



## **The Tiffin Girls' School**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**November 2022**

**The Attendance Policy is guided by and committed to the following principles:**

1. Tiffin Girls' is a selective school for girls aged 11 – 18 years. It is situated in the Royal Borough of Kingston upon Thames and it draws its students from a wide geographical area. A significant number of students travel to this school from outside the Borough. Some students travel for up to one hour to and from school each day. The school is very proud of its high attendance record.
2. As a school we aim to maintain and raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest possible levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in school.

**The aims of this Attendance Policy:**

3. Aims:
  - To maintain our high attendance record and to improve on it by focusing on individuals and groups, where appropriate.
  - To keep an accurate and up-to-date record of attendance.
  - To identify causes of non-attendance and to take appropriate action.
  - To inform parents/carers of attendance and punctuality issues.
  - To work closely with the Education Welfare Officer to support the wellbeing of the students, and inform external services when identified vulnerable students are absent.
  - To work closely with a student who has been absent for a prolonged period of time, or for a period of absence over a series of separate days.
  - To be consistent with the application of this policy

#### **Opening and Closing of Register**

4. It is the Form Tutor's responsibility to take the online register each morning at 8.30am. All registers will be taken electronically using the School Information Management System (SIMS). Lesson registration also enables patterns of internal truancy to be identified which may suggest problems with a particular subject or wider issues.
5. Students need to be in school on time by 8.30 am each day when registration begins. It is important that all students make a good start to the day and are ready to learn. If a student arrives after 8.30 am but before 8.50am (when registers close) they will be given a late mark (L), and the number of minutes late will be recorded, after this time students will be marked with an N code (unless they are attending a medical appointment) until a satisfactory reason is provided from parents/carers. If no satisfactory reason is provided then it will be marked with a U and will be deemed an unauthorised absence.
6. Procedures are in place if a student is late on a number of occasions. See APPENDIX A.
7. Form Tutors should inform Heads of Year/Assistant Head if they feel the attendance of a student in their form is giving cause for concern.

8. Students will be made aware of the procedures for providing absence notes via the webPortal, procedures for requesting known absences using our Absence Request forms and late registration procedures. They will be reminded of these by form tutors. Form tutors are also responsible for making sure their students understand the importance of regular and prompt attendance at school.
9. The main codes used are those laid down by the DfE from September 2006:
- / present AM
  - \ present PM
  - O unauthorised absence
  - I authorised absence for illness
  - M authorised absence for medical/dentist appointment
  - C authorised absence for other circumstances
  - L late arrival before register closed
  - U late (after register closed)
  - G family holiday not authorised by Headteacher
  - V educational visit
  - B educated off site

### **The Subject Teacher**

10. It is the subject teacher's responsibility to take a register at the start of each lesson and to make a note of any student who leaves the room during the lesson for whatever reason. Students leaving a classroom at any time should also have a note signed by the class teacher in their planner which records the time and the reason why a student is out of the classroom. On return to that lesson or a subsequent lesson, the in-time should be filled in by the class teacher. Students are required to take their planners with them whilst out of lessons as they may be stopped by members of staff to explain why.
11. The subject teacher should enquire of the group as to why a student is absent and should, if there are any unexplained absences; inform the Form tutor, Head of Year, Attendance Administrator or Sixth Form Administrator immediately.

### **Leadership Team**

12. When it is felt appropriate, after consultation with Head of Year, and the Education Welfare Officer, the parents/carers of a student with poor punctuality or attendance may be asked to attend a meeting with the Assistant Head (Pastoral), Head of Sixth Form or the Headteacher and the Educational Welfare Officer.
13. This meeting will be to discuss poor attendance and/or punctuality, to determine if there is a pastoral reason behind the poor attendance, and to explain to parents/ carers the effects this may have on the students' education and achievements. It is also developmental, in that we will seek to understand the barriers to attendance and determine solutions to overcome these obstacles.
14. Further close monitoring, support and appropriate sanctions will be put in place following this meeting.

