



ATTENDANCE POLICY v1.7

Town Close School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces equal opportunities for all. We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel welcome and valued.

A high level of school attendance is essential for a child to achieve their full educational potential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education.

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the Department for Education's (DfE's) statutory guidance on [working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#), through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Registration

All children are registered in the morning and afternoon; these registration are a legal requirement and it is vital that pupils are in school for this.

In the Pre Prep Department registers are taken by class teachers in the morning and the afternoon.

In the Prep Department registers are taken by the form teachers in the morning and by the subject teachers in the afternoon.

If a (Prep) child is due to have a music lesson or activity which clashes overlaps the registration period, they must go to the front office to register BEFORE going to their music lesson. Teachers can only mark a child as 'present' if they are physically in the registration period.

The registers are taken and recorded using our school management system, iSAMs. If the system is unavailable, paper registers are completed and sent to the appropriate office to be entered electronically once the system is available.

In the Prep Department, the pupils are also registered for each lesson that they attend. Prep pupils are also registered on entering the dining room for lunch. This is particularly important in a school environment in which children move around the school for different lessons.

The full list of updated codes can be found in the Appendix of this policy.

Responsibilities

Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to:

- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)

Parents are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends daily, and on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.25am on the day of the absence and call or email each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Wherever possible, ensure that appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

School

We are duty bound to record and monitor attendance and absence, accurately, maintaining written records from parents when a child is absent. The government has set out a range of codes for this purpose, which are in the attached appendix.

We have a responsibility to monitor absence levels, supporting pupils and parents where attendance levels fall, so as to maximise the time in which pupils are in school.

Emma Boyt, Deputy Head Pastoral, is the named Attendance Champion.

Absence

Arriving late

Morning registration takes place at 8.25am. Any pupil arriving after this time should go to the Front Office (Prep) or Pre Prep office. They will be marked as Late (L) if they arrive before the registers close and (U) if arrival is after registers close. Registers close at 8:55am.

The afternoon registration will be at 1.30pm in Pre Prep and 2:00pm for the Prep department.

Absence for medical reasons

If your child needs to be absent from school due to ill health, parents should email the relevant school office by 8.30am:

Prep pupils: prepsec@townclose.com
Pre prep pupils: preprepsec@townclose.com

If a child is absent without explanation, the School secretaries will make contact to confirm the child's whereabouts and request written confirmation of the absence.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents must apply in advance in writing for permission for their child to have leave of absence. Government guidance has introduced a single national threshold of **10 sessions (usually equivalent to 5 school days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10 school week period.**

These sessions do not have to be consecutive and can be made up of a combination of any type of **unauthorised** absence. The period of 10 school weeks can span different terms or school years. In line with national guidance, the Local Authority (LA) retains the discretion to prosecute parents under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Requests for family holidays in term time do not typically constitute an exceptional circumstance and should not usually be granted. Whilst parents of pupils in independent schools are not fined, as a matter of course, the right is reserved, by the government, to do so, if frequent or regular absence requests are made.

Requests for leave of absence should be made via the school portal. The decision as to whether to grant the request rests with the Head.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school during morning or afternoon registration must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). All unexplained absences will be recorded using the code N (unauthorised) until written confirmation is received. Only the Headmaster, the Head of Pre Prep or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absences that are not due to medical reasons.

Day 1 of absence (see Absence for medical reasons)

Continued Absence

Day two to twenty – school continues to make enquiries to establish why the pupil is not attending

- Continue efforts to contact all parents, family members and emergency contacts by all available telephone numbers and email addresses.
- Undertake a visit to the family home to establish whether the family still reside at the property (this should be conducted by 2 members of staff or with the local Safer Schools Officer linked to the cluster/area).
- Contact siblings' schools to see whether siblings continue to attend, or they hold information as to the families' whereabouts.
- Checks with members of school-based staff who the child or parent may have had contact with e.g. SENCO, School Nurse, etc.
- Checks with other agencies with known involvement who may information regarding the whereabouts of the child.
- If ongoing risk assessment suggests the child may be at risk of harm, school's Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact Norfolk Police and/or Children's Advice and Duty Service.

School establishes one of the following during enquiries

Outcome	Action
Parent is failing to ensure regular attendance.	Follow school attendance procedures.
Family have moved and new address within local area is gained.	Follow school attendance procedures.
Confirmation that child is attending a new school, being electively home educated.	Off roll notification form can be submitted and pupil can be removed from school roll.
Family have moved and new address outside local area is gained but no new school identified.	Telephone consultation with CME Team to establish whether removal from roll can be agreed under reasonable distance grounds.
Family believed to have moved but new address has not been established.	Telephone consultation with CME Team to establish whether any further enquiries can be made by the school or CME Team to establish the whereabouts of the child.

Written absence records

Written notice of absence received from parents, usually via email, are saved digitally in pupils' files in Records Shared.

Frequent Absence

Within the School, it is the responsibility of the Data Administrator to raise concerns over repeated absence or lateness to the Attendance Champion. The Deputy Head Pastoral in the Prep Department and the Head of Pre Prep will also be made aware of any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the School will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible, by working with parents/carers and seeking outside help where needed.

Record Preservation

We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least 6 years.

Computer registers are preserved as electronic back-ups once a month and are available for each month.

Children Missing Education

Refer to the policy: Procedure for Pupil Registration and Children Missing Education

Last reviewed: November 2024

Next review: November 2025

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		

C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a ‘mobile child’ who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency

Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	Pupil is unable to attend as they are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention
Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays

