

Tudhoe Colliery Primary School



Attendance Policy 2023 – 2024

Mission Statement:

At Tudhoe Colliery we offer the opportunity for achievement, the motivation for development and the support for independent growth in a caring environment, which values every individual, learning together to achieve our full potential.

Attendance Policy

Tudhoe Colliery Primary seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise their true potential in line with our Mission Statement. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure.

We believe that all pupils benefit in achievement, well-being and wider life choices from the education we provide and students need to attend school regularly to achieve this. The aim of our attendance policy is to set out our expectations and our consistent practice to facilitate the regular attendance of all pupils.

Regular attendance is also a protective factor and this policy is part of an integrated approach to supporting pupils along with other policies including safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning.

This policy has been written in line with the DFE 'Working together to improve school attendance' applied from September 2022.

Key people

Wendy Armstrong – Office Manager
Susan Etherington – Attendance Officer
Jim Smith – Head Teacher
Allison Boustead DHT & DSL
Jaime Theakson Behaviour Lead

Contact School: Phone: 01388814399 Email: office@tudhoecolliery.co.uk

Important General Information

All of our procedures and the steps we take to improve attendance are set by the government and supported by the Local Authority School Attendance Support Team.

The government recognises that pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 who meet national expectations in reading, writing and maths have an attendance of 95% - 96% (7 days absence) and those who attain higher than expected have an attendance of 97% (6 days absence). The government recognises if a child's attendance drops below 90% it is a serious concern – this means 19 days absence a year. If a pupil's attendance falls below 50% this is regarded as severe and a possible safeguarding issue. Schools are directed by the government to take action when a child's attendance drops below expected levels.

The Law

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school

Our Commitment

We will ensure that:

- All pupils have access to a full-time education in accordance with the national curriculum or agreed alternative.
- Pupils will not be deprived of their education opportunities, impacting their attainment, well-being and wider life chances, by either their own absence or lateness, or that of other pupils.
- Pupils and families are supported to improve pupil attendance – working together to remove barriers to attendance and to develop support plans.
- Expectations are clear, attendance is monitored and pupils and families are supported.
- School is a place of safety and support for a pupil.
- Government guidance is followed including the management of persistent and severe absenteeism and enforcement action if required.

Expectation	Pupils attend school every day on time. Maximum absence 7 days a year (means minimum 96% attendance)	School has systems in place to support attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - School ethos - Monitoring procedures - Incentives and rewards - Inclusive curriculum
Monitoring	School monitors every pupil's attendance daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annually.	School systems in place to support attendance. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Communication with home (Phone calls, letters, school meetings, termly attendance data) - School ethos - Incentives and rewards for pupils - Governor over-sight
Support	This is the focus of the work in school on attendance. School wants to support pupils and families and we will listen to what barriers there are in school and work to remove them, working together to resolve issues. Parents are required to engage with school. School will help parents to access support for out of school barriers to attendance.	School systems in place. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meetings - Policies and actions on behaviour, SEND, medical conditions, bullying, pastoral, mental health, well-being, use of resources etc. - Home-school communication - Pastoral support, counselling. - Working with support services
Persistent or severe absence	If all other support fails and absence persists, school may have to formalise plans to support attendance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Working together with families and support services - Meetings, support and action plans.

	This may include the local authority team with parenting contracts or education supervision orders.	
Enforcement	If support is not working statutory intervention or prosecution may be required to protect a pupil's right to an education. Fixed penalty notices may be used for failure to ensure that a child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered (eg. unauthorised absences including unauthorised school holiday)	- Local Authority involvement.

Procedures

Contact details

Parents and carers must ensure that the contact details on the school information system are accurate. A house move, telephone number change, emergency contact change must be reported to school as soon as possible so that the emergency contact details can be updated on the school system. School should have at least 2 emergency contact numbers for a pupil.

School hours and registration – punctuality

1. School starts at 08:55 (5 minutes to 9 o'clock) and finishes at 15:30 (30 minutes past 3 o'clock)
2. Pupils can enter school from 08:40 (20 minutes to 9 o'clock).
3. Pupils are expected to be in school and in the classroom for 08:55 ready for registration in the morning and 13:30 (30 minutes past 1 o'clock) in the afternoon.
4. Pupils arriving after 08:55 and 09:05 in the morning (5 minutes past 9 o'clock) will be marked as late. Please let school know the reason for the lateness. Missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class.
5. Registers close at 09:05 and pupils arriving after this time may be recorded as an unauthorised absence. Pupils arriving after 09:30 (half past 9 o'clock) will be marked as unauthorised.
6. Registration is recorded on Arbor – the school's electronic management system.
7. Persistent lateness will result in a letter home requesting parents / carers to make an improvement to the situation.
8. If lateness continues parents / carers will be asked to come to school for a meeting to discuss the barriers to punctuality and what support the school can provide.
9. Continued lateness may result in involvement from the Local Authority.

Absence

Pupils are expected to attend school everyday that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from school.

1. On day 1 of an absence- parents must contact school to explain the reason for absence. Parents must contact school every day their child is absent. This may be done by phoning the school office and speaking to:
 - Mrs Wendy Armstrong, Office Manager, on 01388814399 or
 - Jim Smith, Head Teacher and Attendance Officeror by leaving a message on the school answer machine.
2. If absence continues to 3 days or more, even if a parent has made regularly daily contact with school, we will get in touch to offer support and to enquire about the pupil's well-being as an important member of our school community.

