



# TORQUAY BOYS' GRAMMAR SCHOOL

## Attendance Policy (Students)

Reviewed by Governing Body – June 2020

**Torquay Boys' Grammar School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and young people in its care**

### 1. Aims

Our attendance policy enables us to provide a consistent practice and a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance. We believe it is the joint responsibility of parents, students and all staff members to ensure that regular attendance underpins the highest possible levels of performance.

We actively seek the full co-operation of families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

In order for a student to gain maximum benefit from his/her time with us, it is imperative that regular attendance is maintained throughout his/her school career where at all possible. Unavoidable absence will occur on occasions for most people, but work missed should be made good upon his/her return to school – he/she will need to check with teachers what needs to be done. If an absence is prolonged, then a work package will be assembled where appropriate - under the supervision of the student's tutor.

This policy is supported by our policies on **safeguarding and good behaviour & discipline**.

### 2. Procedure for reporting absences

Parents are asked to inform the school as early as possible on the morning of the first day of an unexpected absence – by contacting the school by phone on **01803 615501** or by e-mailing, **[attendance@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk)** . Parents are encouraged to give some indication of the likely length of absence where this is possible. It would be appreciated if parents could phone in at regular intervals, e.g. every three days, if the absence continues for a length of time.

The Attendance Registrar will always endeavour to make telephone contact with parents on the first day of absence, if no communication has been received from home. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the school's safeguarding procedures.

On the day that your child returns to school, please use one of the following methods to confirm the dates on which your child has been absent, and provide a brief explanation of the reason for the absence (please remember to give your child's name and tutor group):

- Telephone the school
- Send an email to [attendance@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk](mailto:attendance@tbgs.torbay.sch.uk)
- Write and sign a letter which the student should hand to his/her form tutor



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### 3. Categories of absence

The Department for Education requires that Torquay Boys' Grammar School, as with every other school in the land, carefully investigates all absences.

- **Authorised** absences represent times off school which TBGS acknowledges as being justifiable, e.g. illness supported by telephone call/parental note, medical/dental appointments, special occasions, family bereavements, interviews, school trips, work experience and other off-site activities.  
NB. If a notification is received by a student's tutor detailing a planned (and justifiable) absence, it is imperative that the Attendance Registrar is informed.
- **Unauthorised** absences represent holidays taken in school time or where no satisfactory explanation has been forwarded. (see School action – following up school absences)

#### (i) Late arrival

**Registration begins at 8.50** students who arrive after this time, but within the registration period will be marked as late. The **registration period ends at 9.10** Students who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school reception to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. The code that is entered at this stage is a 'U'. Any unjustifiable reason for a student arriving late will be marked as unauthorised – code 'O'. It is vital that students sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate safeguarding and health and safety regulations are followed and that all students are accounted for.

A register is taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action (see behaviour policy)

#### (ii) Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the morning of first day of absence.

**(see Procedures for reporting absence)**

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a letter or email from the student's medical professional.

#### (iii) Medical or dental appointments



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Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, your child should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

### **(iv) Exclusion**

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. When a student receives a fixed term exclusion (FTE) The tutor/HOH can arrange for work to be sent home.

### **(v) Family holidays and extended leave**

*From the 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 amendments to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006<sup>1</sup> came into force. The amendments make clear that head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.*

It is the policy of the Governing Body not to grant permission for term time absence due to family holidays, except in exceptional circumstances.

Parents may request a leave of absence during term time, but these must be made in writing to the Headteacher as far in advance of any absence as is reasonably possible (**see addendum 1 – Absence request form**)

In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The Headteacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to school. Parents should contact the school immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action by the school, or prosecution by the local authority.

**(see section 5 Legal Action –Following up absences)**

**(see local authority's Penalty Notice Code of Conduct which can be accessed at [www.torbay.gov.uk/attendance](http://www.torbay.gov.uk/attendance))**

### **(vi) Religious observance**

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'TBGS recognises that there may be times where parents may request absence in order to observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times. Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance (*see addendum 1 – Absence request form*)

### **4. School action: following up absences**

Class registers are passed to the school office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the tutor/HOH or Deputy Headteacher (Pastoral) will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

If the attendance registrar has not received an explanation for a student's absence then form tutors may ask students for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon their return. This is for the school records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

The school will take disciplinary action against any students who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

### **5. Legal action: following up absences**

We are required by law to investigate carefully all absences - parents must understand that unjustified absences will not be permitted. Where regular attendance of a student is causing concern, the services of an appropriate outside agency may be enlisted.

