



School Attendance and Pupil Absence Policy

This whole school policy also applies to the Prep School

1. Introduction

- 1.1 All pupils 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*. Improving attendance is everyone's business. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.

2. References

- 2.1 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) and *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* (May 2022)

3. Other Policies

- 3.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with the School's:
- i. First Aid Policy
 - ii. Safeguarding Policy
 - iii. Supervision of Pupils Policy

4. Responsibilities

- 4.1 Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children are receiving suitable full-time education. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that 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. The school recognises that there may be

external barriers for some children to attain regular attendance. The school aims to work in partnership with families to ensure that any attendance concerns are dealt with at an early stage and support within school and/or external agencies is sought promptly. Parents will be reminded of their duties and the process to report absence at the start of each academic year.

- 4.2 Improving attendance is a school leadership issue and the Deputy Head (Pastoral), has overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school. Responsibilities should include offering a clear vision for attendance improvement, evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes, oversight of data analysis, and communicating messages to pupils and parents.

5. Types of Absence

5.1 Illness at Home

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

5.3 Illness at School

- 5.4 If a pupil becomes unwell at School, she may only leave once permission has been given by a member of staff; pupils 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 Prep School, permission must be given by the Class Teacher, Prep 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.

5.5 Medical/ Dental Appointments

- 5.6 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 pupils are encouraged to make direct contact via text or email to inform their daughter (pupils are permitted to check their phones/ iPads for texts and emails at break and lunchtimes); Prep School parents should ask the Office to pass on a message to their daughters.

5.7 Other Circumstances

- 5.8 Permission for absence on any other grounds should be sought, in writing, from the Head by contacting headpa@tormeadschool.org.uk or from the Head of Prep, nfry@tormeadschool.org.uk, if in the prep. These absences need to be requested and authorised in advance. Any absence that has not been pre-approved will be marked as 'unauthorised'. Requests for absence will be reviewed by the Head and prior attendance will be taken into consideration.

5.9 Unauthorised Absence

- 5.10 If a pupil 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.
- 5.11 Short and Long Term Absence
- 5.12 If a pupil is registered as absent without that absence accounted for, the Front Office will follow the procedure set out below to identify reason for absence. The Front Office will do this every day of absence, unless notified of authorised long-term absence. The Front Office will still notify the Deputy Head (Pastoral) when absence reaches 10 consecutive days.
- 5.13 On Day 3 of absence, it may be necessary for the Form Tutor to contact the family to discuss absence and plan for return of pupil. This can be decided on a case-by-case basis. For example, this may be appropriate if the student was previously exhibiting anxious behaviours but not appropriate if Tormead had been made aware of planned medical procedures and absence.
- 5.14 Tormead is committed to supporting any pupil who is absent from School on a long-term basis, defined as a period of more than five working days.
- 5.15 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 pupil. These may include arrangements for sending work home and providing a named contact (usually the Head of Year or Deputy Head in Prep) in school to facilitate communication. Appropriate procedures will be put in place for pupils who are taking public examinations.
- 5.16 For pupils who are absent for 5 days consequently, the school requires further evidence to authorise this absence. Examples of evidence include appointment cards or letters.
- 5.17 The School will do all that is possible to ensure that any pupil is reintegrated smoothly. There will be appropriate discussion between the School, the pupil and her family to assist this process, but at all times the welfare of other pupils will also be considered. Any pupil who has had five days of consecutive absence will have a return to school meeting with their Head of Year.
- 5.18 Expected Levels of Attendance and Persistent Absenteeism
- 5.19 Tormead expects excellent attendance from all pupils. Attendance records will therefore be monitored during the year. Pupils whose attendance is 100% at the end of the year will receive a certificate.
- 5.20 90% is the current government threshold for ‘persistent absenteeism’¹. Tormead takes an active approach to attendance, and therefore if a pupil’s attendance drops below 92% this will initiate our attendance improvement mechanism:

Stages	Attendance Percentage	Action
Requires improvement	Between 92 – 90%	Letter sent to parents. Expectation that attendance will improve over next half-term.

¹Department of Education, *A Guide to Absence Statistics*, March 2019, https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/787314/Guide_to_absence_statistics_21032019.pdf Page 13

		Meeting can be arranged at request of school or parents.
Cause for concern	Between 85 – 90%	Parents and student requested to attend meeting at the school. Attendance contract [Appendix 1] discussed and implemented. Reviewed at the end of the half-term.
Significant concern	Below 85%	Referral to the inclusion team at Surrey County Council. Continued poor levels of absence may result in fines for parents.

