

Trent CE Primary School Governing Body

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Inspired by Christ



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	CSSW (Curriculum, Standards, Safeguarding, Welfare)
Ratified by GB	September 2021
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Trent C of E Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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 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 35 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 they receive efficient full-time education. Parents are responsible for supporting attendance and taking seriously any problems that may lead to non-attendance.

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

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a. 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:

- Give parents/carers details on attendance in our newsletters
- 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 normal 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 9.20am, 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. Appendix 1 This must be completed by the parent and immediately returned to school.

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

5. 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 which the school does not receive a reason or an explanation considered reasonable. This includes:

- parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- truancy before or during the school day
- children who arrive at school too late to get a mark
- shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- day trips and holidays in term time
- working, oversleeping
- Looking after brothers and sisters at home
- 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 sorted out 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 is doing considerable damage to any child’s education and we need parent’s fullest support and co-operation to tackle 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.

6. 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 get 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.

7. 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 pick up 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.

8. Exceptional Leave of Absence

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence.

Headteachers should not grant leave of absence unless in exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher’s discretion. (School Attendance, Statutory guidance and departmental advice, August 2013)

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.

9. Lateness

At Trent we feel that children arriving late in the classroom disrupt both their own 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. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, can be embarrassing for the child and can also encourage 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.

School starts at 08.45 am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after 8.55am. All children arriving after 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 celebrate good class punctuality.

10. 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 (Letter 1).

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.

Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting and a possible referral to the Educational Welfare Service.

The Head and the School Office should be informed if any member of staff is concerned about a child's absences – both authorised and unauthorised, or regular late arrivals/collections.

A meeting may be arranged with the parent/carer and the Head to discuss any issues that may be causing poor attendance or punctuality, and to discuss support where appropriate. Attendance registers are reviewed regularly.

Notes, records of telephone calls, and medical certificates should be forwarded to the Office Administrator by the member of staff who receives them. These notes are regularly transferred to the child's individual school file at regular intervals. Please note that such documents may be required in legal proceedings.

11. 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.
- Class teachers and tutors should promote within the tutor group a positive
- Any internal support structure (for example, special needs provision, learning mentor) should be used flexibly.

12. 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. He/she will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorized absences persist, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court.

APPENDIX 1 - ABSENCE LETTER

Dear PARENT

Regular attendance at school ensures that pupils at Trent have the best chance to succeed with their education. Unfortunately, attendance across the school has declined in recent years and I would like your assistance to ensure your child's attendance improves next term.

Any pupil with attendance **below 90%** 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 xxxx .

The school Governors and I will be monitoring xxxx attendance and we expect to see an improvement. 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

APPENDIX 2- Punctuality

Dear XX

As you are aware we take attendance and punctuality very seriously at Trent and over the last 3 years, as a school, it has dropped considerably.

Our recent attendance records indicate (child's name) has been late to school XX times this half term. **School starts at 8:45am every day.** 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 (child's name) punctuality and expect to see an improvement.

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

Trent C of E Primary School will be continuing the Independent Traveller Alert Scheme. The aim is to ensure that the school has a record of all children coming to school without an adult.

If your child travels to or from school without an adult, you must complete the attached form and return it to the school office as soon as possible. If an older sibling or other child is responsible for ensuring your child attends school, you must still complete the form. Completing this form prioritises your child in the first response process.

Please ensure your child does not arrive before 8.40am as the school cannot accept responsibility for children at this time. If your child is not attending school (due to illness for example), please contact the school before 8.30am to inform us. Failure to do so will result in the school calling your contact numbers. Please ensure that these numbers are kept up to date.

If we are unable to contact you, we will refer the matter to the local police. -----
-----Please tear/cut here----- My child
_____, in class _____

is an independent traveller. I will ensure that they do not arrive at school before 8.30am. I agree to contact the school by 8.30am if my child is not attending school.

Signed: _____ Print: _____
Mobile: _____ Home: _____
Work: _____
Emergency contact name and number: _____

Education Welfare Team^[1] Penalty Notices for School Attendance Issues

Guide for Parents 2019-20

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and subsequent amendments give the Education Welfare Team the power to issue fixed-penalty notices to parents at the request of head teachers. Most penalty notices are issued for holidays or other personal events for which permission has either not been given or has not been requested.

The Supreme Court of the United Kingdom made clear on 6 April 2017 that parents must ensure their children's regular attendance, and comply with term dates, pointing to the disruption to class management caused by individual parents taking their own children out of school.

The circumstances in which a penalty notice can be issued are as follows

- . 1 **Absence without the school's or academy's permission,**^[1] Includes holidays, visiting relatives, birthdays, day trips, shopping, or any other matter considered unexceptional. ^[1]
- . 2 **Unauthorised lateness to school**^[1] Six unauthorised lates in any four-week period. ^[1]
- . 3 **Casework by EWT, school or academy**^[1] Some parents are issued with penalty notices following a Court

Assessment Meeting instead of being taken to court for their child's poor attendance. [L] [SEP]

- . 4 **Inadequate parental supervision of excluded pupil** [L] [SEP]
If your child is excluded, you must ensure he or she is at home or under your supervision in public. [L] [SEP]

Parents should

- **Follow the school's attendance policy** [L] [SEP]
- **Make a request for leave of absence in good time so that it can be considered** [L] [SEP]
- **Make travel arrangements AFTER permission has been given** [L] [SEP]
- **Keep all travel documents and invoices to account for delays or disruptions** [L] [SEP]
- **Make sure that they obtain medical evidence if their child is ill in the periods either side of an official school holiday** [L] [SEP]
- **Ensure they can be contacted by school during periods of illness** [L] [SEP]
- **Understand that, if school or Education Welfare staff visit the family home and the child is not there when reportedly too ill to attend school, a penalty notice will be issued.** [L] [SEP]

Disputing a penalty notice.

There is no right of appeal for parents in the Regulations, but the Local Authority will examine any evidence provided that shows that a mistake has been made.

Recipients are advised to contact the Education Welfare Team **by e-mail or in writing**, using contact details on the front of the

invoice if challenging the penalty notice.

Penalty notices can only be withdrawn if they are issued in error or there are exceptional circumstances that common law would accept. The Local Authority must refund any payments made in respect of a wrongly-issued penalty notice. Parents entitled to a refund must provide evidence of their bank account for the transfer of funds.

Parents with a credible claim not to have received a penalty notice may have the original replaced by a new notice, allowing time to pay the initial, lower, amount. Generally, however, a notice issued by second-class post is deemed to have been received within three to four days.

Legal information

A parent is defined by **Section 576 of the Education Act 1996** is any natural parent, person with Parental Responsibility under the **Children Act 1989** or a person with whom the child lives and who looks after the child, irrespective of his or her relationship with the child.

All parents whose children attend a maintained school or academy in Barnet are subject to the rules in respect of penalty notices.

You can be issued a maximum of 3 penalty notices each in respect of the same child in any calendar year.

Each penalty notice is £60 if paid within the early-payment period, up to the 21st day after issue, rising to £120 up to the 28th day. If the notice remains unpaid the Local Authority prosecutes the parent in the Magistrates' Court for a non-attendance offence under The Education Act 1996, section 444, not for non-payment of the penalty notice. If found guilty, parents have a criminal record, are liable to a fine of up to £1000, and may have to pay costs to the Local Authority.

If you pay a penalty notice, you cannot be pursued legally for

the same period of evidence.

As with prosecution in a magistrates' court, penalty notices can only apply to offences relating to a child of statutory school age enrolled at a maintained school or a Pupil Referral Unit (PRU).