

Trinity School Attendance Policy

This Policy is intended to ensure that the Governors' Behaviour Principles, Vision and Aims are delivered, as set out below:

Trinity School Vision

- Leading Excellence in SEND Provision
- Ensuring Outstanding Person-Centred Achievement
- Including Everyone in Meaningful and Safeguarded Life-.... *Excellent personal development, behaviour and welfare....*

This policy connects to and is consistent with our other policies such as 'Child Protection Policy' and 'Behaviour and Physical Intervention Policy'

The Guiding Principles

Improving attendance at Trinity School is the work of the whole staff team. The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex for our pupils and their families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn. We achieve this through working with families in a sensitive and personalised way.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Improving attendance is not the sole responsibility of a single member of staff at Trinity; it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in our school, the local authority, and other local partners.

The law on school attendance and the right to a full-time education

- The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.
- Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school
- It is essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances.
- For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

(DfE Working together to improve school attendance September 2022)

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations for Families

There is a rolling start to the school day which gives flexibility to the arrival time of pupils given their method of transport used to get to school. The senior leadership are sympathetic to the complex transport arrangements that families face; this is detailed below:

Arrival Time	LA Transport 8.45 – 9.00	Parent/Carer Drop Off 9.00 – 9.15
Digital Registration in classrooms	9.15 – 9.30	
Digital Registration remains open in school office (late marks given)	9.30 – 10.30	
'U' code used if a pupil arrives after 10.30 and before the afternoon registers are completed		
Afternoon Registration in classrooms	Primary 12.30 – 12.45	Secondary/ FEC 13.30 – 13.45
Departure Time	LA Transport 14.45 – 15.00	Parent/Carer Collection 15.00

Class teachers are responsible for completing their registers in a timely way. Ensuring that they are coding any absences correctly and recording any information that they have received through communication with Parents and/or Carers on Integris in the notes section.

At the beginning of every term every pupil will receive a letter explaining the school's expectations on punctuality. Punctuality is reviewed weekly by the whole school attendance team. Any pupil who is persistently late will be sent home a letter explaining the impact of their child's lateness on their education. The letter will also state that they will be invited to a meeting with the phase Attendance Lead and if necessary the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance to discuss strategies to help the family address their child's punctuality.

Agreed Procedures

Parents/Carers should contact the school every day that their child is absent either by telephone/ email or Class Dojo before 9am. They should state the reason for their child's absence. Class teachers must include any information that they receive via Class Dojo in the notes on the online register notes and code the absence correctly.

Pupils who are suffering from sickness and/or diarrhoea (unless this is a usual reaction to medication) should remain absent from school for a further 48 hours after the symptoms stop. This is to ensure the pupil can return to school with readiness for learning whilst also supporting infection control. We recognise the importance of following this stringently in order to prevent spread of viruses which can lead to an outbreak which in some serious instances can lead to the closure of the whole school for deep cleaning, which would impact attendance and disrupt learning across the whole school.

When a pupil returns to school following an absence which has involved a medical appointment, a copy of the appointment letter or card may be supplied by their Parent/Carer. A pupil returning to school following an admission to hospital will be required to provide discharge notes prior to their return. A pupil's return to school may require a risk assessment and further planning to support any additional health and safety needs. Evidence provided may also include a copy of medication prescribed, or other written information from a medical professional which may impact their time in school for example: a care plan may need to be written. Parents/ Carers do not need to ask GPs for medical certificates as these may have financial consequences. Information received from Parents/ Carers is taken good faith. When an appointment has been made for medical reasons the School Office/ Class Teacher should be notified in advance.

The Headteacher has day to day responsibility for attendance and will ensure that the school meets all legal requirements. It should be noted that the school alone has the power to authorise an absence.

Day to day processes for managing attendance

- The School Office liaises with Phases each day to highlight which pupils are absent and why, this will involve verifying reasons via Integris
- If the School Office is unable to contact Parents/Carers of absent pupil's then the emergency contact details and information will be used as an alternative
- Any pupil with an allocated Social Worker will be flagged to ensure that absences can be communicated to EHC partners as appropriate
- Phase Attendance Leads will be made aware of any issues of families that cannot be reached, with further attempts being made using the telephone/ parent hub and class dojo if appropriate
- A decision will then be made to attend the home address of the pupil on the first day of absence after the circumstances have been assessed by the phase Attendance Lead with either Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance or Head of School.

