



The Trinity Catholic Academy

Attendance Policy 2023/2024

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Attendance Policy

Regular and punctual attendance is of paramount importance to all pupils who attend The Trinity Catholic Academy. Pupils need to attend regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. The Trinity Catholic Academy fully recognises their responsibilities to ensure pupils are in school and on time each day, therefore fully having access to learning for the maximum number of days and hours.

Although Parent/Carers have the legal responsibility for ensuring their child's good attendance, the headteacher, attendance officer, Senior Leadership Team, safeguarding team and Governors of our school, work together with other professionals and outside agencies to ensure that all pupils and their families are encouraged and supported to develop good attendance habits.

Pupils who are persistently late or absent very quickly fall behind with their learning, Pupils who are frequently absent or late develop large gaps in their learning which will impact on their progress and age-related learning expectations.

Aims and 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 ensuring high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Achieve a minimum of 97% attendance for all children.
- 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 Nursery and Reception aged children in order to promote good habits at an early age.
- Work in partnership with pupils, parents, staff and the Education Welfare officer 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, but especially class teachers, in promoting good attendance.

We maintain and promote good attendance and punctuality through:

- Raising awareness of attendance and punctuality issues among all staff, parents and pupils.
- Ensuring that parents have an understanding of the responsibility placed on them for making sure their child attends regularly and punctually.
- Equipping children with the life skills needed to take responsibility for good school attendance and punctuality appropriate to the child's age and development.
- Maintaining effective means of communication with parents, pupils, staff and governors on school attendance matters.
- Developing and implementing procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing cases of poor attendance and persistent lateness.
- Supporting pupils who have been experiencing any difficulties at home or at school which are preventing good attendance.
- Developing and implementing procedures to follow up non-attendance at school.

Types of Absence

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.

Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:

- illness, medical or dental appointments;
- days of religious observance;
- exclusion;
- traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
- family bereavement;
- involvement in a public performance;
- 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis);

Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.

Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc);
- family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Home Visits

If School deem it necessary, staff will make home visits without notification, when a child is a persistent absentee or there is a failure to contact School on the first day of absence.

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as authorised absent, and will be recorded as on an approved educational activity. This means that for statistical purposes such as educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Responsibilities

All members of school staff have a responsibility for identifying trends in attendance and punctuality. The following includes a more specific list of the kinds of responsibilities which individuals might have.

Headteacher

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality and to take appropriate action where and when necessary (in line with statutory regulations and Local Authority and national guidance).

Class teacher

Class teachers are responsible for:

- Keeping an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for either poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/ or unusual explanations for attendance offered by children and their parents/ carers
- Informing the attendance officer where there are concerns and acting upon them
- Providing background information to support referrals
- Monitoring follow-up once actions have been taken to correct attendance concerns
- Emphasising with their class the importance of good attendance and promptness
- Following up absences with immediate requests for explanation which should be noted inside the register
- Discussing attendance issues at consultation evenings where necessary

Attendance Officer

The attendance officer is responsible for:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Trends in authorised and unauthorised absence
- Contacting families where concerns are raised about absence including arranging meetings to discuss attendance issues
- Monitoring individual attendance where concerns have been raised
- Making referrals to the EWO.
- Providing reports and background information to inform discussion with the school's EWO.
- Liaising with other professionals to determine potential sources of difficulties and reasons for absence.

Parents

Parents/Carers are responsible for:

- Ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually unless prevented from doing so by illness or attendance at a medical appointment.
- Contacting the school office on the first morning of absence.
- Informing the school in advance of any medical appointments in school time. For the absence to be recorded as a medical absence we do require evidence from the doctor or dentist. (Appointment card/letter)
- Making requests for authorised absence in term time, only if absolutely necessary as these are not automatically authorised.
- Talking to the school as soon as possible about any child's reluctance to come to school so that problems can be quickly identified and dealt with.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session. The Trinity Catholic Academy expects parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8:40 am for the morning session and that they are also on time for the afternoon session, these times are staggered as follows: Nursery 12.30pm, Reception, Year 1, Year 2, Year 3 12.50pm and Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 1.15pm.