## **Attendance Monitoring**

15. The Attendance Administrator (Years 7-11) / Sixth Form Administrator will contact the family of any student who is absent without notification on the first morning of the absence. First day absence contact is a priority in this school.
16. The Attendance Administrator (Years 7-11) / Sixth Form Administrator will keep comprehensive records of these absences and inform Assistant Headteachers (Pastoral), Heads of Year and Form Tutors regularly and produce a weekly summary for the tutor of each form group.
17. The Attendance Administrator (Years 7-11) / Sixth Form Administrator will audit yearly student records to ensure that two contacts are held for Parents/Carers. This supports our safeguarding duty and the important process of same day attendance calling.
18. The Heads of Year monitor attendance weekly and this is discussed fortnightly in SLT line management meetings. This includes monitoring of attendance percentages and unexplained absences.
19. If a student's attendance falls below 95% then their attendance is monitored. Often this is for a satisfactory reason e.g. for bouts of illness or for medical reasons. If an unsatisfactory reason is given, then further information may need to be gained from parents/carers or health professionals.
20. The Educational Welfare Officer works onsite each week to analyse patterns of persistent non-attendance and meet with students and parents to ensure that minimum government attendance is achieved.

## **Persistent Absence**

21. If a student's attendance falls below 90% they are defined by the Department of Education as 'persistently absent'. At this level their progress and development may be significantly impaired. This will trigger a meeting or discussion between the school and the parents/carers and student.
22. In the case of a student whose absences are a cause for concern, that is a student whose attendance is dropping below an acceptable level for this school for no apparent reason, the Education Welfare Officer will be asked to meet with that student and parents/carers to explain the consequences of such poor attendance. The Education Welfare Officer will offer advice and support to the parents/carers and the student and will work with the school to support the student's wellbeing. If the student's attendance does not improve, after consultation with the Heads of Year and Assistant Headteacher (Pastoral), the Education Welfare Officer will be asked either to contact the parents/carers or visit the student's home.
23. This procedure will also be followed for a student who is persistently late, providing the school has taken measures to address the lateness.
24. If the student's attendance does not improve, and in accordance with the DfE's guidelines on attendance, the Education Welfare Officer may commence formal legal proceedings which could start with the parents/carers being issued with a penalty notice on behalf of the Local Authority. This may be followed by the issue of a parenting order.
25. If there continues to be no improvement there may follow a prosecution by the Education Welfare Service on behalf of the Local Authority.

## **Reintegration**

26. We realise that returning to school following a period of absence can be very difficult for some young people, whatever the reason for their absence. In these situations, school staff will plan carefully with parents/carers and students, together with any relevant agencies, about how best to support the student's return to school.

## **De-registration of students outside of standard transition times**

27. As is our statutory duty we follow guidelines to inform the Local Authority of any students whose names are removed from the admission register outside of the standard transition points. In doing so we recognise that students who are not in school for any period of time are vulnerable and we have a duty to minimise the number of students who are currently missing education.

## **Parental/Carer Responsibility**

28. Be aware of their legal duty to ensure their child attends school on a regular full-time basis – Section 7 Education Act 1996.
29. Parents and carers are to ensure that the student leaves for school on time each day.
30. They are not to take the student out of school in term time.
31. It is highly recommended that parents/carers contact the Attendance Administrator (Years 7-11)/Sixth Form Administrator, Form Tutor or Head of Year if they notice problems arising with attendance at school.
32. Parents/ carers are required to notify the school on each day of the student's absence by 8.25am.
33. When a student is absent from school, parents/carers should use the webPortal to notify the school of the reason for the absence. The webPortal can be used for an absence explanation for up to 7 days after the absence, after which time a written note must be brought into school.
34. On the day of the student returning to school, a communication should be sent into the school office containing a full explanation of the student's absence via the webPortal.
35. Absences will not be authorised without webPortal explanation to detail the reason for absence. Communications via the webPortal must be entered by the parents/carers.
36. Parents/carers are asked most earnestly not to arrange dental or medical appointments during school sessions, except in cases of urgency, so that considerable interference with school work is avoided. In the exceptional case of a medical/dental appointment being made, parents/carers should inform the Attendance Administrator (Years 7-11)/ Sixth Form Administrator, in advance, of the date and time of the appointment via the Absence request form, which can be obtained from the school website or via the school office. The Attendance Administrator (Years 7-11) / Sixth Form Administrator will then inform the necessary subject teacher of the appointment.

