

# TASIS



THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN ENGLAND

# Attendance Policy

## Document

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TASIS is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of students and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. It is our aim that all students fulfil their potential.

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. For purposes of this document, the term “Board of Directors” is deemed to have the same meaning as “Proprietor” in accordance with the ISSR, and is used interchangeably.
- 1.2. Complies with:
  - a. Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended 2013, Part 3, paragraph 17
  - b. The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Part 3, paragraph 15
  - c. Children Missing Education guidance
- 1.1. We comply with the UKVI criteria regarding the admission to and attendance of students at TASIS The American School in England.
- 1.2. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the School is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.
- 1.3. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend and to put in place appropriate procedures. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children.
- 1.4. The Board of Directors are responsible for making sure the School keeps Admission and Attendance registers in accordance with the regulatory requirements. Our attendance register records which students are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the School day. An attendance record is also kept of children in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).
- 1.5. This register will also indicate whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.
- 1.6. The School calendar and dates when the School is open can be accessed from the home page of our website, <http://england.tasis.com>. Alternatively, our term dates and Calendar of Events can be obtained from the School office. School emergency closures for such things as extreme weather will also be published on the home page of our website and using the Clarion Call system.

## 2. Roles

- 2.1. **The Role of Parents:** Parents have the legal responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

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**2.2. The Role of the School:** The School is required to maintain two registers:

- a. An admission Register (known as the School Roll)
- b. An attendance Register.

**2.3. The Admission Register:** This gives particular information about students who are currently registered as attending TASIS. The register will comprise information that is compliant with regulations set out in the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations currently in force. For each student, the admission register will contain:

- a. Name in full
- b. Gender
- c. Name and address of every person known to the School to be a parent or guardian of the student (and an indication of the parent with whom the student normally resides)
- d. At least one telephone number at which the parent can be contacted in an emergency
- e. Day, month and year of birth
- f. Day, month and year of admission or re-admission to the School
- g. Name and address of the School last attended, if any
- h. Leaving date and ongoing placement.

**2.4. Attendance Register:** The School is required to ensure that the attendance register for all students on the School roll is taken twice a day – once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Each student must be marked on the register in one of the following categories:

- a. Present
- b. Engaged in an approved educational activity away from the School site (approved by the Head of School and supervised by a person approved by the Head of School, including sporting activities, educational visits or residential trips)
- c. Absent
- d. Unable to attend through exceptional circumstances (unavoidable closure of the School site or part of it)
- e. Taking authorised absence (granted leave of absence by the head teacher or a person acting on their behalf, unable to attend by reason of sickness or unavoidable cause, observing a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parent belongs)
- f. Taking unauthorised absence (if no reason is established when the register is taken, the entry may be corrected later if a valid reason is established).

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- 2.5. If a student is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the School. Parents cannot authorise absence – it is the School that decides how to classify absences.
- 2.6. Authorised absence is where the School has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away from school, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification of absence (e.g. illness). All other absences are treated as unauthorised.
- 2.7. Authorised absences include: medical or dental appointments, days of religious observance, visits to future schools, exclusion, family bereavement and special occasions (e.g. weddings).
- 2.8. All requests for absence must be made in writing to the appropriate Divisional Head for Lower and Middle school students and to the Head of Upper School Student Life for Upper School Students, giving the School plenty of time to consider the request.
- 2.9. If a student is absent without explanation when the register is called, school staff will normally contact the parents the same day whenever possible. The absence will be treated as unauthorised unless an explanation is offered as satisfactory justification for absence.
- 2.10. Due to the international nature of the School and the festivals fundamental to the different nationalities (such as the Russian Orthodox Church, American Thanksgiving, Spanish Feast of the Kings and so on) there is reasonable flexibility regarding the timing of the academic year for particular students.

### **3. Failure to Attend School**

- 3.1. If a student fails to regularly attend school, we will work closely with the parents, student and school to resolve issues and develop strategies to improve attendance.
- 3.2. The School is required to inform the Local Authority (LA) if a student fails to attend school regularly.
- 3.3. Independent schools have a legal duty to report certain thresholds of attendance to the LA. The trigger is 3.5 times within a 6-week block.
- 3.4. All schools are required to notify the LA within five days when a student's name is added to the admission register at any one of the fifteen 'non-standard transition points' – see Appendix 1.
- 3.5. Schools will need to provide the LA with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply when a student's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point – at the start of

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the first year of education usually provided by the School – unless the LA requests for such information to be provided.

## **4. Definitions**

### **4.1. Authorised absence**

- a. 'Authorised absence' means that the School has either given approval in advance for a student of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.
- b. Only the School can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority.
- c. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

### **4.2. Unauthorised absence**

- a. 'Unauthorised absence' is where the School is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.
- b. Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

### **4.3. If a child is absent**

- a. When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence in the electronic register, which immediately informs the appropriate divisional office.
- b. When the child returns to school, a note, email or telephone call to the School office from a parent or guardian should explain the absence. Notes are placed in the family file in the School office.
- c. A note, email or telephone call may be sent/made to the School office prior to the day of absence e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.
- d. If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the appropriate divisional office without delay. TASIS will then be in contact straight away with the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety and wellbeing of the child.

