

Trent CE Primary School Governing Body

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY



Kindness Thankfulness Perseverance

“A new command I give you: love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another”
Inspired by Jesus’ example, the Trent school community aims to serve one another in love.

We show **kindness** to others because God has shown us great kindness.

We live **thankful** lives, because every good thing comes from God.

We **persevere**, not giving up, because God is our helper.

Approved by committee/GB	Full GB
Ratified by GB	July 2024
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1. Introduction

This policy is written with the school's vision in mind:

Inspired by Christ, we serve one another in love.

We believe that being inspired by Christ in the area of attendance and punctuality, means that we as a school have a responsibility to ensure equal and fair access to education for all children under our care. Just as Jesus cared for all people equally, we want to ensure that all children attending Trent School are given the same opportunities as each other. This can only happen when all children are in school for the same amount of time. Just as Jesus loved everyone, we seek to show love and support to all families and help them ensure that there are no children who miss out on the education that they need and is legally due to them.

As a school we:

- Promote children's welfare and safeguarding;
- ensure every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- ensure that pupils succeed whilst at school;
- and ensure that pupils have access to the widest possible range of opportunities when they leave school.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or later arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parental/carer's responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

2. Rationale

Regular attendance is important. Without it, the best efforts of teachers and school will come to nothing. Children need to attend school regularly if they are to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. Irregular attendance undermines the educational process and can lead to educational disadvantages.

Under Section 36 of the Education Act 1944, a parent (an adult who has parental responsibility or an adult who has care of children of compulsory school age) is required to ensure that their child(ren) receive/s efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to nonattendance.

3. Aims

- To demonstrate to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance.
- To raise the educational achievement of all pupils in the school.
- To value the individual and be socially and educationally inclusive.
- To promote regular school attendance at whole school level, class level and individual child level.
- To be consistent in the implementation of rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance.

Promoting Regular Attendance and Punctuality:

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance within the annual school report.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance be of concern.
- Celebrate good attendance of individuals and classes. A system of rewards can prove very successful in improving attendance and punctuality levels. Such rewards might include: letters of congratulation and certificates for good attendance which may be taken home; mentions in assembly; celebrating 100% attendance at the end of year.

4. Absence Procedures:

It is the parent's/carer's responsibility to inform the school of the reason for a child's absence as soon as possible. Parental contact on the first day of absence is the typical expectation.

If your child is absent the parent/carer must follow the following procedures:

Contact us as soon as possible on the first day of absence before 9.00am, preferably by email

Or call into school in person and report to reception.

If an absence is unexplained the school will telephone or write to parents for an explanation.

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact you if we have not heard from you as part of our first response procedure;
- Invite you in to discuss the situation if absences persist; in order to ascertain whether there are particular issues affecting your child's attendance

- Refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer if attendance falls below 85%.

Understanding types of absence:

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either AUTHORISED or UNAUTHORISED. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

a. Authorised:

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, bereavement, interview at another school, medical/dental appointments (although we encourage you to make these outside of school times) emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

b. Unauthorised:

Unauthorised absences are those for which the school does not receive a reason or an explanation considered reasonable. This includes:

- a. parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- b. truancy before or during the school day
- c. children who arrive at school too late to be marked in
- d. shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- e. day trips and holidays in term time
- f. oversleeping
- g. looking after brothers and sisters at home
- h. non-urgent medical or dental appointments

When explanations for absence are not satisfactory, or when absence persists, parents will be invited into school to discuss any difficulties that may prevent their child(ren) from attending.

Please note that the decision to authorise absences rests with schools and not parents.

c. School refusers:

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with irregular attendance are best addressed between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem. The school can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).

d. Persistent Absenteeism (PA):

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling (85%) across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level causes considerable damage to any child's education and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

We will monitor all absences and the reasons given thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and we will inform the parents/carers immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also combine this with academic tracking where absence affects attainment. We may also use circle time, individual incentive programmes, individual targets and participation in group activities around raising attendance.

5. End of the School Day

Children should always be clear about who is collecting them from school. All children should be collected from the playground at the end of the school day at 3.15pm by parents/carers. Parents are asked to telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child so that the child doesn't become anxious. All pupils are released from class playground doors.

Children not collected on time are brought back into school and attend Teatime Club. On collection a valid reason must be given for the late collection. You will be charged for your child's attendance at Teatime Club. If your child is not collected at the end of the day, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home and at work. Ultimately, the Police could be called to hold your child for collection.

6. Independent Travellers

If children are independent travellers, parents should complete an independent travellers form (APPENDIX 2) and keep the school updated of any changes. Pupils who are independent travellers are prioritised in the first response procedure. Any changes to normal collection arrangements should be made in advance. Please only call the school office with changes of pick up arrangements in an emergency.

Parents of Independent Travellers (travelling without an adult), whose children are not attending school (due to illness for example) must contact the school by 9.00am with the reason. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting parents/carers at home or work to ask where the child is. If it is not possible to contact parents/carers, the matter will be referred to the local Police – this is to ensure the safety of the child.

7. Exceptional Leave of Absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.

Headteachers will not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the Headteacher must be satisfied that there are

exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Headteacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Headteacher's discretion. (Working together to improve school attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities, May 2022).