## **Students' Responsibilities**

37. Attend school regularly and attend all lessons.
38. The expectation is that students should arrive at school in time to be in their form rooms by 8.25am for registration at 8:30 a.m. They should go to their lockers pre-8.30am, and have their bags packed before form time in preparation for their lessons, to then arrive on time for their lessons.

- 39.** Students must follow the late procedures:
- If they arrive late to school and arrive before the end of AM registration, they are to go directly to their form room.
  - If they arrive late on an assembly day, and before the end of AM registration, they should sign in at reception and go directly to the assembly venue.
  - If students arrive at school after 8.50am they should report to the school office immediately upon arrival and sign in.
- 40.** Permission should be sought for any known absence other than illness and should be requested in advance. Parents and students can do this by filling in an online absence request form for that day with additional supporting information if available. The absence request forms can be found on the school website. These should be submitted to school at least one week in advance.
- 41.** Only in the case of a dental or medical emergency will an absence request form be accepted on the day. In this situation, the student/parent should contact the Head of Year/ Sixth Form team or attendance administrator for immediate approval before registration.
- 42.** If a student becomes ill during the school day, they must ask for permission to go to the school medical room and, if necessary, parents/carers will be contacted for their child to go home. Students must never contact parents/carers directly to make arrangements to go home.
- 43.** If permission has been given for a student to leave school before the end of the school day, this will be notified via email by the attendance administrator. On these occasions, the student should present themselves at reception at the time that they are due to leave and this authorisation will be stamped (with the official school stamp) into their student planner as they sign out. It is important that the student have their stamped planner with them in the event of being stopped by truancy officers or police.
- 44.** A student who is persistently late must realise that sanctions will be imposed if there is no acceptable reason for her persistent lateness. See APPENDIX A.

**Year 12 specific details:**

- 45.** Year 12 students must register at 8.30am, and remain in school for the full day from AM registration at 8.30am until the end of period 5 at 3.15pm.
- 46.** Year 12 students are only allowed off site at lunchtime. They must not leave until 12.10pm and must be back on site by 1.15pm, and must sign out when leaving and sign in when returning.
- 47.** Year 12 students with no lessons period 4 and period 5 must register with the Sixth form Administrator at the beginning of period 4.
- 48.** Year 12 students can only leave the site during a study period if agreed in advance with the Sixth Form team, e.g. for taking part in voluntary work.

**Year 13 specific details:**

- 49.** Year 13 students must register at 8.30am, and remain in school from AM registration at 8.30am until at least the end of period 3 at 12.10pm. Year 13 students can leave school after 12.10pm, provided that they have completed all their lessons for the day and have no further school duties to perform. Year 13 students must not leave the site before the end of period 3 at 12.10pm, regardless of whether they have finished their timetabled lessons.

- 50. Y13 students with no lessons period 4 and period 5 must register with the Sixth Form Administrator at the beginning of lunch, whether they are leaving the site or choosing to stay in school. They must also sign out at reception when leaving.
- 51. Sanctions (e.g. a loss of privileges or an after school detention) can be applied by the Sixth Form team to any Sixth Form students found to have left the school site at times outside those specified above without a valid reason.

