

TORMEAD

PUPIL ABSENCE POLICY

This whole school policy also applies to the Early Years Foundation Stage

Introduction

All girls are expected to attend every session of the school term unless they are ill or the School has authorised their absence. Throughout this policy the word 'parent/ parents' should be taken to mean either parent(s) or those *in loco parentis*.

References

This policy has been drawn up with regard to the statutory guidance *Children Missing Education* (DfE 2016) and *Surrey County Council Policy Guidance for Safeguarding Children Missing Education* (May 2017)

Other Policies

This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's:

- First Aid Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Supervision of Pupils Policy

Types of Absence

Illness at Home

If a girl is too ill to come to school, parents should inform the School before the start of the school day at 8.25am. If a girl is absent frequently owing to illness, the School may ask for medical guidance to make sure that the right support is given. Should a girl need to take medication following an illness, this should be arranged via the Health Care Lead in the Senior School or the Class Teacher/ Junior School Secretary in the Junior School.

Illness at School

If a girl becomes unwell at School, she may only leave once permission has been given by a member of staff; girls should not contact their parents directly to request collection. In the Senior School, permission may only be given by the Health Care Lead or a qualified First Aider; in the Junior School, permission must be given by the Class Teacher, Junior School Secretary or School Health Care Lead. The member of staff giving permission should make the appropriate office staff aware that they have given permission. Parents (or emergency contacts, if necessary) will then be contacted by the School to arrange collection.

Medical/ Dental Appointments

The School will automatically authorise absence for routine or emergency medical or dental appointments. As much notice as possible should be given. In the case of emergency appointments, parents of Senior School girls are encouraged to make direct contact via text or email to inform their daughter (girls are permitted to check their phones/ iPads for texts and emails at break and lunchtimes); Junior School parents should ask the Office to pass on a message to their daughters.

Other Circumstances

Permission for absence on any other grounds should be sought, in writing, from the Head.

Unauthorised Absence

If a girl is absent without good reason or permission, this will be recorded as unauthorised. If necessary, the steps outlined in the Missing Pupil Procedure (below) will be followed and action taken accordingly.

Long Term Absence

Tormead is committed to supporting any girl who is absent from School on a long-term basis, defined as a period of more than five working days.

The Form Tutor or Head of Year should contact parents or guardians on or before the fifth consecutive working day of absence and put arrangements in place to support the girl. These may include arrangements for sending work home and providing a named contact (usually the Head of Year) in school to facilitate communication. Appropriate procedures will be put in place for girls who are taking public examinations.

The School will do all that is possible to ensure that any girl is reintegrated smoothly. There will be appropriate discussion between the School, the girl and her family to assist this process, but at all times the welfare of other girls will also be considered.

Covid related Absence

The code X continues to be used for absence due to COVID isolation period or whilst waiting for a test.

If test is positive, pupil stays at home because ill, and code "I" kicks in, until they are able to return to school.

All other usual absence codes remain unchanged.

Methods of Communication

Our recommendation is that parents use electronic notification via the Parent Message Centre where possible. This is the most convenient method for all concerned: it is highly secure for parents and allows the School to process the information efficiently.

Method	Details
Parent Message Centre	Personal log-in
Email	Senior School Office: <i>absence@tormeadschool.org.uk</i> Junior School Office <i>juniors@tormeadschool.org.uk</i>
Telephone	School Office: (01483) 575101 Junior School Office: (01483) 796073

Type of Absence	Notification Method			By
	PMC	Email	Tel	
Illness at Home	Y	Y	Y	8.25am

Routine Medical/ Dental Appointment	Y	Y	Y	ASAP
Emergency Medical/ Dental Appointment			Y	ASAP

The School asks that notice of future absence be given as early as is practicably possible.

Parent Message Centre

Instructions for setting up an account with the PMC are sent to all parents upon joining the School. Being password protected, the PMC is the most secure method of communicating with the School.

In creating an account, parents will be asked to complete a form confirming that their password is known only to them and that they accept responsibility for keeping it private. Please note that each parent needs to sign the form. Please note that we cannot accept electronic notification of absence without a signed copy of this form.

Electronic notification can only be used for illness on the day or for notification of future medical appointments; emergency medical appointments and requests for extraordinary absence follow the existing systems.

Parents in the Senior School will be reminded every half term to log in to the PMC to check their daughter's absence report.

A report every half term to see if anyone of the pupils have gone over the 10 day absence line, but we do not remind parents to check their absence reports.

