



Torquay Girls Grammar School Attendance Policy

Policy Information	
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Approving Committee	Board of Trustees
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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The board of trustees

The board of trustees is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Authorising requests to the LA for fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 SLT Attendance Lead

The SLT Attendance Lead:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the Attendance Officer/HoYs/Pastoral Deputy/DSL and local authority to tackle persistent absence
- Advises the headteacher when to issue requests for fixed-penalty notices

3.4 The Attendance Officer

The Attendance Officer:

- Monitor attendance data for their year group and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the SLT Attendance Lead/Pastoral Deputy, DSL and Heads of Year as appropriate
- Works with the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the SLT Attendance Lead when to issue requests for fixed-penalty notices

3.5 The Heads of Year

The Heads of Year:

- Monitor attendance data for their year group and at an individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Attendance Officer/SLT Attendance Lead/Pastoral Deputy and DSL as appropriate
- Works with the local authority to tackle persistent absence
- Works with the Attendance Officer to arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Works with the Attendance Officer to advise the SLT Attendance Lead when to issue requests for fixed-penalty notices

3.6 Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to SIMS (or the school admin team if necessary).

3.7 School admin team

School admin team are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system if Heads of Year unavailable.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and then in the 1st ten minutes of each lesson. P4 attendance will be used for the PM session attendance. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

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 keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school and be in their form room by 8.45am on each school day.

Students in Year 7-11 arriving before 8.15 must register using the iPads at reception and will be supervised in the Study Centre.

Sixth Form students arriving before 8.15 must register using the iPads at reception and will go to the 6th form Café or Common Rooms.

The register for the first session will be taken between 8.45am and 9.05am. Students arriving after 8.45am must sign in via the iPads at reception.

The register for the afternoon session will be taken during the 1st ten minutes of period 4.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school every day of any unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parents should use Studybugs to inform the school of absence. For students in Y7-11, they may also use the absence line: 01803 653 750. For 6th Form students, they may also use the absence line: 01803 653 761.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide 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.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school 48 hours in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should use Studybugs or contact the Attendance Officer or child's Head of Year to inform them of any planned absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, e.g. at the beginning or end of the school day.

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

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The Attendance Officer and Heads of Year will receive a notification via StudyBugs of any student who is late. Students who are late more than once to a session in a week, without valid reason (including issues with public transport), will receive a phone call home from the HoY and if late again will result in a lunchtime detention being assigned and being recorded as a Level 1 behaviour incident as per the behaviour policy.
- More than eight times in a half-term, or ten lates in total will trigger a notification via StudyBugs and the HoY will review the case and check the validity of any reasons given for lateness. Strategies to ensure punctuality are set out and agreed. Parents will also be consulted and informed. Cases will be looked at individually but if, after the review date, punctuality does not improve, another meeting between Attendance Officer/HoY, student, parent/carer and SLT will take place where a contract will be agreed.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by telephone on the first day of the absence and then via email
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported on twice a year to parents/carers as part of a student's Grade Sheet.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

Exceptional circumstances could include:

1. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
2. Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
3. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
4. To attend a wedding or funeral of a person close to the family.
5. Participating in sporting events representing a club, region or nation.
6. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of 1 to 5 above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the attendance improvement officer prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Please note: Evidence would be required in each case.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

1. The first half term of any academic year (applies to all students)
2. Year nine options time (for students in year nine)
3. At any time during years 10 to 13 (for all students in these year groups)
4. At any time specified by the school (this will be communicated to parents).

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- 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 student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the student is attending educational provision
- Study leave
- Work Experience
- 6th Form/University open days (2 per student)
- 6th Form/University offer holder days (2 per student)
- 6th Form/University Interviews
- Other possible 'exceptional circumstances' where the headteacher may grant term-time holiday

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Year 7-11

During the 1st half-term a letter will be issued to communicate our procedures regarding attendance and remind parents of the importance of having high expectations regarding attendance. This will include the general warning letter from the Torbay Attendance Improvement Service.

After the first half-term, where attendance dips below threshold rates the following actions will be taken:

Threshold 1: 96% - Attendance Officer/Head of Year will meet with the student and phone the parent/carer.

Threshold 2: 92% - Attendance Officer will issue a Level 1 Letter to parent/carer.

