



Attendance policy

(inc. Absence in Term Time Policy)

Adopted by Governing Body: Sept 2020-21

Due for review: 2021/22

TRINITY CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

This policy reflects the vision and aims of Trinity CofE Primary School.

At Trinity, all staff work collaboratively to encourage every pupil to strive for excellence. Every child will be supported, challenged and valued. One way in which we strive to do this is by encouraging staff, parents and children to maximise the learning experience in order that all children reach their maximum potential. We are determined in encouraging the development of high self-esteem and for our children to take pride and ownership of their learning. In conjunction with this, we will continuously provide a clear framework for parents and staff as well as clear procedures for involving parents and/or external agencies where appropriate.

Our policy applies to all children registered at this school and this policy is made available to all parents/carers of pupils that are registered at our school on the school website.

Trinity encourages all parents/carers to work in partnership with the school in order to improve attendance and punctuality and recognises that ***“parents have the primary responsibility to ensure that pupils of compulsory school age attend school regularly” (DfE 1999).***

Aims & Objectives

This attendance policy ensures that all staff and governors in our school are fully aware of and clear about the actions necessary to promote good attendance.

Through this policy we aim to:

- Improve pupils' achievement by ensure high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 95% for all pupils, apart from those with chronic health issues.
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and seen to be valued by the school.
- Raise awareness of parents, carers and pupils of the importance of uninterrupted attendance and punctuality at every stage of a child's education.
- Ensure that our policy applies to Reception age children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare Service so that all pupils realise their potential, unhindered by unnecessary absence.
- Promote a positive and welcoming atmosphere in which pupils feel safe, secure and valued, and encourage in pupils a sense of their own responsibility.

- Establish a pattern of monitoring attendance and ensure consistency in recognising achievement and dealing with difficulties.
- Recognise the key role of all staff in promoting good attendance.

Responsibility of Parents/Carers

Children who are persistently late or absent soon fall behind with their learning. Children who are absent from school frequently develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and their ability to meet age-related learning expectations. A child whose attendance drops to 90% each year will, over their time at primary school, have missed two whole terms of learning.

Punctuality

It is the parent/carers responsibility:

- To ensure that their children arrive to school on time. Both KS1 and KS2 doors open at 8:35am until 8:50am. This is sufficient time for all pupils to get to their classroom.
- To ensure children who are late after 8:50am report to the school office to sign in. Records are kept of the pupils that are late with an L code in the register.
- To ensure children are collected promptly at the end of the school day and that necessary arrangements are in place for the journey home. If these differ from the child's normal arrangements, the class teacher and school office should be made aware of this.

Absences

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To notify the school on the first day of absence before 9:10am or as soon as possible. Parents can report an absence by telephoning the school office, or emailing admin@trinity.shropshire.sch.uk
- To provide medical evidence, if necessary, on the child's return to school.
- To ensure that as far as possible, medical appointments are arranged for outside school hours. Where this is not possible, the child should attend school before/after the appointment.
- To liaise with the school as soon as possible regarding any specific issues that might cause absence or lateness, e.g. a sick parent/carer.

Parents/carers of children for whom we do not know the reason for absence will be contacted after 9:10am.

Illness/Medical absences

In addition to the points previously, if a child has prolonged absence due to illness or is repeatedly absent due to illness, the school may request medical evidence for further absences. This can take the form of a GP appointment card, a consultant letter, a copy of a prescription, etc.

Absence for Holidays

Parents/carers are expected to take their children on holiday during the school holidays to minimise the impact of missing education.

The Absence in Term Time Policy (appendix A) is provided to parents upon their child's initial registration to the school sign and agree to. This document sets out that holidays in term time may not be granted by the Headteacher, unless there is considered to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

Parents/carers must complete a Request for Leave Form (appendix B) in advance of the trip (ideally at least 4 weeks prior). These requests will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the Headteacher, and they will use their discretion whilst applying government recommendations.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To obtain a leave of absence form from the school office (or see appendix B).
- To complete and submit the form in advance of the period of absence (ideally 4 weeks prior).