Girls Leaving During the Day

Junior School

Please see Supervision of Pupils Policy for girls in Reception. All Junior School girls in Years 1-6 should wait in the Junior School reception to be collected and signed out by a parent, guardian or appropriate adult (of which the school should be made aware). No girl is allowed to leave school unaccompanied during the day.

Years 7-11

All girls in Years 7-11 must sign out in the Wellbeing Centre before leaving during the school day. Staff should already be aware of the reason for their early departure; if this is not the case, then they will contact parents to establish it.

We would normally expect girls in Years 7-9 to be collected by a parent, guardian or other appropriate adult (of whom the School should be made aware) from the Wellbeing Centre. However, they, as well as girls in Years 10 and 11, may be permitted to leave unaccompanied, if permission has been given by their parent(s) and they are deemed well enough to do so.

Sixth Form

During the day the Sixth Form are permitted to leave the School premises if they are not expected in a lesson, pastoral period or assembly. They must sign out and in using the biometric terminals in the Sixth Form Common Room. For girls in the Lower Sixth, this privilege applies after the first half term at the earliest (i.e. when appropriate)

If a girl needs to leave School for reasons of ill health, she must have obtained permission from the Health Care Lead or a qualified First Aider. She must sign out using the biometric terminals in the Sixth Form Common Room. The School will not allow a Sixth Former who seems very unwell to leave the premises unaccompanied. We require that a parent either picks her up or grants permission to allow the girl to leave the premises unaccompanied.

Registration

All registration is completed electronically. We have two official registrations which fulfil our statutory requirements: one in the morning and one in the afternoon. However, in the Senior School, registrations are also taken at the start of every lesson as well as at the start of Independent Study and the pastoral period.

Junior School

Morning registration is completed by classroom teachers for Years 1-6 by 8.25am with Reception by 8.50am. Afternoon registration is completed by classroom teachers by 1.00pm.

Senior School

Years 7-11: morning registration is taken at 8.25am; it should be completed by 8.50am. Afternoon registration is taken at 1.55pm; it should be completed by 2.15pm.

Sixth Form: registration is taken in every lesson.

Should a girl arrive after the start of any lesson for any reason, the teacher should update the register accordingly.

Procedure

Junior & Senior School

If, when collating the registers, staff in either of the school offices find that a girl is absent without this absence having been accounted for, they will follow the following procedure:

- Check to establish whether the girl is on a late-running coach (AM only)
- Check that the girl has not signed in/out
- Check office documentation (notification of absence via letter/ email from parents etc.)
- Carry out internal enquiries: check that the girl is not in a Learning Support or Music lesson and that she is not in the Wellbeing Centre
- Contact both the girl's parents to inform them that their daughter has not been registered and try to establish her whereabouts, using email as well as telephoning all given numbers and leaving messages.

If parents respond and inform us that the girl should be in school...

Go to classroom to check.

If girl is present

Establish why she was not registered (and send report accordingly).

Contact parents to inform them that she is safe.

If girl is missing

Inform either the Head or the Bursar in person (Senior School) or the Deputy Heads of Junior School (Junior School) and email Executive Group; they will advise of further action, possibly involving:

- speaking to the girl's friends
- sounding the fire alarm
- contacting the police, with ongoing action agreed as the situation develops.

Keep parents informed.

If parents respond and inform us that the girl is absent...

Remind them of absence procedure for notification (and report to Deputy Headmistress for follow up).

If parents do not respond...

If no response from either parent is received after 10 minutes, go to classroom to check whether girl is present.

If girl is present

Establish why she was not registered (and send report accordingly).

Contact parents to inform them that she is safe.

If girl is missing

Contact both the girl's emergency contacts to inform them of the situation and try to establish her whereabouts, using email as well as telephoning all given numbers and leaving messages.

Inform either the Head or the Bursar in person (Senior School) or the Deputy Heads of Junior School (Junior School) *and* email Executive Group; they will advise of further action, possibly involving:

- speaking to the girl's friends
- sounding the fire alarm
- contacting the police, with ongoing action agreed as the situation develops
- keep parents and emergency contacts informed.

The appropriate steps of the above procedure will be carried out under any other circumstances in which a girl is not where she is timetabled to be, or does not present herself for collection at the agreed time.

After every registration in which any issues were encountered, the member of office staff in charge should email a report to the Deputy Headmistress (Senior School) or Deputy Head: Logistics (Junior School), detailing these issues (girl not signing in, teacher error etc) so that they can be promptly followed up. If the child is subject to a child protection plan then the named social worker should be informed.

If a girl's absence from school still gives cause for concern after the steps of the Missing Pupil Policy have been followed and/or contact made with parents, the DSL will make contact with the appropriate local agencies.