Children will be marked late if they arrived after 8.50am.

The data which is extracted from accurate and up-to-date attendance registers will be used to support the more effective management of whole-school attendance matters. Such data can be used to:

- support and underpin the target-setting process (for individual pupils, year groups, identified cohorts, the whole school) in relation to overall attendance and unauthorised absence on a (half-)termly and yearly basis;
- identify individual children and particular groups of children who are or may be at risk of becoming persistent absentees;
- facilitate and encourage early intervention;
- identify particular types or patterns of absenteeism
- identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy;
- report attendance matters to parents/carers.

Absence Procedures:

As a vigilant and caring school, we apply first-day response to pupil absence. This means making a determined and sustained effort to respond to unexplained absence on the first morning of absence.

If your child is absent you must:

□ Contact us as by 8.40 am on the first day of absence, usually through a telephone call or leaving a message on the answering machine.

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you through telephone call/text to inform you (or any persons on your contact list) that your child is not in school and we have not been given a reason why.
- If contact with you is not established on the first morning of absence, we may follow this up with a home welfare visit from either school staff or the education welfare officer.
- If we have still failed to make contact a home welfare visit may be made by Merseyside police in order to ensure the safety of you and your child.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority Education Welfare Officer

Punctuality

In addressing punctuality at The Trinity Catholic Academy we:

- Have clear procedures regarding register closing times.
- Publicise this policy in School and communicate it to parents/carers;
- balance any sanctions with positive encouragement;
- praise and acknowledge punctuality and improvements in punctuality;
- ensure that teachers set a good example by arriving punctually for registration and for lessons;
- follow up the reasons for lateness and be alert to any emerging patterns or problems.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality. The Governing Body set attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance figures.

Leave of Absence

There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.

All applications for leave for other exceptional circumstances must be made in advance and the school will consider the circumstances of each application individually, including any previous pattern of leave in term time. Any parent/carer requesting leave of absence of more than 1 day will be asked to make an appointment to see the Headteacher to explain the circumstances.

Please be aware however that in line with Local Authority and Government guidance, leave of absence in term time will only be considered in the most exceptional of circumstances. Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract sanctions such as a Penalty Notice.

Leave of absence in term-time will never be authorised:

- during the first term, when a pupil is just starting at School, as it is very important for the child to settle into their new class;
- during an assessment/test period – Key Stage 2 SATs
- when a pupil's attendance record already includes **any** level of unauthorised absence;

Holidays in Term Time:

We do not authorise holidays in term time and penalty notices will be issued

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not to take children away in school time. Remember that any savings you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education.

Penalty Notices

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/ carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60. In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of 5 school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term or 10 school days lost to unauthorised absence in 2 consecutive terms before a Penalty Notice is considered. In cases of unauthorised absence parents/carers will receive a written warning of the possibility of Penalty Notice being issued. This will state the extent of the child's absences and give parents/carers 15 days to bring about an improvement. In that time the child should have no unauthorised absences from school.

In cases of unauthorised holidays warnings will be issued where sufficient notice of the intended absence has been given. This means that in some cases, Penalty Notices may be issued without a warning.

Absence for religious reasons

The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 3 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carers is a member and this will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Recording and Reporting

CPOMS (Child Protection On-line Management System) is used to record absence concerns/issues, parent contracts and Penalty notices. All data/information relating to absence is secure and confidential and accessible only by appropriate members of staff.

Safeguarding

If at any time the school are concerned for a child's safety or welfare from any year group, we will consult with the relevant agencies and follow the local Safeguarding Children Partnership procedure. The link between attendance and safeguarding is established and the procedures that are in place are adhered to and followed.

Children Missing in Education (CME)

School works closely with the Local Authority / School Safeguarding Team to inform them of any children that are absent and their whereabouts are unknown. School carries out welfare checks and completes a CME form to be submitted to the Local Authority.

