



**Trinity**

LEARNING • LOVING • LIVING

# ATTENDANCE & PUNCTUALITY POLICY

Link to the Policies page on Trinity Website:  
<https://www.trinitylewisham.org.uk/page/?title=Policies&pid=39>

Mr David Lucas - Executive Headteacher

## **PRIMARY PHASE**

Leahurst Road, London SE13 5HZ Tel: 0208 325 4551

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## Our Mission Statement:



- We are all members of the **Trinity family**
- We are a **Christian Community**
- We want **learning** to be **fun and challenging**
- We believe that **every child** should **succeed**
- We **never give up**

*A place at the table: to be seated; to listen; where all have equal value*

At Trinity, we place your child's learning at the centre of all we do. Every single day matters in ensuring your child makes the best possible progress during their time with us. Attendance is therefore integral to our mission statement, which states that every child should succeed.

### Maintaining and Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality:

At Trinity we will:

- Apply first day response whenever a child is absent.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality in depth at half termly intervals.
- Inform individual parents/carers of any attendance or punctuality issues.
- Inform individual parents/carers when attendance or punctuality issues have shown improvement.
- Work **with** families who find regular attendance and/or punctuality difficult.
- Award certificates to children with 100% attendance on a termly basis as part of celebration worship
- Publish attendance figures in our newsletter on a half termly basis.

### Types of Attendance:

The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is **required by law** to ensure that the child regularly attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school regularly 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.

Type of absence:	Definition:
<b>Authorised absence:</b>	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.
<b>Unauthorised absence:</b>	Where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.
<b>Persistent Absence:</b>	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).
<b>Approved Educational Activity:</b>	Trinity Primary School Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises 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.

### Authorising Absence:

We are aware that there are sometimes **exceptional circumstances** that mean your child is unable to be at school or needs to be absent for a reason when special leave has been requested. The Borough of Lewisham and Trinity Primary School define this as being:

- Illness, medical or dental appointments
- A death in the immediate family
- A wedding of a close relative
- The serious or sudden illness of a relative where they are subject to palliative care or have had an operation to prolong life.
- A religious event that is recognised nationally (The school will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, up to a maximum of 2 days in any one academic year, on the day specifically set aside by the Religious Body of which the parent/carer is a member)
- A one-off educational opportunity afforded to the child by a national or regional organisation
- 'Exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis)

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

- No explanation is offered by the parent/carer
- Child's or family members' birthday/s
- Shopping trips or ticketed events such as theatre trips

- Where there are excessive amounts of authorised absence due to illness (at the school's discretion but usually 5 or more days in a half term period)
- Where the child has gone to bed late and has 'slept in'
- Parent/carer has an appointment and takes child with them
- Another child in the family is ill, so all are kept off school
- The child has to look after a younger sibling/child on a school day
- Picking up someone from an airport – except where this is part of an agreed holiday period with the school

Under the new Regulations if a child has been **absent for 10 consecutive days and it is unauthorised** (including unauthorised holidays) **we must report this absence to Lewisham**. Children who then continue to be absent after this time then risk losing their place on our school roll.

### Applying for a Leave of Absence:

Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the **'Request For Term Time Absence' form**, which requires **supplementary evidence of the 'exceptional circumstance'**.

Accepted forms of evidence include, but are not exclusive to:

- A prescription covering the date/s of the illness
- An appointment card covering the date/s of the illness
- A letter, or slip signed by somebody at the surgery to say you attended and either had an appointment or tried to get an appointment
- A wedding invitation alongside proof of relationship
- A letter from a national or regional organisation

**Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return** and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation: The specific circumstances which outline when a pupil can be removed from roll are laid out in Regulation 8 (1) (f) (i-iii) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (amended 2013).

Trinity Primary recognises that there may be extenuating and exceptional circumstances that occur during special leave, which may mean that the family/child are unable to return to school on the agreed date. Such circumstances may include:

- Flights being cancelled or rerouted
- Illness preventing members of the family flying
- Freak weather conditions leading to a flight being cancelled or delayed.
- Death of a family member whilst on special leave

**In any of these circumstances, upon the child's return we only able to authorise the further absence if the following documents are produced, confirming what has happened:**

- A letter from the airline, on their headed paper, confirming that the family's flight had been delayed, oversold, cancelled due to unforeseen circumstances. One of the circumstances may be freak weather conditions.
- A letter from the doctor, with their name and telephone number stating the medical reasons why the person couldn't fly on the flight scheduled.