- 5.21 Any pupil that is classed as a ‘persistent absentee’ (attendance below 90%) will be carefully monitored by the pastoral and wellbeing team. Consideration will be given to the need of academic mentoring should absence be impacting the pupil’s attainment. Any pupil who needs support with their attendance will have contact with their Head of Year or a member of the Wellbeing Team.
- 5.22 Should the school be notified of a physical, social, emotional or mental health issue that is impacting on a pupils wellbeing and/or attendance, the school will offer a meeting to consider any reasonable adjustments that may be needed for the pupil to access learning. This may include putting together a Support Plan. Plans will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that they are up to date and the pupils individual needs are met. Should the pupils absence continue, or there is no improvement, consideration will be given as to whether it would be appropriate for referrals to be made to outside agencies, such as CAHMS (Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) or the Local Authority.
- 5.23 Tormead will liaise with all agencies involved with the pupil and consideration will be given as to whether a Team Around the Family (TAF) meeting is required to ensure that all services are working together in the best interests of the pupil.
- 5.24 Should a pupil be hospitalised – school will coordinate care and, with permission, health care professionals. If unable to attend school due to medical reasons we require written permission from health care professionals. These will be co-ordinated by our Health Care Lead.
- 5.25 Tormead will continue to make contact with those pupils who are not able to attend due to health reasons, so long as medical advice permits this. This includes the provision of home learning, in special circumstances.
- 5.26 All other usual absence codes remain unchanged.

6. Methods of Communication

- 6.1 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> Prep School Office <i>Preps@tormeadschool.org.uk</i>
Telephone	School Office: <i>(01483) 575101</i> Prep School Office: <i>(01483) 796073</i>

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

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

6.3 Parent Message Centre

6.4 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.

6.5 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.

6.6 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.

7. Pupils Leaving During the Day

7.1 Prep School

- 7.2 Please see Supervision of Pupils Policy for pupils in Reception. All Prep School pupils in Years 1-6 should wait in the Prep School reception to be collected and signed out by a parent, guardian or appropriate adult (of which the school should be made aware). No pupil is allowed to leave school unaccompanied during the day.
- 7.3 Years 7-11
- 7.4 All pupils 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.
- 7.5 We would normally expect pupils 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 pupils 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. It must be stated clearly as part of the absence request that you authorise your child to leave the school unaccompanied for scheduled or emergency appointments. They will not be allowed to leave without this permission.
- 7.6 Sixth Form
- 7.7 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 pupils in the Lower Sixth, this privilege applies after the first half term at the earliest (i.e. when appropriate).
- 7.8 If a pupil 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 pupil to leave the premises unaccompanied.
- 8. Registration**
- 8.1 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.
- 8.2 Prep School
- 8.3 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.
- 8.4 Senior School
- 8.5 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.
- 8.6 Sixth Form: registration is taken in every lesson.
- 8.7 Should a pupil arrive after the start of any lesson for any reason, the teacher should update the register accordingly. Pupils arriving late (after 8.25am) must firstly come to the wellbeing centre to sign in, before going to lesson.

9. Procedure

9.1 Prep & Senior School

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

- i. Check to establish whether the pupil is on a late-running coach (AM only)
- ii. Check that the pupil has not signed in/out
- iii. Check office documentation (notification of absence via letter/ email from parents etc.)
- iv. Carry out internal enquiries: check that the pupil is not in a Learning Support, music lesson, sporting event and that she is not in the Wellbeing Centre
- v. Contact both the pupil'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.

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

9.4 Go to classroom to check.

9.5 If pupil is present

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

9.7 Contact parents to inform them that she is safe.

9.8 If pupil is missing

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

- i. speaking to the pupil's friends
- ii. sounding the fire alarm
- iii. contacting the police, with ongoing action agreed as the situation develops.
- iv. keep parents informed

9.10 If parents respond and inform us that the pupil is absent...

9.11 Remind them of absence procedure for notification (and report to Head of Year, Deputy Head (Pastoral), Deputy Head of Prep for follow up).

