



COAST
ACADEMIES

Attendance Policy

Key contacts for Coast Academies:

	Eden Park	Cockington	Preston
DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead)	Deb Mawbey (Assistant Head)	John-Paul Sharman	Jane Stead
Attendance Team	Sarah Maunder, Deb Mawbey	Zoe Davies, Emma Thackery, Jess Whitelock and John Paul Sharman	Sharon Jordain, Laura Ellery
Executive Head	Ken Kies	Ken Kies	Ken Kies
Head of School/Headteacher	Ian Morgan	Emma King	Scott Ord

Please also refer to COVID-19 DFE Guidance for Returning to Full Time Education in Torbay in Appendix Three.

Rationale

Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable children to extend their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is developed and maintained. We expect all children to attend every day, when school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school and learning.

Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's:

- Attainment in school.
- Relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting relationships.
- Confidence to attempt new work and work alongside others.

Definition

Every half day absence has to be classified by the school as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, by telephone, by e-mail or via text.

AUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent telephones, emails or texts the school to explain the absence. Only the school can make an absence authorised.

UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Head. Unauthorised absences are those, which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Holidays during term time
- Special treats such as birthdays, visiting relatives or shopping
- Child not able to get to school due to parents/carers illness or attending parental medical appointments

Attendance statistics

Each child's attendance can be summarised as:

100%	Excellent – well done! This will help with all aspects of your child's progress and life in school. This will give them a brilliant start in life and a positive work ethic.
96% +	Very Good – Well done keep on trying hard to achieve 100%.
96-90%	Poor – Absence is now affecting attainment and progress at school. You will be receiving letters from our attendance officer and offered support to encourage improved attendance. This may take a range of forms. (See Appendix two). A penalty notice will be considered to improve attendance at this point.
Below 90%	Unacceptable – Absence IS causing SERIOUS CONCERN. It IS affecting attainment and progress and is disrupting your child's learning. The school pastoral team, including our attendance worker will be working with you to improve your child's attendance and will offer you various solutions which you can access. This level of attendance is prosecutable by the Local Authority. * See info in appendix 3 for COVID-19 which states that penalty notices will still be available to the local authorities but does not require their use. Only the school can "authorise" absence.

Acceptable reasons for authorised absence

Even when seeking authorisation for the reasons listed below, failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being unauthorised.

Illness

- Where a child is absent from school and there has been no reason provided by the parents/carers for this, the attendance team will make a welfare check /phone call to the family. This is done for all pupils (Please appendix one)
- Medical evidence may be requested where a child has been absent for 3 days or more due to illness OR where a child's attendance is below 96% and/or the child is regularly away from school due to illness. Failure to provide evidence when requested may result in the absences being recorded as unauthorised and the attendance team will make contact with the family. Medical evidence can be in the form of a copy of a prescription, medication or an appointment card showing name of child and date they visited.
- If a child is diagnosed with a medical condition, evidence should be provided.
- A card will be provided for you to take to the Doctor in order for you to gain medical evidence. Please ask the Doctor's receptionist to stamp the card and date it to confirm your appointment. Then hand it in at school as your medical evidence.

Unavoidable medical/dental appointments

- All routine (non-emergency) appointments should be made, whenever possible, outside of school hours. Should a child need to have an appointment during school hours, such as in an emergency, hospital or CAMHS appointment, evidence of this will need to be provided. Failure to provide evidence may result in the school recording the absence as unauthorised. In this circumstance, children should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

Exceptional Circumstances

- Exceptional family circumstances such as a bereavements, funerals, weddings and days of religious observance will be considered on an individual basis. Therefore, an absence request form must be submitted to school which can be found on the school website and emailed directly to the admin team.

Rights, responsibilities and roles

School:

1. All staff will understand the registration process in the school.
2. All registers will be completed accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and submitted.
3. The school will ensure that clear attendance information about your child is regularly communicated to parents through a variety of media: the school's website, newsletters, emails, letters, texts and meetings. *This will be done sensitively during the return to school following whole school closure, taking into consideration absences resulting from COVID-19 concerns.
4. The child's yearly attendance figure will also be given with the child's school report.
5. The school will accurately record and monitor all absenteeism and lateness via the school registration system. (See Appendix One)
6. The school will have clear procedures to identify and follow up all absence and lateness, allocating individual staff roles and responsibilities. (See Appendix Two)

Parents:

1. Parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child regularly attends the school at which they are registered. Help and support is available in school to ensure that this can be successful. Failure to fulfil this duty may result in the Local Authority taking legal action.
2. Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.
3. Parents are responsible for immediately informing school of the reason for any absence on the first morning of the absence and every morning thereafter.
4. Parents are not authorised to take their child on holidays in term time.