Home visits in cases of unexplained non attendance

- One senior member of staff will complete a home visit where necessary and may in some circumstances be accompanied by another member of staff
- One senior member of staff may attend alone after discussions with the phase Attendance Lead and either Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance or the Head of School
- Senior staff carrying out a home visit must supply a mobile phone number that they can be contacted on to the Office Manager
- On arrival at an address the senior member of staff must telephone the Office Manager whom will note the time
- On departure from an address the senior member of staff must telephone the Office Manager
- If there is no answer a letter will be put through the front door
- If there is no response from the letter after the initial visit and the child is absent the following day a second visit will be made
- If there is no response and the pupil is known to Social Care the relevant team will be informed immediately
- If there is no response on the second visit, the phase Designated Safeguarding Lead will contact the MASH team/ Social Services and/or the police

Attendance – A Whole School Approach

Parents/Carers should contact their child's class teacher and/or the school office in relation to any matters regarding attendance. This can be achieved through using class dojo/ email or leaving a message on the school absence line. Support for any matters in relation to attendance can be escalated by a family or class team to the phase attendance lead. Attendance leads meet weekly from across the school to ensure that all matters of concern are reported to the Headteacher via the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance.

Class Teachers & School Office Staff			
Primary Mike Wheeler	Secondary Sandra Lee	FEC Jean Williams	HSBT Sam Beezley
Jo Long Deputy Headteacher		Julie Baker Office Manager	

The Attendance Team meet weekly to address matters relating to attendance and punctuality. It is acknowledged that the individual complexities of our pupil cohort require sensitive and supportive management. Support and guidance is provided to the school by our BDSIP attendance Advisor and Local Authority Education Inclusion Partners to ensure that our legal obligations in relation to attendance are met.

The Office Manager and School Office are responsible for:

- Recording pupils arriving to school after 9.30 and before 10.30 in the register as late (the extended period of time for this is due to the complex situations our families face each day)
- Sharing absence reports each day with each phase for X and Y codes each day
- Sharing reports for pupils whose attendance or punctuality is a concern
- Recording pupils who are late to be picked up after school
- Sending out attendance summaries for each pupil at the beginning of each term
- Ensuring letters relating to attendance are issued to each pupil as appropriate
- Highlighting any concerns relating attendance or punctuality issues across the school to the Deputy Headteacher and appropriate phase attendance lead

Holidays and Leave of Absence from School

The Headteacher should not grant leave of absence from school unless there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts of each request. When leave of absence is granted the Headteacher will determine the number of days that a pupil can be away from school. Applications forms are available from the school office. Only in exceptional circumstances will leave of absence be granted for a period in excess of two weeks, or for more than one holiday in any one academic year. It should be understood that all applications and their agreement are at the discretion of the Headteacher and the Governing Body. Parents and/or Carers do not have an automatic right to have these requests agreed.

If leave of over two weeks is requested Parents and/or Carers must apply in writing to the Headteacher at least four weeks in advance. Information should include the nature and purpose of the trip and whether this event or similar request is likely to be requested again. The Headteacher and Governors will then review the pupil's attendance record and the impact that this extended amount of time would have on their education. Where a family has such a trip approved it is expected that where ever possible it will include a school holiday period. It is recognised that this may not always be possible so the family should discuss with the school possible times where taking an extended holiday that will have less impact on the pupil's education. Leave will be granted for a maximum of four weeks during term time and should state a clear return date.

If a pupil fails to return to school without contact being made with the school advice will be sought from the EHC team and attendance leads. If a return date is not supplied the pupil's place at school may be at risk.

Unauthorised Holidays

Families who take unauthorised holidays may be issued a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) which could lead to a fine at county court. Penalty notices will be sent by first class post by the Local Authority, to each parent who is liable for the offence.