9.12 If parents do not respond...

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

9.14 If pupil is present

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

9.16 Contact parents to inform them that she is safe.

9.17 If pupil is missing

- 9.18 Contact both the pupil'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.
- 9.19 Inform either the Head or the Bursar in person (Senior School) or the Deputy Heads of Prep School (Prep School) and email Executive Group; they will advise of further action, possibly involving:
- i. speaking to the pupil's friends
 - ii. sounding the fire alarm
 - iii. contacting the police, with ongoing action agreed as the situation develops
 - iv. keep parents and emergency contacts informed.
- 9.20 The appropriate steps of the above procedure will be carried out under any other circumstances in which a pupil is not where she is timetabled to be, or does not present herself for collection at the agreed time.
- 9.21 After every registration in which any issues were encountered, the member of office staff in charge should email a report to the Deputy Head (Pastoral) (Senior School) or Deputy Head: Logistics (Prep School), detailing these issues (pupil 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.
- 9.22 If a pupil's absence from school still gives cause for concern the DSL will make contact with the appropriate local agencies.
- 9.23 If a pupil is found not to have signed in or out in the Senior School, she will be issued with two detention marks.

10. Absence from Lessons

10.1 Prep School

10.2 The Prep School office informs teachers if a pupil has an authorised absence. If a pupil 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 pupil is missing without good reason, teachers will inform the Prep Office staff, who will then follow the appropriate steps of the procedure detailed above.

10.3 Senior School

10.4 An electronic registration is taken at the start of each academic lesson. Should a pupil 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 without delay to the email group "PupilAbsence". The Office staff will then follow the appropriate steps of the procedure detailed above.

10.5 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 pupil does not arrive. This can be via email or telephone.

11. Absence During a Visit

- 11.1 If a pupil 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.
- i. The pupil's friends and other members of staff should be questioned in order to establish when she was last seen.
 - ii. Contact via mobile phone should be attempted.
 - iii. Staff should be detailed to search the immediate area, while others remain at the meeting point for an agreed and reasonable period of time.
 - iv. The Executive Group should be informed; they will advise of further action, possibly involving contacting parents, emergency contacts or the Police.
- 11.2 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. Pupils are required to stay in small groups and rendezvous points should be arranged beforehand.

12. Tracking and Analysing Attendance Data

- 12.1 As poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. The key to this is regular data analysis to both identify and provide immediate additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them.
- 12.2 To aid this, Tormead completes the following analysis:
- i. Each day, the Front Office provides Executive Group data on total attendance of each Year group to spot general trends in absence.
 - ii. At the end of each week, The Front Office Provides Executive Group and Heads of Year with an individual breakdown of attendance for that week, accounting for absence both authorised, illness and unauthorised absence. This is compared to attendance for that term and attendance for the entire academic year allowing for pupils whose attendance is poor to be spotted early and appropriate intervention put in place.
 - iii. The Heads of Year will indicate concerns on attendance on any individual using CPOMS and bring to the attention of the Deputy Head (Pastoral)
 - iv. The Deputy Head (Pastoral) includes data on attendance to the Governing Board on a termly basis.

13. Children Missing Education

- 13.1 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.
- 13.2 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.
- 13.3 Parents' Responsibilities

- 13.4 Parents have a duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age are receiving suitable full-time education.
- 13.5 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.
- 13.6 School's Responsibilities
- 13.7 In line with local procedures, Tormead:
- i. Enters pupils on the admission register on the first day of attendance.
 - ii. 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.
 - iii. Monitors each pupil's attendance through daily registration procedures as detailed above and follows the procedure set out above for any unauthorised absence.
 - iv. Removes a pupil's name from the admissions register on the day she leaves the school.
 - v. 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.
- 13.8 These actions will be completed whenever a pupil's name is removed or added to the admissions register at both standard and non-standard times for all pupils of compulsory school age.
- 13.9 Reporting to the Local Authority
- 13.10 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 pupil and attending any necessary reviews or other meetings.
- 13.11 Elective Home Education (Home Schooling)
- 13.12 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.
- 13.13 Contacts

13.14 External agencies might include:

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

13.15 You can also register a Child Missing in Education on this form:
<https://customer.surreycc.gov.uk/children-missing-education>

Review

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

**Person Responsible for Policy: Tony Breslin, Deputy Head (Pastoral),
tbreslin@tormeadschool.org.uk**

Date of Last Review: 8 June 2022



Appendix 1 – Attendance Contract

Attendance Contract – Tormead School

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	
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We need this Attendance Contract because...

I [Student] am responsible for... and I agree to...

As a Parent, I agree to...

Action agreed

Attendance target:	
Timescale for improvement:	

Date for review meeting:	
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I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

..... Parent/carer

..... Pupil

..... School Representative