Lateness

The school definitions and procedures for lateness are as follows:

**COVID-19 staggered start times will need to be taken into consideration.*

- Pupils who arrive late by 10 mins (but before being 30mins late) are considered 'Late before registers close' and marked as (L) They should enter via Reception to sign in and record the reason for their late arrival. The Attendance Officer will monitor late arrivals regularly and look for any patterns.
- At Preston the children who are in the Nest Provision should be in school for 9 am and no later than 9.15 for those travelling by taxi, if they arrive after that they will get a late mark.
- Pupils who arrive late by 30mins or more should be marked as U. This is because it is referred to as "late after registers close)' (U).
- All pupils' attendance records will be checked every week for "late" before registers close (L) and "late" after registers close (U).
- Where either/or these late arrivals cumulate to 5 or more in a half term the school will write/email/text to parents/carers of the pupil in question to discuss any support needs and ways of accessing support.

Term Time Holidays and Exceptional Circumstances

The national policy from the Department for Education states that as of the 1st September 2013, head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All absence requests forms will be considered on a case by case basis and only authorised where there are exceptional circumstances. The Head of School/Headteacher will determine the number of school days a pupil can be away from school if the leave is granted. This decision remains with the school at all times.

You can access the absence request form online on our school website. Our Attendance Team will reply to your request via email.

Penalty notices

Where the decision has been made to unauthorise a request for leave of absence and the leave is still taken, the school may send in a request for the issuing of a Penalty Notice, to the Local Authority, who will then make the final decision about whether a Penalty Notice should be issued. Penalty Notices can also be used as a method to improve attendance when children have had a number of unauthorised absences within a six month period.

The Penalty 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. The Local Authority are unable to accept part or late payments and there is no legal right to appeal the Penalty Notice once it has been issued. If a Penalty Notice goes unpaid, this is likely to result in Court proceedings being taken against you

for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance contrary to section 444 Education Act 1996. If convicted, you may face a fine of up to £2500 and/or a maximum 3 months imprisonment.

Please note: only **one** Penalty Notice will be issued **in any two year period**. This means that if a Penalty Notice is paid, and the child accumulates a further 10 sessions of unauthorised absence (5 school days), this will result in the parent/carer receiving a summons to Court for an offence contrary to s444 Education Act. The matter **cannot** be dealt with by way of a further Penalty Notice being issued.

Penalty Notices are issued per parent, per child. A 'parent' can be any person, whether a natural parent or not, who has care of the child or young person. This can also include parents who are estranged.

[Special absence for talented or gifted children](#)

On rare occasions requests for absence may be considered for children participating in a significant sporting/arts event linked to a particular talent or ability. Examples might be a sporting competition at county or national level, specialist training or attendance at a musical instrument exam. A form is available to request this type of absence which will need to be submitted along with evidence.

If, at any time, a pupil has 10 or more unauthorised absences the school will consider the legal options available.

Appendix One

Procedures for reporting and following up absence/ lateness

First day reporting

Eden Park

- Parents can find the various ways of reporting absence to the Attendance Team via the school websites.
- On every day of absence the parent/carer should ring/email/text school before the start of the school day to inform the offices that their child will be away and give a reason for the absence. An indication of the likely period of absence is requested.
- All children who arrive late will be given a late mark.
- Between 09:30am – 10:30am attendance/administrative staff will contact the parents/carers of any pupil whose absence remains unexplained.
- The Attendance Team will conduct a school walk around as the registers are taken and absences for each class will be recorded by the class staff on a board on the classroom door. Cross checks will be made with any messages received and any family who hasn't left a message will be contacted. If we cannot contact you on any numbers which are on your contact list we may decide to do a home visit. We will always leave a school calling card to let you know that we have made a visit. If we have cause for concern we may report this in to Children's Services or ask the Police to do a welfare check.
- A child may be reported as "missing in education" if no contact has been made for up to 10 days, this includes sending this information to the Local Authority. If we are concerned about the child's welfare we will always do this sooner.