If parents/carers decide to take a holiday without the Headteacher's authorisation, the child's absences will be marked as unauthorised. **Fixed Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service for unauthorised holiday absence during term time. This fine is payable at £60 per child, per parent.**

Absence for Other Reasons

Absences for reasons that qualify as 'exceptional circumstances' in the Absence in Term Time Policy (appendix A) such as religious observance (up to 2 days per year) or close family bereavement *may* be authorised by the Headteachers. These requests must be discussed with the school and a Request for Leave Form completed, if necessary. Absences for close family members' weddings or funerals will be limited to one day's authorised absence, if granted.

It is the parent/carer's responsibility:

- To inform the office, in writing or via the Request of Leave Form (appendix B), of the need for leave in circumstances which are known in advance.
- To inform the school as soon as possible when sudden circumstances occur which prevent a family bringing a child to school, so that the appropriate code can be recorded in the register.

Unexplained Absence

When a child is repeatedly absent and no satisfactory reason is given, the parent/carers will be investigated and may be liable for prosecution and/or a fine from the Local Authority.

Regular monitoring is carried out by the Education Welfare Officer. Children who have repeated unauthorised absences, holidays or otherwise, will be contacted by the Education Welfare Officer and may be invited in to an attendance meeting to discuss absences and any appropriate support.

Role of the Education Welfare Officer

- To investigate absence which exceeds more than 10%, and to hold meetings with these parents as required.
- To investigate lateness which exceeds more than 5%.
- To investigate any unexplained absence which exceeds more than 5 consecutive days.
- To ensure parents are aware of their legal duty under the Education Act to ensure their children attend school.
- To refer cases to the Local Authority for prosecution where persistent absenteeism has not improved despite thorough intervention and support from the school and Education Welfare Officer.
- To report accurate whole school and individual attendance data when required.

Children Missing in Education

If a child is absent (unexplained) for at least 5 consecutive days, the Education Welfare Officer will be notified. A home visit may be carried out. If the absence continues for a 'substantial period of time', the family will be referred as a CME case for the Local Authority. Link for form below:

<https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/schools-and-education/school-attendance-or-exclusion/children-missing-education-cme/>

Persistent Latecomers

Children who repeatedly attend school late after 8:50am will be brought to the attention of the Education Welfare Officer. Warning letters will be issued to the parents/carers of these children. In addition, the Education Welfare Officer does unannounced gate checks.

Parents/carers should note that children who arrive late after registration closes may be marked as unauthorised. Warning letters and/or Fixed-penalty notices may be issued to parents/carers whose children have unauthorised absences due to persistent or prolonged lateness.

Appendix A

ABSENCE IN TERM TIME POLICY

On 1 September 2013, the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 came into force, changing the rules about term-time holidays.

The amendments removed references to family holidays and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of 10 school days.

Parents were informed that during 2013/14, the school would adopt a pragmatic approach which defined pre-booked family holidays as 'exceptional' given that the introduction of regulations meant for a number of parents, events would not be repeated.

The amendments specify that the headteacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless they consider there to be "exceptional circumstances" for doing so. If leave is granted, the headteacher should determine the number of days a child can be away from school. The Governing Body agreed that it is important to all families that where leave of absence is granted, this should be done against clear criteria.

Definitions of 'Exceptional Circumstances'

'Exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

- Being unforeseen and unavoidable.
- Being a 'one off' event not to be repeated.
- Being a significant life-event for the child.
- Being for compassionate reasons.

Given this interpretation, examples where absence would be granted may include, but are not limited to:

- Being unable to return to school due to breakdown.
- Attending the funeral of a close family member.
- Attending the wedding of a close family member.
- Competing in major sporting event.
- Time off to visit a terminally ill close family member.

Family holidays of any form do not fit under this definition. Nor would permission be granted for the convenience (business, financial or otherwise) of parents.

While decisions will be made on a case-by-case basis, requests will normally be refused.

WARNING

If this requested period of absence has not been authorised, details will be passed to Shropshire Council's Education Access Service. The Council may, in the following circumstances, issue a formal Warning, serve a Fixed Penalty Notice or take court action in respect of non-school attendance for this and any future unauthorised absence:

- Parents have not sought permission from the headteacher before taking their child out of school for a holiday in term time
- The headteacher has refused the request but the absence occurs anyway; or
- A pupil has not returned to school by the agreed date with no satisfactory explanation