Torquay Boys' Grammar School is dedicated to complying with attendance laws and has set out this attendance policy accordingly. Please be aware of the following Local Authority guidelines:

***'Parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular and punctual attendance of their child at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.'***

***If your child has at least 10 unauthorised absences within a 6 month period, please note that failure to ensure regular attendance could result in future legal proceedings by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.***

***All leave of absences from school can only be agreed by the school in advance, so it is therefore very important that you apply to the school in writing as far in advance of any absence as is reasonably possible. Please be aware that a school can only grant leave in 'exceptional circumstances'.***

***Parent/s and/or carers who take their child or children out of school without authorisation, be that by failing to apply at all, applying retrospectively or having their request refused, may be issued with a Penalty***



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***Notice per child per parent/carer who has 10 or more unauthorised absences within any six month period. The Notice carries a penalty of £60 if paid in full within 21 days or £120 if paid in full after this time but within 28 days. We are unable to accept part or late payment and there is no legal right to appeal the Penalty Notice once it has been issued. Failure to comply with a Penalty Notice may result in prosecution proceedings being initiated against you for an offence of failing to ensure your child's regular school attendance which is contrary to section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, you may face a fine of up to £1,000.***

## 6. Roles and responsibilities

### Students

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that students:

- Be aware of the school's attendance policy, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents and the school timetable
- Attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable.
- Bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened, or is foreseen.
- Follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (see 3i). Students are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation.
- Speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Inform reception immediately, at any time during the school day, when attending an extra-curricular activity, a separate school based activity or for an appointment.

### Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- Ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily.
- Tutors will actively monitor lateness. Parents will be notified to discuss any potential support needs.



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- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- Work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

### Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school
- Promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- Encourage and support their children's aspirations
- Follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school and include an expected date for return.
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- Use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- Do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Headteacher (**see addendum 1 Absence Request Form**)

### School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- Be proactive in our approach to promoting good attendance to students and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- Ensure that our school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that students are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement





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- Coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review.
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues
- Ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- Nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- Report to the governing body annually and the lead governor for attendance *termly* on attendance records, data and provision
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- Develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- Document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

### **Governing body**

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff.
- Annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the policy effectively
- Nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- Take time at governors' meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- Ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff

**'TBGS's commitment to equality and diversity means that this policy has been screened in relation to the use of gender-neutral language, jargon-free plain English, recognition of the needs of disabled people, promotion of the positive duty in relation to race and disability and avoidance of stereotypes. This document is available in alternative formats on request.'**



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### ABSENCE REQUEST FORM

To: *The Head Teacher of **Torquay Boys' Grammar School***

*I wish to apply to have an absence authorised from (DATES):*  
*child(ren)*

*To: (inclusive) for the following*

Child(ren)'s name(s)	Class/Year

Do you have a child who attends at a different school that will also be absent? If so, please state the child's name and school:

Name of child(ren):	Registered school

If the children will not be with you, but be with another parent/carer during the absence please provide their details:

Name:	
Address:	
Relationship to child	

Please fully explain the **exceptional circumstances** that you would like the school to consider. This section must be completed. Please continue on a separate sheet if needed and attach any supporting documentation you would like the school to consider:

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<b>Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Name:</b>	
<b>Address:</b>	

Office use only		<input type="checkbox"/> Absence authorised <input type="checkbox"/> Absence unauthorised	Code ____
Date form received	No of days absence requested		
   	   	Signed _____ Head Teacher	



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### **This portion to be returned to parents/carers**

Please note that even if this absence request is authorised you may still receive letters of concern from either the school or Local Authority if your child's attendance drops below a level that the school deems acceptable,

Pupil(s) name(s).....

Class/Year.....

☐ Absence authorised from .....to ..... (Inclusive)

☐ Absence unauthorised current attendance ..... % as of ...../...../20.....

Signed ..... (Head Teacher)

Date.....