If a girl is found not to have signed in or out in the Senior School, she will be issued with two detention marks.

Absence from Lessons

Junior School

The Junior School office informs teachers if a girl has an authorised absence. If a girl is absent for a lesson elsewhere (Music or Learning Support, for example, according to the published timetables) she will request permission from her teacher to leave the classroom. If a girl is missing without good reason, teachers will inform the Junior Office staff, who will then follow the appropriate steps of the procedure detailed above.

Senior School

An electronic registration is taken at the start of each academic lesson. Should a girl be found to be missing without being on the most recent iSAMS out of school list with a valid reason

(illness or visit, for example), then an email should be sent to the School Office immediately. The Office staff will then follow the appropriate steps of the procedure detailed above.

Peripatetic music staff, Learning Support teachers and LAMDA teachers should alert the relevant School Office within the first five minutes of a lesson if the girl does not arrive. This can be via email or telephone.

Absence During a Visit

If a girl is found to be missing during a school visit away from Tormead, then the following procedure should be followed. Please note that common sense should be the guiding principle in dealing with incidents of this nature.

- The girl's friends and other members of staff should be questioned in order to establish when she was last seen
- Contact via mobile phone should be attempted
- Staff should be detailed to search the immediate area, while others remain at the meeting point for an agreed and reasonable period of time
- The Executive Group should be informed; they will advise of further action, possibly involving contacting parents, emergency contacts or the Police.

NB Procedures outlined in the Visits Policy should minimise the possibility of this happening through adequate staff/ pupil ratios, robust risk assessment, carrying of contact details and careful planning. Girls are required to stay in small groups and rendezvous points should be arranged beforehand.

Children Missing Education

Introduction

Tormead recognises that all children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to an efficient, full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Children missing education are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of harm, abuse, exploitation or radicalisation, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later in life.

Effective information sharing between parents, schools and local authorities is critical to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age are safe and receiving suitable education. Tormead is committed to working in accordance with Surrey County Council Policy Guidance to monitor and report any cases of prolonged absence.

Parents' Responsibilities

Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.

Compulsory school age starts on 31 December, 31 March or 31 August following a child's fifth birthday - whichever comes first. If the child's fifth birthday is on one of those dates then they reach compulsory school age on that date. Pupils can leave school on the last Friday in June if they will be 16 by the end of the summer holidays.

School's Responsibilities

In line with local procedures, Tormead:

- Enters pupils on the admission register on the first day of attendance

- Notifies the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register, including all the details contained in the admissions register for the new pupil
- Monitors each pupil's attendance through daily registration procedures as detailed above and follows the procedure set out above for any unauthorised absence
- Removes a pupil's name from the admissions register on the day she leaves the school
- Notifies the local authority when about to remove a pupil's name from the admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations, and no later than the date that the child's name is due to be removed.

These actions will be completed whenever a girl's name is removed or added to the admissions register at both standard and non-standard times for all girls of compulsory school age.

Reporting to the Local Authority

Tormead will refer a pupil to the local authority for further investigation if she has failed to attend regularly or has been continually absent for a continuous period of ten school days or more without permission and the school has carried out reasonable checks but failed to establish her whereabouts and the reason for absence. This will happen regardless of whether or not local agencies have already been informed. The School will provide a named contact to liaise with the agencies to participate in supporting the absent girl and attending any necessary reviews or other meetings.

Elective Home Education (Home Schooling)

Some parents may elect to educate their children at home and may withdraw them from school at any time to do so, unless they are subject to a School Attendance Order. Where parents notify the school in writing of their intention to electively home educate their child, the school must forward a copy of the letter to the Elective Home Education Team. Where parents orally indicate that they intend to withdraw their child to be home educated and no letter has been received, the school must not remove the child from roll and should notify the Inclusion Service (formerly the Education Welfare Service) at the earliest opportunity. The Inclusion Service provides support to schools, parents and young people in providing services on behalf of the local education authority and deals with non-attendance (truancy), child protection and making enquiries about children missing education.

Contacts

External agencies might include:

- Inclusion Service South West Area (01483) 517179
- Surrey Police (01483) 571212
- Surrey Single Point of Access (0300) 470 9100
(01483) 517898
(Emergency Duty Team for out of hours concerns)
cspa@surreycc.gov.uk
- CME Tracking Officer (0208) 541 9313
(0208) 541 9313
cme@surreycc.gov.uk

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Executive Group (EG) and made available to parents via the website.

Date of Last Review: 23 April 2021