Leave of absence in term-time **will not be authorised**:

- During September, 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 – eg. Key Stage 1 SATs or phonics screening week
- When a pupil's attendance record already includes any worrying level of unauthorised absence
- For a term-time holiday

Any parent/carers requesting leave of absence of 5 days or more will be asked to make an appointment to see the Headteacher/Chair of Governors to explain the circumstances.

## Monitoring Absences:

### First Day of Absence:

If a child is absent from school the parent/carers should contact the school on 0208 325 4551 to give the reason for the absence. However, if we are not informed, 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, usually through a telephone call.

### Addressing Longer Term Attendance Concerns:

At Trinity, attendance is monitored by the Attendance Lead on a half-termly basis. Reasons for intervention from the school at this stage include:

- One or more unauthorised absences within a half term
- A drop in a child's percentage attendance
- A significant number of days off for illness
- A child's attendance dropping below 90%
- A pattern of absence (for example, days off near a school holiday or recurring week days within a given period)

Examples of intervention include:

- Requesting proof (either medical or otherwise) to deem an absence authorised
- A letter home if attendance falls below 90% in a given period
- A meeting with the Head of School or Attendance Lead
- Home visits from the Attendance Lead
- Targeted monitoring of attendance for a fixed period
- Individual Action Plans put in place (this may include tailored support, systems or processes for targeted families)
- Informing the Educational Welfare Officer
- Involving external agencies
- Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice

## Fixed Penalty Notices:

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school regularly and those absences are classed as unauthorised. 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. A Penalty Notice (issued by the Magistrates' Court) is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid by the deadline. The issuing of a Penalty Notice is considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- Unacceptable amounts of unauthorised absences (the school decides what constitutes an unacceptable amount).
- If you take your child out of school during term time for a 'holiday' without the permission of the school
- If there are 10 or more unauthorised absences (code U, O, G, N) on your child's record in a 3 calendar month period.
- If there are 10 or more code U (late after 9:10am) on your child's attendance record in a 3 calendar month period

Parents/carers will often receive a warning that a fine could be issued in the near future, so steps can be taken to avoid this. Warnings may take the form of:

- **A letter home** if attendance falls below 90% in a given period (usually half a term) due to unauthorised absence (code U, O, N, G - unauthorised holiday or excessive Code C) or excessive illness (5 days or more, code I). Parents are likely (but not always) to have received several of these before a penalty notice is issued.
- **A meeting with the Head of School or Attendance Lead** to discuss the attendance and inform parents of the next steps if letters have been received but there has not been a significant improvement.

In any case where the pupil meets the threshold for unauthorised absence a penalty notice will be considered. 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.

### 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.

In considering attendance levels, the form register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. The School's policy with regard to registration will be regularly communicated to parents/carers.

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 (for example, time lost to term-time holidays, regular absences on Mondays and/or Fridays, etc)
- Match attendance trends with attainment trends
- Identify possible inconsistencies in the implementation of school policy
- Report attendance matters to parents/carers.

### **Punctuality:**

**We want all children to arrive at school unrushed and ready to begin learning. To ensure this happens, we have clear procedures:**

- We open our gates at 8:45am
- We expect parents/carers to ensure that children are on the school premises by 8.55am.
- The morning register closes at 9.15am
- Pupils arriving between 9am and 9:15am will be marked with an **L** indicating they are late for school
- Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be registered with a **U** showing they are present in school but were significantly late.
- Parents/carers arriving with children past 9am are required to enter through the main reception and to write the reason for lateness in the signing in folder at the front desk.

**Acceptable reasons for one off lateness could include:**

- Health appointment (recorded as code M)
- Exceptional transport problems – over and above what is the norm e.g. the excuse of the bus was late will only be acceptable if the bus is not normally late.
- Exceptional weather – e.g. severe flooding, heavy snowfall

**Addressing Longer Term Punctuality Concerns:**

At Trinity, punctuality is monitored alongside attendance by the Attendance Lead on a half-termly basis. Reasons for intervention from the school at this stage include:

- A significant number of L or U markings in the register for a particular child
- An increase in the number of L or U markings in the register for a particular child over the half term
- A pattern of lateness (for example, on recurring week days within a given period)

**Examples of intervention include:**

- A letter home if lateness is deemed a concern
- A meeting with the Head of School or Attendance Lead
- Targeted monitoring of punctuality for a fixed period
- Individual Action Plans put in place (this may include tailored support, systems or processes for targeted families)
- Informing the Educational Welfare Officer
- Involving external agencies
- Issuing a Fixed Penalty Notice