorised absence.

In recognising that pupils who are being educated by TCES National Online School may have been out of education for a considerable period it should also be recognised that as we work to improve attendance, on poor attender may have a disproportionate impact on attendance results.

TCES demonstrate improved attendance from each student's starting point. We address weak attendance through our attendance toolkit and our safeguarding policy, and we track, monitor and address weak attendance through our Clinical inclusion meetings and SLT meetings. Attendance Toolkit

The TCES National Online School Attendance Toolkit is designed to assist administrators, staff and the SLT to follow a set procedure in tackling student absence. It clearly defines the timescales we adhere to, and the relevant action that must be taken at each stage.

The key to the success of the Attendance Toolkit is communication, both with the parent/carer, and the Local Authority to ensure that we are doing everything we can to assist a young person in returning to online education, following or during any period of prolonged absence.

Phone calls home are a vital part of the Attendance Toolkit and happen at all stages. These phone calls area also recorded on the student's Scholar Pack record, as evidence of our communications.

By following the Attendance Toolkit rigorously, TCES National Online School can show that they we are meeting our statutory and contractual obligations regarding attendance.
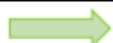
Attendance Toolkit Flowchart

TCES National Online School Attendance Flowchart

We are proud to be able to support pupils through their education when onsite provision has not been possible or has not suited the immediate needs of the child. Keeping Children safe in education continues to be our first priority and we have a duty of care to adhere to the statutory guidelines laid out in 'Keeping Children Safe in Education - GOV.UK'

Pupil Attends

Complete Register (and 6 week learning plan)	→	Pupil is late to log on	→	Call Pupil into meeting after 5 minutes

Pupil Does Not Attend

These steps to be repeated, and register completed, daily by tutor for each day of non-attendance

1) Tutor call to parents to offer support to help student join the lesson	→	2) If no response - repeat call to parent/carer. Complete register and inform HL team	→	3) Tutor to send cover work to both parent and pupil emial address expressing concern and offering help/support

Office Team to continue to try to make contact with parent/carer via phone/text/email. If contact is made, update register with appropriate code.

Pupil Does not Attend - Parents are in contact

Day 1		Day 5 (No doctors letter)		Day 10 (no doctors letter)
If child is ill, parent can self certify for 7 days.	If there is a doctors letter then we do not need to take the matter futher. We would continue to support pupil & Parent to engage.	We outline our duty of care in our induction procedure and in this duty of care we explain that we would request a MASH consultation.	We would avoid Police Welfare checks unless there was a previous concern in place.	If there is no authorisation and particularly if we have not had sight of child, we have a duty of care to complete a MASH/CME referral.

Pupil Does not Attend - and No contact from Parents

Where there is statutory Involvement

Day 1	Day 3	Day 5	Day 8	Day 10
If pupil is absent & Parents have not responded - notify the statutory Social Worker	Letter and Email 1 from Attendance Toolkit to be sent to parents. Copy to Social Worker	All Attendance is RAG rated for discussion and allocation of resources through Clinical inclusion meeting. Update Social Worker	Professionals Meeting to be convened. Parent/carers to be informed by telephone messages and email.	MASH/CME referral should be made in agreement with Social Worker.

Pupil Does not Attend - and no contact from Parents

No current statutory involvement.

Day 1	Day 3		Day 5	Day 10
Office Team to continue to try to make contact with parent/carer via phone/text/email. If contact is made, update register with appropriate code.	Letter and Email 1 from Attendance Toolkit to be sent to parents.	All Attendance is RAG rated for discussion and allocation of resources through Clinical inclusion meeting.	Contact MASH service for telephone consultation.	MASH/CME referral should be made as discussed in MASH consultation call.

All Schools have a duty of care to pupils (and to parents) to protect their safety.

MASH is the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub.
* Mash Telephone Consultation is to request advice and guidance from Safeguarding professionals in the pupil's local authority.
** A referral to MASH signifies a level of concern that the child has not been seen for considerable periods of time.
*** CME referral - Child Missing in Education
Keeping Children Safe in Education - GOV.UK

Encouraging attendance through target setting, good practice, and reward

Attendance can be encouraged in the following ways:
- Accurate completion of the registers at the beginning of each session and within 30 minutes of the start of the session.
- Attendance checks at appropriate times.
- Recording of good attendance on individual success reports and end of term reports.
- Awarding certificates for 100% and significant improvement of attendance each week.
- An 'improved attendance' certificate for any student achieving a greater than 10% improvement in attendance in any on half-term/term.
- Vouchers for students who achieve 100% attendance each half term.
- All awards to be awarded by the Head teacher as appropriate.
- Establishing a mechanism for working with those parents who are concerned that their children may be having trouble in attending school.
- Setting reasonable targets for students, which are incorporated into their individual planning documents.
- Sending parents termly absence reports, together with targets for improvement as appropriate.
- The efficient use of registration systems can provide valuable, year group and student level attendance data which enables speedy analysis and timely responses by the National Online School.

Exclusions

At TCES Group we do not issue Fixed Term Exclusions. It is our intention to provide all our students with the opportunity to work in a safe and secure environment enabling all teachers to teach and all students to learn. The Behaviour Policy is underpinned by the above statement.