Attendance policy

(referred to as the Centre)

Head of Tuition Service: Ruth Minhall

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Signed: Ruth Minhall

Position: CEO

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Contents

1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance from the Department for Education (DfE). We aim to achieve this through our Centre's culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

> 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 educational allocation they are entitled to.

> Acting early to address patterns of absence

> Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend tutoring sessions.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy is based on the DfE's statutory guidance on Working together to improve school attendance and School attendance parental responsibility measures. The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

> Part 6 of the Education Act 1996

> Part 7 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006

> The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
  The Equality Act 2010

It also refers to:

> School census guidance

> Keeping Children Safe in Education

> Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools

> Ofsted's 2025 framework toolkit

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The CEO and Senior Leadership Team (which includes the Group DSL, Group Education Partner, Group SENDCO and Group Head of Education) are responsible for

- Setting high expectations of all Centre leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers
- Making sure Centre leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on Centre attendance, including:
  - Making sure the Centre records attendance accurately on the portal which is used to record attendance data, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
  - Making sure the Centre works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of attendance to tutoring sessions across the Centre's policies and ethos
- Making sure the Centre's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure Tuition Extra has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with Centre leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole Centre and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of Tuition Extra's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the Centre is struggling with attendance, working with leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance
- Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
  - The importance of good attendance
  - That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
  - The school's legal requirements for keeping registers and how to update the portal through additional training as required
  - The Centre's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the CEO to account for the implementation of this policy

3.2 The CEO and Senior Leadership Team (which includes the Group DSL, Group Education Partner, Group SENDCO and Group Head of Education) are responsible for

- The implementation of this policy at the Tuition Extra
- Monitoring absence data and reporting it to appropriate stakeholders
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils, and supporting follow up strategies where appropriate
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where Local Authority transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels

  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days (the Group DSL requests that 2 consecutive absences are logged on our safeguarding platform My Concern, and will become involved at this point rather than after 10 days. Any intervention will be specific to the individual student concerned).
  - Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

3.3 The Attendance Team (as above and including the Data Manager and Thrive Lead) is responsible for

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across Tuition Extra
- Setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having a strong grasp of absence data and oversight of absence data analysis
- Regularly monitoring and evaluating progress in attendance
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling absence, and making sure they are followed by all staff, in consultation with individual staff
- Liaising with pupils, parents/carers and external agencies, where needed

- Building close and productive relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues and using, where appropriate, a wrap around strategy that includes the Thrive Leader

- Creating intervention or reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers. These interventions are discussed at senior level weekly in wrap around meetings.

- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Emma Sedgwick and can be contacted via emma.sedgwick@tuition-extra.co.uk

3.4 Tuition Extra staff including the office Manager and Data Manager are responsible for

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 9)

- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to Centre staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance, and the CEO where appropriate

- Working with EHCP Casework Officers to tackle persistent absence

3.5 Tuition Extra Tutors are responsible for

Recording attendance for both morning and afternoon sessions on a daily basis, using the correct codes (see Appendix 1), and submitting this information to the portal.

3.6 The Office Manager will

- Take calls from parents/carers and students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the Centre system

- Transfer calls from parents/carers and students to the Group DSL where appropriate, in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

3.7 Parents

Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:

- 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 every timetabled session on time

> Call the school OR the tutor to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence, and advise when they are expected to return. Safeguarding notices will be made after 2 consecutive absences from sessions with the same tutor

> Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

> Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

> Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting either the Office Manager initially or Emma Sedgwick.

3.8 Students

Pupils are expected to: Attend every timetabled session, on time

> Call the school to report their absence before 9am on the day of the absence, if over 18

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an electronic attendance register, known as the portal, and place all pupils on this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of each session of each relevant school day and. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

> Present

> Attending a place other than school

> Absent

> Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

> The original entry

> The amended entry

> The reason for the amendment

> The date on which the amendment was made

> The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

> Whether the absence is authorised or not

- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent must notify the Centre OR the tutor of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence as soon as practically possible, by calling the Centre office staff, who can be contacted via 01227 935773 or email Reception@tuition-extra.co.uk

Reception will inform staff as soon as possible

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised, unless the Centre has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, Tuition Extra may ask for medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents should inform tutors well in advance if they are planning to take children out of term time for a holiday. Tutors should be able to expect that parents/carers will support in making up missed time once back from holiday

The pupil's parent must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. See section 5 to find out which term-time absences the Centre can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

At Tuition Extra we understand that there are often unavoidable reasons for lateness but we try to encourage our students to be on time to develop this idea as a life skill

4.5 Following up unexplained absence

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, Tuition Extra will:

- Call the pupil's parent on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will email and speak to tutors to ensure that all information that might be relevant to the absence has been passed on.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not

- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session(s) for which the pupil was absent

- Call the parent on each day that the absence continues without explanation, to make sure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary (Group DSL will do this)

- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or EHCP Casework Officer

- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance

- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

4.6 Reporting to parents

The school will regularly inform parents (see the definition of 'parent', as used in this policy, in section 3.7 above) about their child's attendance and absence levels at Annual Reviews, pre-annual review meetings and in any conversation regarding absence if there is a cause for concern.

5. Authorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

As a centre we ask that students holiday in school holidays but understand that this is not always possible. In the event that this means missing sessions, the tutor(s) will liaise with the family to make up any missed sessions.

5.2 Other reasons for authorised absence

Other valid reasons for **authorised absence** include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance

- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place

- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

We want our pupils to succeed and develop their skills. To do this, pupils need to avoid missing lessons understand the importance of routine and structure as life skills, and that missing lessons will potentially have an impact on their outcomes.

Students are greeted at the Centre when they come in. Many students are tutored at home and online and we expect the same punctuality for those sessions.

We have a deep commitment to support students who are not attending regularly. We consider many strategies including support for families through our Outreach programme and Thrive, changing tutors, being flexible in how we deliver lessons, understanding that learning can only take place where there is trust and a student feels safe and following therapeutic pathways that build up relationships.

7. Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Tuition Extra does not use penalty payments or sanctions for poor attendance. We recognise that poor attendance can be a result of many issues, and we seek to support, not punish.

We intervene in a very bespoke and individual manner. Accessing proven strategies (such as Thrive) but also trying new ones, we are not afraid to push boundaries to support our young people and their families, and we will trial any intervention that we feel may have a positive effect on the students, which will inevitably increase attendance.

8. Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

8.1 Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority, but initially it might be that a chat with parents is the most effective way of supporting our students.

All of our students have SEND which makes them vulnerable. The majority have Social, Emotional or Mental Health needs and there are many that suffer from previous school-based trauma. We use a gentle but consistent approach to reintegrating students; this might mean a home visit or regular phone call, spending time with the student in an outside environment such as Maypole Farm or allowing them just to be and feel safe. We regularly liaise with professionals from other agencies to secure a joined-up approach and we offer as much support to our parents as we do to the students, as their own issues can often translate into issues for the whole family. We use animals at our farm to allow students and parents time to breathe and while we follow many curriculum pathways there, we are very aware of the benefits of fresh air, how

stroking animals can release oxytocin and that being in a low-demand environment can support wellness.

Our tutors start sessions with a meet and greet and always focus on relational growth as a pathway for academic or pastoral success. The Thrive approach is embedded in the work we do and for younger children we practice Thrive explicitly, while for adolescents we teach subjects while following a Thrive programme so that mental wellbeing can be improved.

8.2 Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

We work with many young people that have mental or physical ill health. We will always tailor our approach to one that is agreed by student and their parents, and will work with partner agencies to support through agreed interventions. Many of the tutors at Tuition Extra are highly skilled in working with the most vulnerable students and may be specifically chosen to support a young person in alignment with their skillset.

8.3 Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, the Centre will inform the local authority.

8.4 Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a student has been away from routine and formal learning for some time, we need to support reengagement through enjoyment and increasing resilience. We may change the environment we meet the student in, or change the staff, but because we are not a school we do not focus on getting the student to our site in canterbury and therefore enjoy a much greater level of flexibility in what we can provide.

8.5 Prolonged absence for child

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances

Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection/safeguarding policy (available on our website) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check. We will always be measured and proactive rather than operate through reaction.

9. Attendance monitoring

9.1 Monitoring attendance

The Centre will monitor attendance and absence data weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the provision and at an individual pupil and possibly cohort level. We also scrutinize tutor attendance.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

Attendance figures and patterns are reported in our termly meetings with the Local Authority.

9.2 Analysing attendance

Tuition Extra will:

> Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils that need additional support with their attendance

> Many of the students referred to our service are on an interim basis and therefore the aim is to maintain education while an appropriate setting is found, and as such we have a limited and specific timeframe in which to support our students' educational outcomes.

> Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence

9.3 Using data to improve attendance

Tuition Extra will:

> Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils

> Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severed absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)

> Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

> Share information and work collaboratively with other provisions in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate

9.4 Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of planned lessons, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of planned lessons. We have a broad strategy to secure best attendance but we are not a school and therefore can look at attendance on a personal level while developing whole Centre strategies to make learning more accessible to the students in our care.

When a student is not attending we work quickly through safeguarding channels and will always bring parents into proposed strategies as quickly as we can.

10. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority and/or DfE is updated, and as a minimum [insert frequency] by [name/job title of individual]. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

11. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy

> Supporting pupils with medical conditions

> 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: • 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