### **Special Leave Requests**

- 52. Students of school age must, by law, attend school regularly. School holidays are published a year in advance on the school website. Therefore, there should not be a reason for parents/carers to take their child out of school during term time. In exceptional circumstances, permission for absence can be applied for, using the Absence Request form at least 3 weeks in advance, to allow the school time for appropriate consideration and a response to be made.
- 53. The school would not normally grant leave-of-absence under exceptional circumstances to students in Years 10, 11, 12 or 13 who will be undertaking internal or external examination courses or assessments.
- 54. Permission for special leave will not be granted if the level of attendance of the student concerned is below 97%.
- 55. Leave granted will not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- 56. Permission will not be granted for any leave-of-absence during any public examination period (for example GCSE's, A Levels), mock examinations, internal school examinations or controlled assessments.
- 57. If a student is taken out of school at any time for the purposes of a holiday, or similar, the school is obliged to inform the Education Welfare Officer who is empowered to take further action. This may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice and fine for each parent/carer for each student's absence.
- 58. A student's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of under achievement which we, working in partnership with parents/carers, seek to avoid. If leave of absence is not agreed by the school, then the absence is recorded as an unauthorised absence.
- 59. If a student is absent for two days either at the beginning or end of a half-term or term, the school will ask for evidence of their illness (medical certificate) or, in certain circumstances, request the Education Welfare Officer to visit.
- 60. If the student is sitting External Examinations and is taken out of school when a request has been refused, the Headteacher reserves the right to withdraw the school's support for the student's public examination entries and parents/carers will have to pay privately for all their child's examinations, including any controlled assessments.

### **Truancy**

- 61. If a student truant from school or leaves school without permission, this is regarded as an extremely serious matter. It may take up a great deal of staff time and it may be necessary to

inform the police that a student is missing. This is a matter of both discipline and personal safety. Under no circumstances should students leave school without permission. Heads of Year will report acts of truancy to parents/carers and any student found truanting will be liable to school sanctions such as detentions.

### **Conclusion**

- 62.** The school makes it clear to both staff and students that the issue of attendance is of the highest priority. The webPortal enables parents/carers to access their child's attendance record daily and will ensure that parents/carers are kept up to date.
- 63.** Attendance and punctuality for AM and PM registration are also recorded on the student's reports which are sent home during the school year and can also be accessed through the web portal.
- 64.** This policy should be read in conjunction with the Safeguarding, and Suspension and Permanent Exclusion Policies.

## APPENDIX A

### Lates Procedures for Years 7-11

Reset each term

No. of lates	Action	Further actions
3	Put on Green Report for attendance. Monitored by form tutor	Failure to complete – HoY detention
6	5 consecutive days signing in with HOY at 08.20	Failure to complete – HoY detention
9	HOY informs parents/carers – 5 consecutive days signing in with HOY at 08.20 and HOY detention	Put on Orange Report for attendance for 2 weeks
12	Meeting with parents/carers - HoY/SLT 10 consecutive days signing in with HoY at 8:20 and 2 x SLT detention	Put on Red report for attendance
15 or continued persistent lateness	Meeting with student, parents/carers and Headteacher Other sanctions as appropriate	Referred to Educational Welfare Officer

\*The number of lates is wiped at the end of each term.

\*\*Continued persistent lateness refers to a situation when a student is repeatedly identified as late in arriving to school over multiple terms.

### Lates Procedures for Sixth Form

Reset each term

No. of lates	Action
3	Tutor informs parents via phone call and encourages improvement, outlining detrimental impact on future pathways of poor punctuality
6	Sign in with Sixth Form Team for 3 Days at 8.15am + potential loss of privileges.
9	1 week signing in with sixth form team at 8.15am and 30 minute detention with Sixth Form Team
12	Phone call with parents/carers from Sixth Form Team and 1 week signing in with sixth form team at 8.15am.
15	Meeting with parents/carers, student and Sixth Form Team
Continued persistent lateness	Meeting with student, parents/carers and Headteacher