Exceptional Circumstances

In exceptional circumstances Parents or Carers of pupils who are due to undergo major and/or complex medical procedures may after discussion with the school have a pre-surgery agreement whereby absence from school is agreed. This is done so to ensure that pupils are prepared physically and mentally for an upcoming procedure. Class Teachers and phase attendance leads will contact families in these circumstances weekly to ensure that welfare calls and remote learning resources are provided to pupils as necessary.

Non-Attendance

At times there are pupils who may not be able to attend school due to complex matters that they and their families face. This can include: complex medical and health issues, transport issues, pupils who have moved and Trinity remains named on their EHC Plan. The Senior Leaders of the school ensure that there are appropriate measures in place to safeguard these pupils. Attendance leads make weekly contact with these families and maintain details records in relation to this. Relevant referrals are made to Social Care, Health and any other multi agency partners as necessary. Remote learning resources are offered and provided as appropriate to each individual pupil.

Children Missing in Education

At Trinity we identify a child missing from education as a pupil of compulsory school age who has unauthorised leave for a long period of time and cannot be contacted. It is vital we identify and report pupils who may be missing in education as they may potentially be exposed to the risk of harm, exploitation or radicalisation.

A CME audit form will be completed and shared with the Local Authority instances where pupils have had unauthorised absences from school for twenty continuous days and contact cannot be made with the parent/carer to establish the reason for the absence. This may be completed sooner if we are aware of any mitigating risk factors given the vulnerabilities of our pupils.

Repeated Absence

Trinity School is dedicated to improving the attendance of our pupils. Where attendance is continuing to be a concern the following steps will be taken to ensure that support is provided to families who are having difficulties in ensuring that their child attends school regularly.

Stage 1 Attendance Concern:

- There will be an alert generated for pupils whose attendance is below 90% since the beginning of September at half termly intervals
- Alternatively, due to individual circumstances the alert may be generated at below 90% attendance during an alternative time frame at the discretion of the Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance
- Phase attendance leads will discuss these cases at weekly attendance meetings where a decision will be made to follow up with individual families as necessary
- Phone call to be made by the phase attendance lead to the family and/or carer to share the concerns relating to attendance
- A generic letter will be sent to the Parents and/or Carers to follow up the telephone conversation
- This stage one concern will be reviewed after half a term, if there has been the required improvement there will be no further action taken. If there are further concerns in the remainder of the academic year the concern will escalate to stage 2

Stage 2 Attendance Concern

- Stage 1 attendance concerns which have not improved after half a term will be escalated to stage 2
- Parents and/or Carers will be invited into school to discuss the issue in person with the allocated Phase Attendance Lead, Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance and the Office Manager

- Where ill health is being given as a reason for continuous absence without medical verification a referral may be made to the School Health Service or permission to contact the pupils' GP may be requested in order for the school to continue to authorize the absence
- Where long term absence is supported by documentary evidence (including medical and home circumstances) then a request for Home Tuition may be explored and applied for if it is deemed necessary
- Any potential barriers to attending school will be explored with the Parent and/or Carer referrals will be made to relevant agencies as necessary depending on each family's individual circumstances
- Attendance will be monitored weekly across a term, with phase attendance leads making contact with families directly when they have further concerns relating to attendance
- If there is a further decline in attendance or no improvement despite the support provided the case may be escalated as a Stage 3 Attendance Concern

Stage 3 Attendance Concern

- The Deputy Headteacher responsible for attendance will make a referral to the Local Authority's Attendance Service
- The family of the pupil concerned will be informed of this referral
- A meeting will be organized and held in person in school to discuss attendance
- A further attendance target will be set with a specified review date
- If there is no improvement and the target set is not met the case will be escalated to a Stage 4 Attendance Concern

Stage 4 Attendance Concern

- At this stage action will be taken by the Local Authority through the Attendance Service to resolve the situation
- This may include direct work with the family and/or referral to other agencies
- Legal proceedings may be considered by the Attendance Service under the:
 - Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003 Section 23 (FPNs)
 - The Education Act 1996 Section 7 and 444
 - The Education Act 2005 (Prosecutions)
 - The Children's Act 1989 (ESO5)

It should be noted that there is legislation that allows Local Authorities to take legal action against parents of children who fail to regularly attend school. Penalty Notices can be issued to a parent if their child is not in regular attendance at school.