Trent School does not approve general holidays to be taken during term time in accordance with the law. Parents wishing to take children out of school during term time must complete an exceptional leave of absence form (Appendix 3).

When making a decision on whether a pupil may have leave during term time, the Headteacher will consider the child's attendance record, attainment and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

8. Lateness

At Trent we feel that children arriving late in the classroom disrupt both their own learning and the learning of others. If a child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting vital information and news for the day. Arriving late can also be embarrassing for the child as well as potentially encouraging absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help our children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider world.

The school day at Trent is split into two sessions, morning and afternoon, with a registration period at the beginning of each.

We have a soft start approach to the morning with children able to come into school from 8:35am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 8:45am. All children arriving after 8:45am must report to the main school office so they can sign the late book with a reason for the lateness. **Children arriving after morning registration will receive a late absence mark** unless they have a very good reason for being late.

If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet us to resolve the problem, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

We will encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and by celebrating good class punctuality.

9. Monitoring of Attendance and Punctuality

All children are expected to have attendance of 95% or above.

Where a child's attendance is below 95% for any reason, including sickness, parents may be contacted by the Office.

Where a child's attendance falls below 85%, or where there are concerns about a child's attendance patterns or lateness, parents will be asked to attend a meeting which may include the Head Teacher.

The EWO has the authority to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents whose children have levels of unauthorised lateness which bring them below the Borough Target for attendance. This process will be initiated by a referral to the EWO where there is a concern which cannot be resolved.

10. When pupils return after a period of non-attendance:

How a child is received back in school after a period of poor attendance or unauthorised absence may crucially influence whether he or she is to achieve and maintain an improvement in attendance. The following recommendations are made:

- Gentle encouragement and support in organising missed work helps to avoid the pupil feeling overwhelmed. This should be carefully coordinated beforehand if possible by the class teacher.
- Parents should be actively involved in their child's reintegration. Inviting the parents into school and deciding on joint strategies may achieve this.
- Older pupils might be encouraged to act as helpers, befrienders or mentors to help to promote re-integration.
- Any internal support structure (for example, special needs provision, learning mentor) should be used flexibly.

11. The Education Welfare Officer

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties with attendance persist, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare Officer from the Local Authority. The Education Welfare Officer will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

Monitoring and evaluation: This policy is updated bi-annually by the Head Teacher and Governing body. Any changes will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

APPENDIX 1 - ABSENCE LETTER

Dear _____,

Regular attendance at school ensures that pupils at Trent have the best chance to succeed with their education. As a school, we closely monitor pupil attendance.

Any pupil with attendance below 95% is defined as a 'persistent absentee', regardless of whether the school has authorised the absence. The Government's expectation is that pupil attendance should be above 95% and I would like us to work together to improve the situation as your child's current attendance is _____

The school Governors and I will be monitoring _____'s attendance and we hope to see an improvement soon. Do speak to your child's class teacher about any issues that may be affecting your child's attendance and discuss strategies for improving this with them.

Please do not hesitate in contacting me if you believe the above information is inaccurate or if you have any queries about the content.

Thanking you in advance for your support.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Vassiliou

Punctuality

Dear _____,

As you are aware we take attendance and punctuality very seriously at Trent and carefully monitor patterns of lateness.

Our recent attendance and punctuality records indicate _____ has been late to school _____ times this half term. It is very important that children establish good routines and habits in preparation for the rest of their lives. Punctuality is a life skill that they need to develop whilst they are young.

It is essential that you ensure that your child arrives at school on time to prevent disruption to your child's own learning and that of others.

Along with the Governors, we will continue to monitor _____'s punctuality and hope to see an improvement soon.

We understand that there may be rare occasions when your child is unavoidably late due to unforeseen circumstances. On these occasions please make sure that you contact the school office to inform us when they will arrive.

High levels of unauthorised absences or poor punctuality can result in a referral to the Educational Welfare Service or other agencies which have a duty to investigate further and could result in legal action being taken against you.

If you are experiencing difficulties with punctuality and would like to talk to us about it, please make an appointment to speak to us.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs. Vassiliou

Appendix 2 – Independent Traveller Form

Independent Traveller Form (Year 6 only)

Lone Traveller Permission Form

Dear Parents/Carers,

Now that your child is in Year 6, they have the opportunity to walk home by themselves with permission from parents/carers.

If you would like your child to walk home from school without an accompanying adult, you must complete this form and return it to us.

If you have any questions regarding this matter, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Kind regards,

The Year 6 team.

I give permission for (child's full name) _____ to walk home alone on the following days:

Monday	
Tuesday	
Wednesday	
Thursday	
Friday	

If your child attends an afterschool club, please tick the box to indicate they can walk home alone after the club has finished

By signing this form, you are acknowledging the following:

- I understand I am responsible to ensure my child has safe access to home on their arrival.
- I am aware of the route they will take and have discuss lone, safe travel with them.
- I understand that the school can accept no responsibility for my child once they have left the school grounds.

Signed:

Name of parent signing:

Relationship to child:

Date:

APPENDIX 3- REQUEST FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Trent Exceptional Leave of Absence Request Form

Child's Name:

Year:

Name of Parent/Carer making request:

Dates requested:

How many school days:

Return to school date:

Reason for requested absence:

Parent/Carer Signature:

Date:

Please return completed form to the school office as soon as possible, prior to the requested absence.