Absence without reason – this is an unauthorised absence.

1. We will make contact by phone or text message/Parentmail. Please note that this is also a safeguarding procedure. If you miss a call from school please phone back.
2. If an absence continues *without explanation* we have a safeguarding duty to make contact with the pupil/family and if necessary make a welfare home visit. If the absence continues, we may have to request support from services to make a welfare visit.

Long-term absence

If a pupil has an operation or an illness which will require them to be absent longer-term from school, we will work with the family to provide additional support to continue their education until they can return to school. This is likely to be alternative provision. The return to school will be managed/phased as appropriate to the situation.

If a pupil has been absent for any other reason, for any length of time, school will work with the family to provide support to the pupil returning to school.

Absence Monitoring

All pupils' attendance is monitored daily, weekly, half-termly, termly and annually. Attendance is a key factor in a pupil's attainment within school, well-being and an influence on future life choices. Attendance is monitored so that we can identify, as early as possible, if attendance is falling for a pupil and put the appropriate support in place. Parents will be informed every term of their child's attendance.

1. If a pupil's attendance falls below 96% at any time during the academic year, we will contact home, usually sending a letter to make parents and carers aware of the situation. If any support is required, please contact school.
2. If attendance does not improve, parents and carers may receive a letter requesting they provide medical evidence for any future absences. This is based on a concern over the frequency and regularity of absences. Get in touch with school at any point to discuss absences, medical concerns etc. and if there is any support the school can provide.
3. If attendance does not improve, you may be requested to attend a school meeting to discuss any barriers to attendance and any support that the school can provide. Attendance below 90% is regarded as persistent absenteeism and parents and carers will be asked to a meeting to prevent pupils from falling into this category and to agree a support and action plan.

4. If attendance does not improve and absence falls below 90% (persistent absentee) and towards 50% (severe absentee) the local authority will get involved to review the support required and enforcement action may be taken.

Leave of Absence

1. If you are planning a leave of absence from school, you must complete the Leave of absence form and return it to school, irrespective of whether the absence may or may not be authorised. This informs the school that the child will be absent and therefore safeguarding measures will not be activated when the child does not turn up at school.
2. Only in *exceptional circumstances* can a leave of absence be granted.
3. Applications must be made in writing 2 weeks before the requested date for the absence.
4. Requests are made on the Leave of absence form available from the school office or on the website.
5. The request must be made by the parent or carer who the pupil usually lives with and submitted to the Head Teacher. All parents and carers with responsibility for the pupil must sign the form.
6. The Head Teacher will consider each application individually, taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. However, the government states that a leave of absence should not be granted unless the headteacher believes the circumstances are exceptional and it is therefore unlikely that a leave of absence will be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.
7. Parents and carers with responsibility for the pupil will receive a letter detailing whether the leave of absence has been granted.
8. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the headteacher to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. The days granted will be marked as an authorised absence.
9. If a leave of absence is not granted and a pupil is taken out of school, the absence will be marked as unauthorised. This may lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice for failure to ensure that a child of compulsory school age regularly attends school where they are registered.
10. Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

Medical conditions and Special Education Needs and Disabilities (SEND)

Every pupil has a right to a full-time education and high attendance is expected for all pupils, however we are aware that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. This can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or special education needs and/or disabilities. All pupils have the same right to an education and the school has the same attendance ambition for all pupils. However, when working with families to improve attendance, school will be mindful of the barriers pupils face and put additional support in place. This can include:

- Reasonable adjustments
- Individual health care plans, where needed, if a pupil has a long-term medical condition.

- Considering additional support from external partners (local authority or health services)
- Working with parents to develop specific support plans.
- Where appropriate, Education Health and Care Plans.

Pupils with medical conditions will be contacted annually to check that the information the school has is accurate and that, where appropriate, individual health plans are in place. In support of this, parents are asked to provide school with copies of medical documentation and letters relating to the medical condition.

Medical appointments

Families are encouraged to schedule interventions or medical appointments outside of the main school day. A medical appointment is an authorised absence. If an appointment is in school hours, pupils are expected to miss the minimum school time possible to attend the appointment – this may mean attending school before the appointment and/or return to school after the appointment whenever possible.

Appointment cards or notifications (email or phone) need to be shown to school to authorise a pupil leaving school during the school day.

Promoting attendance

Attendance at school is non-negotiable and it is essential to support a pupil's attainment, well-being and development. High standards of attendance are promoted as part of the school's ethos at every opportunity including weekly class attendance assemblies, with incentives for the best class attendance. Rewards will be used sensitively and without discrimination – consideration will be given to those pupils who have additional barriers to attendance.

Children Missing from Education

If you move from the area and your whereabouts are unknown, the school can legally remove your child from the roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is vital that you keep school informed of any change of details and regularly update them if details change. Your child may be at risk of losing their school place if your whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if you are leaving the area, you provide details of where and how you can be contacted. If you do not do this and the school is unable to trace your child, this would be treated as a safeguarding matter.

Date of Revised Policy: September 2023

Next Review: September 2024

Signed:	<i>Jim Smith</i>	Headteacher
Signed:	<i>Jill Nicholls</i>	Chair of Governors