Preston Primary School

- Parents can find the various ways of reporting absence to the Attendance Team via the school websites.
- On every day of absence the parent/carer should ring/email/text school before the start of the school day to inform the offices that their child will be away and give a reason for the absence. An indication of the likely period of absence is requested.
- Between 09:30am – 10:30am attendance/administrative staff will contact the parents/carers of any pupil whose absence remains unexplained.
- All children who arrive late will be given a late mark.
- The Attendance Team will conduct a school walk around as the registers are taken after registers have been submitted. Cross checks will be made with any messages received and any family who hasn't left a message will be contacted. If we cannot contact you on any numbers which are on your contact list we may decide to do a home visit. We will always leave a school calling card to let you know that we have made a visit. If we have

cause for concern we may report this in to Children's Services or ask the Police to do a welfare check.

- A child may be reported as "missing in education" if no contact has been made for up to 10 days, this includes sending this information to the Local Authority. If we are concerned about the child's welfare we will always do this sooner.
- If a pupil is on a child protection plan and has been absent without parental contact, the social worker will be informed.

Cockington

- Parents can find the various ways of reporting absence to the Attendance Team via the school websites
- On the first day of any absence the parent/carer should contact school before the start of the day to inform the school that their child will be absent from school and give a reason for that absence. An indication of the likely period of absence is to be requested.
- Admin staff keep a log of absence calls and reasons received each day.
- Immediately after registration, class teachers send their registers to the office.
- If any member of staff is concerned about an absence, the concerns will be raised with attendance/administrative staff to clarify any reasons or knowledge of the absence. If there are still concerns they will relay to the Attendance Officer and Safeguarding Team.
- Between 09:30am – 10:30am attendance/administrative staff will contact the parents/carers of any pupil whose absence remains unexplained.
- If a child is not in school and no contact can be made with parents or with other contacts, a member of staff may undertake a home visit to check on the wellbeing of your child.
- If after 10 school days, the child has continued unauthorised absence, a Child Missing Education (CME) referral will be made to the Attendance Improvement Service.

If the child is subject to a child protection plan or if the school has particular safeguarding concerns and feel the child is at risk of immediate harm, the school will immediately notify the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) without waiting for 10 school days.

Appendix Two

Attendance Letter sequence

The letters should still be used during the pandemic but we will be guided by the local authority position on the use of fines

All pupils with attendance below 96% will be examined every week by the Attendance Officer and Pastoral team, in order to identify persistent absentees and those pupils at risk of becoming persistent absentees.

The following actions may be taken:

Attendance letter 1 will be sent advising the parent that their child's attendance has dropped below 96%.

Attendance letter 2 will be sent within 2 weeks after letter 1 or later in the same academic year if attendance has not improved, offering parents/carers a consultation with our Attendance Team. At this stage school will be unable to unauthorise any further absences without medical evidence. At the meetings we will offer parents a parenting contract as per the local authority's request.

Attendance letter 3 will be sent inviting parents/carers to a meeting with the Attendance Team. In the case of unauthorised absences. If this is not attended nor received any communications from the Parent/Carer it will be referred to the local authority. If the meeting is attended we will work along side the family to insure that attendance is improved.

If the attendance has still not improved from the attendance meeting and signage of the parental contract then the school will referral to the local authority.

Lates

Warning letters would be sent to parent/carer in the event of constant lates. Once a warning letter has been sent if they accumulate 5 U codes the school pastoral/attendance team would contact the family. In some cases a penalty notice could be issued.

Strategies for promoting attendance

(more details may be included in individual school improvement plans)

Cockington

- Attendance Assembly termly and weekly celebrations in awards assembly
- Individuals and classes are rewarded for attendance and punctuality
- Prizes are awarded to encourage positive attendance
- Letters are sent home to acknowledge improved attendance

Eden Park

- Letters and text alerts sent to parents if attendance falls below 96%
- Attendance awards presented in assemblies
- Class attendance celebrated in weekly newsletters

Preston

- Class with best attendance each week will get the chicken eggs to bake with. The cakes will be shared in class in celebration.

Returning to Full Time Education in Torbay following Summer 2020 Lockdown

Guidance

The DfE have stated in their guidance that:

'Now the circumstances have changed and it is vital for all children to return to school to minimise as far as possible the longer-term impact of the pandemic on children's education, wellbeing and wider development.

Missing out on more time in the classroom risks pupils falling further behind. Those with higher overall absence tend to achieve less well in both primary and secondary school. School attendance will therefore be mandatory again from the beginning of the autumn term. This means from that point, the usual rules on school attendance will apply, including:

- *parents' duty to secure that their child attends regularly at school where the child is a registered pupil at school and they are of compulsory school age;*
- *schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence*
- *the availability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices in line with local authorities' codes of conduct'*

This makes penalty notices and prosecutions **available** to local authorities but does not require their use.