**NOTES TO PARENTS/CARERS:** The law does not grant parents/carers an automatic right to take their children out of school during term time. If the request is for an absence in term time you must have Parental Responsibility and be the parent/carer with whom the child normally lives. Permission **must** be sought in **advance**. If the circumstances relating to this request are considered exceptional and the absence is authorised by the school, the authorising of the absences will be conditional on the child(ren) attending satisfactorily up to the date covered by this request.

**WARNING TO PARENTS:** If the school refuses your request and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence. A significant amount of unauthorised absence may make you liable to a Penalty Notice for each child, payable by each parent/carer, or the subject of court proceedings which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a term of imprisonment of up to 3 months. Parents should note that in normal circumstances, current practice is that only one penalty notice will be issued to a parent relating to the absence of a particular child within a two year period. Should a further period of unauthorised absence be recorded, then the parent(s) will normally be summonsed to appear at a Magistrates Court.

### **AVOIDABLE ABSENCE IN TERM-TIME**

**IMPORTANT:** Please read carefully the information below.

**WARNING:** If you allow your child to miss school in term time for an avoidable reason without obtaining the prior approval of the school, you may be issued with a Penalty Notice\* per parent per child, or made the subject of court proceedings under section 444 Education Act 1996.

As a parent/carer, you can demonstrate your commitment to your child's education by not allowing your child to miss school for anything other than an exceptional and unavoidable reason.

THE FACTS	THE LAW
<p>Pupils registered at a school are expected to attend punctually on the 190 days that the school is open. Legislation is clear that any avoidable absence may only be authorised by a school if there are exceptional circumstances.</p> <p><b>WHAT YOU SHOULD CONSIDER</b></p>	<p>The law allows schools to consider individual requests to authorise a future avoidable absence. However before the school can authorise any such requests, they must satisfy themselves that there are exceptional circumstances which justify such a decision. It is entirely the responsibility of the parent submitting the request to provide sufficient information/evidence in order to establish this fact.</p>



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<p>Research suggests that children who are taken out of school may never catch up on the learning they have missed. This may affect test results and can be particularly harmful if the child is studying for final year examinations.</p> <p>Children who struggle with English or Mathematics may also find it even harder to cope when they return to school, while younger children may find it difficult to renew friendships with their classmates.</p> <p>If the school is unable to authorise the absence and the child is still taken out of school, this will be recorded as <b>unauthorised absence</b> and you may receive a £60* fine per parent for each child.</p>	<p>The request for leave must come from a parent with whom the child normally resides.</p> <p>If a child then stays away from school for more than the authorised period this must be recorded as unauthorised absence and could be quoted in a prosecution for poor attendance.</p> <p>If the child is away from school for a total of four weeks or more, the school may have the option to take the child off roll subject to the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.</p> <p>In the case of unexpected extended absence, it is advisable that the parent fully informs the school as to the reasons. If a child is removed from roll, there is no guarantee that the child will regain a place at the school.</p>
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<p><b>Unavoidable absence from school will be authorised if it is for the following reasons:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Genuine illness</li><li>▪ Emergency medical / dental appointments</li><li>▪ Days of religious observance</li><li>▪ Seeing a parent who is on leave from the armed forces</li><li>▪ External examinations</li><li>▪ When Traveller children travel with their parents for the purposes of work where this is agreed by the school</li></ul>	<p><b>Other examples of absence from school that <u>will not be</u> authorised:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▪ Any type of shopping</li><li>▪ Looking after siblings or unwell parents</li><li>▪ Minding the house</li><li>▪ Birthdays</li><li>▪ Resting after a late night</li><li>▪ Relatives visiting or visiting relatives</li><li>▪ The Department for Education states: "Head teachers should only authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If a head teacher grants a leave request, it will be for the head teacher to determine the length of time that the child can be away from school. Leave is unlikely, however, to be granted for the purposes of a family holiday as a norm."</li></ul>
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**The law requires parents to ensure their children receive an efficient full time education, and every minute of every day is important. Please help them not to miss any of this valuable time.**

We hope that when you have read this leaflet you will consider that your child's education is too important to allow them to miss school for avoidable reasons.

\*Penalty Notice £60 if paid within 21 days, increasing to £120 if paid between days 22 and 28.