Threshold 3: 90% - Attendance Officer will issue a Level 2 Letter to parent/carer and organize a meeting with the student and parent/carer/ & Head of Year.

Threshold 4: Below 90% - persistent absence – Attendance Officer/Head of Year will issue a Level 3 Letter to parent/carer and meet with the student, parent/carer with a member of SLT. At the meeting, a review date will be agreed. Cases will be looked at individually but if, after the review date, attendance does not improve, another meeting between HoY, student, parent/carer and SLT will take place where an attendance contract will be agreed.

Year 12-13

During the 1st half-term a letter will be issued to communicate our procedures regarding attendance and remind parents of the importance of having high expectations regarding attendance.

After the first half-term, where attendance dips below threshold rates the following actions will be taken:

Threshold 1: 90% - Head of Year will meet with the student and phone the parent/carer.

Threshold 2: 85% - Head of Year will issue a Level 1 Letter to parent/carer.

Threshold 3: Below 85% - persistent absence – Head of Year will issue a Level 2 Letter to parent/carer and meet with the student, parent/carer with Head of 6th Form. At the meeting, a review date will be agreed. Cases will be looked at individually but if, after the review date, attendance does not improve, another meeting between HoY, student, parent/carer and Head of 6th Form will take place where an attendance contract will be agreed. Failure to adhere to this policy could result in the 'Fitness to Study' Policy being applied

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school can request for the local authority to fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be requested by the headteacher to be issued by the local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason
- In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six-month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child
- If a child does not reside with one of the parents – each parent is liable to receive a proportion of the fine

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

After taking the views of Student Voice into account attendance will be regularly monitored by the Attendance Officer:

For every week a student achieves 100% attendance, they will receive 1 housepoint.

The tutor group with the best progress in attendance each fortnight will receive 30 housepoints. These will regularly be celebrated by HoY in assemblies.

Students who achieve attendance above 96% over a term will receive a congratulatory message that is sent home by the HoY.

The housepoints will feed into the reward system as described in the behaviour policy.

7. Attendance monitoring

Heads of Year at our school monitor their year group's absence on a weekly basis. The SLT Lead for attendance monitors whole school attendance and reports this to the Headteacher every half-term or more frequently if the Heads of Year alert them to a concern. Every other week, issues around attendance of individuals are discussed with form tutors as part of the HoY briefing.

A student's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health with an expected date of return (see section 4.2). Parents/carers are expected to contact school on every subsequent day of the illness.

If a student's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

If a vulnerable student's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and shares this with the board of trustees.

Attendance data is collected and stored via SIMS, our MIS. Regularly generated reports are used for the following purposes:

- Track the attendance of individual students
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern or cause for celebration
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention, support or celebration

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the SLT member overseeing Attendance. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full board of trustees.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

Appendix 2: example warning letters

Level 1 Letter

Parent/carer Name

HOY/1

Parent/carer Address

Date

Dear **Parental Salutation**

Re: **Name Year & Reg**

I am writing to let you know that **Forename's** absence from School has fallen below the acceptable level expected for our School, which is **96%**. Regular and punctual attendance is vital so that all students are able to take full advantage of their education which would further enhance their opportunities later in life.

Forename's attendance is currently: %

Forename's absences this term are detailed below:

1 Session = ½ a School Day

Type of absence	Authorised	Unauthorised	Unexplained
Number of sessions			

Parents and carers working with schools together is the most effective way of making progress in improving attendance and learning. I hope that bringing this to your attention at this early stage will help to improve **Forename's** attendance.

In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child. If a Penalty Notice is issued it 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. Part or late payments cannot be accepted 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 instigated for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance contrary to section 444 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction of such an offence the maximum fine of £2500, or a maximum 3 months imprisonment, can be imposed.

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 within the following two years, this will result in the parent/carer receiving a summons to Court for an offence contrary to s444 Education Act.

If there is a medical or other personal reason that we are unaware of relating to **Forename's** absence, or there are issues that we may be able to support with, then please do not hesitate to contact me to discuss this either by phone or email.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

Head of Year

Email address:

Level 2 Letter

Parent/carer Name

HOY/2

Parent/carer Address

Date

Dear **Parental Salutation**

Re: **Name Year & Reg**

I am writing to you as I am concerned about the amount of time that **FORENAME** is absent from school.

