

# Attendance Policy for Pupils

Trafford Alternative Education Provision



**2022**

<b>Approved by:</b>	Linda Thompson	<b>Date:</b> November 2022
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Approved By:	Linda Thompson Executive Headteacher
For Action By	Senior Leadership Team
For Information to:	All Staff Parent/Carer(s) Pupils
General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR)	This policy document has been reviewed in compliance with GDPR (May 2018)

## Our Mission Statement:

Trafford Alternative Education Provision is committed to providing....

A 21<sup>st</sup> Century education that promotes the academic, emotional and social development of our students. Our aim is to create a holistic, nurturing and inspiring environment where students are supported and encouraged to take charge of their lives, their learning and their decisions. Every student will have an understanding of their personal journey, challenges and future opportunities. All will be encouraged to become independent thinkers and learn to value and respect others thus enabling them to meet the challenges of the wider world. In partnership with parents, carers, schools and outside agencies we will provide students and staff with a positive and supportive learning experience.

We will achieve our vision by constantly thinking about the bigger picture, working as one team, valuing our staff and their continual development and by frequently reviewing, debating and developing the curriculum.

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# 1. Overview

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly. As parents, it is their responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

# 2. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality, reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning
- Enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school
- Make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities
- Ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority targets
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- This policy has been devised in consultation with the Management Committee, children and parents.

# 3. Expectations

## 3.1 We expect that all pupils will:

- Attend school every day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend appropriately prepared for the day
- Report promptly to a member of staff any issues that may affect their school attendance.

## 3.2 We expect that all parents/carers will:

- Ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day.
- Ensure that they contact the school **daily** of absence or if known in advance, whenever their child is unable to attend school. Examples of authorised and unauthorised absences are below:

Authorised absences	Unauthorised absences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• genuine illness of the pupil</li><li>• hospital/dental/doctor's appointment for the pupil (Please see section 5)</li><li>• major religious observances</li><li>• visits to prospective new schools</li><li>• external exams or educational assessments</li><li>• sleep difficulties linked to medical need.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;</li><li>• a birthday treat;</li><li>• oversleeping due to a late night;</li><li>• Appointments for other family members.</li></ul>

- Contact school prior to 8.45 am whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.

- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child.
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details.

**NB: all circumstances will be individually reviewed.**

### **3.3 Parent/Carers and pupils can expect that school will:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere.
- Provide a safe learning environment.
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns.
- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance and punctuality, monitor individual child's attendance and punctuality.
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence.
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from a GP or other relevant body may be requested.
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition.
- Regularly inform parents of the % attendance of all pupils.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly.
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to Attendance Officer. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the Attendance Officer may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order.
- Be supported by the in school Attendance Officer, including the written Parent Attendance Contract where necessary.
- Will notify the Local education Authority (LEA) after 15 days sickness.

## **4. Legislation and guidance**

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

## 5. Roles and responsibilities

### 5.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 5.2 The headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### 5.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education Pupil Absence and Behaviour and Standards Officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

### 5.4 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

## 6. Recording attendance

Pupil punctuality is crucial as lateness causes disruption to pupil's learning and to that of the other pupils in their class. It is therefore paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. For school pupils the school doors are open from 8.30am until 9.00 am.

- Pupils sign in via Inentry
- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be dealt with through the Executive Headteacher
- Pupil's attendance and punctuality is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.
- Pupils arriving between 9am and 9.45am will be given an L code with the minutes calculated.
- Pupils arriving after 9.45am will be given a U code with the minutes calculated.
- Staff trained to follow the recording attendance flow chart

### 6.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the day as students arrive, using the Inventory sign in that records attendance onto Sims - it will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school between 8.45am - 9.00am on each school day.

## **6.2 Lateness and punctuality**

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If pupils are regularly missing morning lessons, the Attendance Officer will draw up a Parent Attendance Contract.

## **7 Unplanned absence**

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.45 or as soon as practically possible.

Parents will all be contacted in the event of absence by 9.45am – NB: Child protection and child in need pupils will be contacted by 9.15am.

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **7.1 Leave of absence during term time**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school have agreed these, but may be subject to change.

### **7.2 Holidays during term time**

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations, holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Head teacher and Governors have determined that:

- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form (please see Appendix 2 for a copy of this form) must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Head teacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year.
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified.

### 7.3 Penalty Notices for Holidays during school time

Penalty Notices can be issued for unauthorised leave or if a parent / carer fails to ensure regular school attendance.

7.4 In accordance with guidance from Trafford Council, holidays during school time will not be authorised by the school and a Penalty Notice may be issued.

7.5 In line with the amendments made to The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 please note the following:

- The Headteacher can now request that the local authority issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when pupils are taken out of school for 5 or more day's holiday or leave of absence without school authorisation.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 when paid within 28 days.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.
- Penalty notices are issued to **each** parent, for each child.

### 5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

7.6 Trafford Alternative Education Provision holds regular meetings with the pupil absence service, any parents whose children are identified as a cause for concern will be invited to attend. If there is no improvement in school attendance Trafford Alternative Education will refer to pupil absence service who work in partnership with school and parents in support of pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.



7.7 Pupil absence service may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Before a Penalty notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice

## 8 Planned absence

During school hours school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school.
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time.
- Parents are requested to **confirm in writing**, by letter or email, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving, the expected return time.
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return.
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site.
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupils as a missing person.

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

## 9 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, through a phone call by Attendance Officer.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

## 10 Reporting to parents

All pupils are provided with half termly academic and attendance reports. These can be discussed at calendared parental review meetings.

## 11. Authorised and unauthorised absence

### 11.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

All circumstances can be reviewed by SLT and a decision made if this is defined as 'exceptional'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

## 11.2 Reducing persistent absence

All pupils will receive daily calls to ascertain the reason for absence which is then logged in school.

On day 3 of school absence, The Attendance Officer will also call and discuss a parental attendance contract.

On day 5 of school absence, a home visit will be arranged. Should nobody be able to see the child, a police welfare check will be triggered.

Parental meetings with SLT may also be arranged should attendance not have improved.

## 12. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Post cards will be sent home to celebrate excellent attendance
- Class DoJo will be used to communicate with parents to celebrate improved attendance
- Half termly attendance certificates will be awarded for attendance

## 13. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health by 8.45am.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will conduct a home visit.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. Severe absence is pupils with 50% attendance.

Pupil-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

## 14. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum 2 years by Linda Thompson, Executive Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 15. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

### Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised absence</b>		

<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised absence</b>		
<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day