Pre Covid

Before the pandemic Torbay local area worked together to ensure that penalty notices and prosecutions were used as parental levers with the intention of securing better attendance in school. In doing so all parties ensured that any sanctions were applied in the public interest.

With the exception of penalty notices for unauthorised holidays, penalty notices and prosecutions were considered alongside other levers such as Education Supervision Orders and School Attendance Orders.

September 2020

COVID-19 Monitoring of Attendance

We will resume taking our attendance register from September 2020. We will also follow [guidance](#) from the Department for Education on how to record attendance and what data to submit.

All pupils of compulsory school age will be expected to attend school unless a statutory reason applies (for example, the pupil has been granted a leave of absence, is unable to attend because of sickness, is unable to attend because of clinical and/or public health advice, is absent for a necessary religious observance).

Where any child we expect to attend school doesn't attend, or stops attending, we will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parents or carers, by Sharon Jordain, Zoe Davies and Sarah Maunder.
- Notify their social worker, where they have one
- Offer current COVID-19 advice on how to obtain appropriate tests.

We will make arrangements with parents and carers to make sure we have up-to-date emergency contact details, and additional contact details where possible.

The intention of the Local Authority is to return to the pre Covid situation over time but in a way that is sensitive to the anxiety felt by families and children.

'Schools should bear in mind the potential concerns of pupils, parents and households who may be reluctant or anxious about returning and put the right support in place to address this.'

This should be achieved by schools having processes that:

- **communicate clear and consistent expectations around school attendance** to families (and any other professionals who work with the family where appropriate) throughout the summer ahead of the new school year
- **identify pupils who are reluctant or anxious about returning or who are at risk of disengagement and develop plans for re-engaging them.** This should include disadvantaged and vulnerable children and young people, especially those who were persistently absent prior to the pandemic or who have not engaged with school regularly during the pandemic
- **use the additional catch-up funding** schools will receive, as well as existing pastoral and support services, attendance staff and resources and schools' pupil premium funding to put measures in place for those families who will need additional support to secure pupils' regular attendance
- **work closely with other professionals as appropriate to support the return to school, including continuing to notify the child's social worker, if they have one, of non-attendance**

Support for Families and Young People

The LA, CCG and Public Health have undertaken to provide a document that signposts provision around anxiety, including the augmentation commissioned for 6 months to meet a predicted increase in need.

This will include:

1. Young Devon running 'Wellbeing Café's' for YP and Families supported by CBT based 1:1 work on need.
2. Enhanced capacity in Kooth including extra counselling and increased opening hours
3. Online resources created by CAMHS
4. Supportive resources from the cell led by Paul Williams.

The LA has also redirected the work of the Mediation Service; asking them to work with 'Imagine This' partners to help identified families address anxiety about the return.

Process for Reintroducing Legal Measures

Torbay local area does not wish to criminalise reasonable anxiety around school absence whilst families are returning to full time attendance. To create a graduated approach we will have a tiered approach to the use of penalty notices and prosecution.

1. September 7th to September 21st

Penalty notices may be sought for families where persistent absence was evident before March 2020.

2. September 21st to October 5th

As above plus for those families who have failed to engage with the school around returning to school full time.

3. October 5th to October 23rd

As above plus those families who engaged but this did not secure full time attendance.

4. November 2nd onwards

Now following guidance of Local Authority following announcement of November 2020 lockdown

What recording attendance will look like from 01/09/20 until 30/10/20

(Imminent guidance from DfE may supersede this)

Reason	Absence to be authorised (✓) or unauthorised (X)
Pupil has no know reason for not attending school	X
Pupil with history of poor attendance prior to Lockdown and continuing poor attendance.	X
Parents refusing to send pupil to school.	X
Pupil shielding or self-isolating, have symptoms or a positive test result or close contact with someone who has Covid 19.	✓
Pupil shielding during a rise in Covid 19 in the local area who is temporarily absent for 14 days (?)	✓
Pupil complying with the advice of specialist health care professionals.	✓
Pupil unable to attend school because they are complying with clinical and/or public health advice – schools to offer remote education and monitor the pupil's engagement with this.	✓

Pupil returning from a previously booked trip abroad – 14 day quarantine.	✓
Pupil returning from a recently booked trip abroad – 14 day quarantine.	X