### **4.4. Requests for leave of absence**

- a. We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are

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circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence; an example would be for a child to attend a special event.

- b. We expect parents to contact the School at least a week in advance but normally this request will be granted.

#### **4.5. Long-term Absence**

- a. When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the School will do all it can to send material home so that they can keep up with their school work.

#### **4.6. Repeated Unauthorized Absences**

- a. The School will contact the parent of any child who has an unauthorized absence.
- b. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents will be asked to visit the School and discuss the problem.
- c. If there is concern about a child's absence, the teacher will contact the appropriate divisional office and this will immediately be followed up by the respective divisional head for Lower and Middle School students and the Head of Upper School Student Life for Upper School students.
- d. Where a student does not return to school on the set date or where there is any unauthorised absence then UKVI, in accordance with their criteria, will be informed immediately.

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**Appendix 1: Grounds for notification to Local Authority for Additions/Deletions from TASIS Admission Register (Annex A: taken from Children Missing Form Education 2016)**

- a. Where the student is registered at the School in accordance with the requirements of a school attendance order, that another school is substituted by the local authority for that named in the order or the order is revoked by the local authority on the ground that arrangements have been made for the student to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude otherwise than at school.
- b. Except where it has been agreed by the proprietor that the student should be registered at more than one school, in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) or regulation 9, that they have been registered as a student at another school.
- c. Where a student is registered at more than one school, and in a case not falling within sub-paragraph (j) or (m) or regulation 9, that they have ceased to attend the School and the proprietor of any other school at which they are registered has given consent to the deletion.
- d. In a case not falling within sub-paragraph (a) of this paragraph, that they have ceased to attend the School and the proprietor has received written notification from the parent that the student is receiving education otherwise than at school.
- e. Except in the case of a boarder that they have ceased to attend the School and no longer ordinarily reside at a place, which is a reasonable distance from the School at which the student is registered.
- f. In the case of a student granted leave of absence in accordance with regulation 7(1A), that — (i) the student has failed to attend the School within the ten school days immediately following the expiry of the period for which such leave was granted; (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is.
- g. That the student is certified by the School medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither they nor their parent has indicated to the School the intention to continue to attend the School after ceasing to be of compulsory school age.
- h. That the student has been continuously absent from the School for a period of not less than twenty school days and (i) at no time was his absence during that period authorised by the proprietor in accordance with regulation 6(2); (ii) the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student is unable to attend the School by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause; and (iii) the proprietor of the

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School and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to ascertain where the student is

- i. That the student is detained in pursuance of a final order made by a court or of an order of recall made by a court or the Secretary of State, that order being for a period of not less than four months, and the proprietor does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the student will return to the School at the end of that period.
- j. That the student has died.
- k. That the student will cease to be of compulsory school age before the School next meets and— (i) the relevant person has indicated that the student will cease to attend the School; or (ii) the student does not meet the academic entry requirements for admission to the School's sixth form.
- l. In the case of a student at a school other than a maintained school, an Academy, a city technology college or a city college for the technology of the arts, that he has ceased to be a student of the School.
- m. That he has been permanently excluded from the School.
- n. Where the student has been admitted to the School to receive nursery education, that they have not on completing such education transferred to a reception, or higher, class at the School.
- o. Where— (i) the student is a boarder at a maintained school or an Academy; (ii) charges for board and lodging are payable by the parent of the student; and (iii) those charges remain unpaid by the student's parent at the end of the School term to which they relate.

## **Appendix 2: Absence Codes (as published by DfE)**

### **1. Authorised Codes:**

#### **Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the School**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parent gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

#### **Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Where alternative provision is made, they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

#### **Code F: Extended family holiday authorised by the School**

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Head teachers may in exceptional circumstances agree more than 10 school days leave of absence in a school year. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

**Code H: Family holiday authorised by the School**

Currently head teachers may in special circumstances grant leave of absence of up to ten days for the purpose of family holidays during term time. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are special circumstances which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

**Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify the School as soon as possible when a child is ill. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the seriousness of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical certificates unnecessarily (particularly retrospective certificates), especially if the illness was not treated by a doctor at the time. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

**Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

**Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

**Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only for year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations.

**Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

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This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling and have agreed this with the School but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

## **2. Unauthorised Absences**

### **Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the School or in excess of agreed period**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

### **Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.

### **Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the School is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

### **Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

## **3. Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

### **Code X: Not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

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**Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.** This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- a. The School site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- b. The transport provided by the School or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or
- c. A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

**Code Z: Pupil not on admission register**

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the School to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the School has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the School.

**Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure**

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to 5 non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

#### **4. Different Term Dates for Different Pupils**

Schools and local authorities can agree to set different term dates for different year groups – e.g. for 'staggered starts' or 'induction days'. Code # can be used to record the year group (s) that is not due to attend. This is only acceptable where the School ensures that those pupils not attending on that day are still offered a full education offer over the School year.

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