Unfortunately **FORENAME**'s attendance is currently **X%**. This includes;

Type of absence	Authorised	Unauthorised	Unexplained
Number of sessions			

(1 session=1/2 a school day)

Research shows that even a small drop in attendance can have an impact upon students' educational success and, in order to help them succeed, we aim for every student to have at least 96% attendance.

In view of **FORENAME**'s high level of medical/illness absences we will require medical evidence for any future medical/illness absences. As we understand that writing letters for this purpose is not good use of GP time and resources, the evidence can be a signed GP appointment card or a copy of the prescription slip, a photo of which can be taken with a mobile phone and emailed across.

I must advise you that, without evidence, the school will not authorise any further medical/illness absences for **FORENAME**. These will be recorded as unauthorised absences and, as such, may be referred to the Torbay Attendance Improvement Service.

In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child. If a Penalty Notice is issued it 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. Part or late payments cannot be accepted 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 instigated for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance contrary to section 444 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction of such an offence the maximum fine of £2500, or a maximum 3 months imprisonment, can be imposed.

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 within the following two years, this will result in the parent/carer receiving a summons to Court for an offence contrary to s444 Education Act.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if **FORENAME** has an ongoing medical condition that affects **FORENAME**'s ability to attend school on a regular basis, or if you would like to discuss this matter further.

I would like to work with you to support **FORENAME** to ensure she reaches her best possible opportunity of success.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

Head of Year

Email address:

Level 3 Letter

Parent/carer Name

HOY/3

Parent/carer Address

Date

Dear **Parental Salutation**

Re: **Name Year & Reg**

I am writing to you as I am still concerned **FORENAME's** attendance. I will be contacting you shortly to arrange a meeting to discuss how we may work together to ensure **FORNAME's** attendance improves.

Unfortunately **FORENAME's** attendance is currently **X%**. This includes;

Type of absence	Authorised	Unauthorised	Unexplained
Number of sessions			

(1 session=1/2 a school day)

Research shows that even a small drop in attendance can have an impact upon students' educational success and, in order to help them succeed, we aim for every student to have at least 96% attendance.

In view of **FORENAME's** high level of medical/illness absences we will require medical evidence for any future medical/illness absences. As we understand that writing letters for this purpose is not good use of GP time and resources, the evidence can be a signed GP appointment card or a copy of the prescription slip, a photo of which can be taken with a mobile phone and emailed across.

I must advise you that, without evidence, the school will not authorise any further medical/illness absences for **FORENAME**. These will be recorded as unauthorised absences and, as such, may be referred to the Torbay Attendance Improvement Service.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if **FORENAME** has an ongoing medical condition that affects **FORENAME's** ability to attend school on a regular basis, or if you would like to discuss this matter further.

In situations where a child accumulates 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absences (one school day is made up of two sessions) within any six month period, parents/carers will make themselves liable to receiving a Penalty Notice per parent/carer, per child. If a Penalty Notice is issued it 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. Part or late payments cannot be accepted 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 instigated for an offence of failing to ensure regular school attendance contrary to section 444 Education Act 1996. Upon conviction of such an offence the maximum fine of £2500, or a maximum 3 months imprisonment, can be imposed.

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 within the following two years, this will result in the parent/carer receiving a summons to Court for an offence contrary to s444 Education Act.

I would like to work with you to support **FORENAME** to ensure she reaches her best possible opportunity of success.

Yours sincerely

Attendance Officer

Head of Year

Email address:

Appendix 3: Attendance Contract

Attendance Contract Template

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Student name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	
School:	

Present at meeting:	
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Action agreed
EXAMPLES OF ACTION AGREED: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Student will arrive at school by 8.45 a.m. every day.• Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon student's return.• Parent will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence student may incur.• Are any issues preventing student from attending regularly, school staff will be informed?

Attendance target:	100%
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

..... Student

..... School Representative

..... Other Agency

Appendix 4: Version Control Amendments

Version No	Date	Summary of changes
2	11/10/22	Changes to monitoring attendance of vulnerable students and reasons accepted as exceptional circumstances for authorized attendance
3	12/10/22	Section 5.2 Update to 6 th form procedures