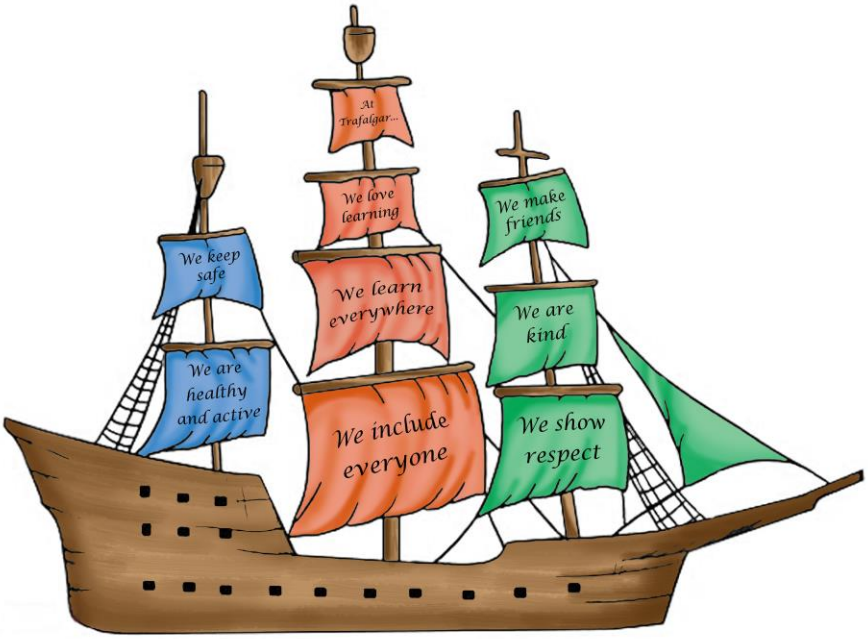
Trafalgar Community Infant School



Policy Document

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed: September 2022

To be Reviewed: September 2023

© The Key Support Services Ltd | For terms of use, visit thekeysupport.com/terms

Contents

1. Aims 2
2. Legislation and guidance 2
3. Roles and responsibilities 3
4. Recording attendance 3
5. Authorised and unauthorised absence 5
6. Strategies for promoting attendance 6
7. Attendance monitoring 7
8. Monitoring arrangements 7
9. Links with other policies 7
Appendix 1: attendance codes 7

1. Aims

At Trafalgar Community Infant School, we are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Trafalgar, we also recognise that regular and punctual attendance at school, or at an AP (Alternative Provision placement), is not only a legal requirement but essential for pupils to maximise their educational opportunities. Missing school leaves pupils vulnerable to falling behind, and can affect wellbeing, and can hinder their wider outcomes. National research shows that pupils with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school. Good attendance will also impact on our whole school improvement, and as a result, leaders will ensure that attendance is well resourced (including through the effective use of Pupil Premium funding), to create, build systems and performance.

2. 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.

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. This is included in the termly Headteacher report to Governors. It also holds the Co-Headteachers to account for the implementation of this policy.

Our Pupil Progress and Curriculum committee is responsible for the monitoring of pupil attendance.

3.2 The Co-Headteachers

The Co-Headteachers (Miss Kat Green and Miss Fiona Hickie) are 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

3.3 The attendance officer

The school attendance officer (Mrs Jo Tilley, School Secretary):

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Co-Headteachers
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents/carers to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Co-Headteachers when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis (on Brom Com), using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School admin staff

School admin staff are expected to take calls from parents/carers about absence and record it on the school system (Brom Com).

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

At Trafalgar Community Infant School we will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day at 9am, and once during the second session(straight after lunch, at 1.15pm). 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 Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

- 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.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.00am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers must telephone the school office on 01403 254925 to report absence. They must report their child's full name, class, and reason for absence.

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.

4.3 Planned absence

Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or when Leave from Learning has been requested in writing in advance (using the appropriate form) from the Co-Headteachers via the School Office for an exceptional circumstance e.g. a day of religious observance, or a close family member's wedding or funeral (for more information please see the Leave from Learning section below).

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.

Parents/carers must telephone the school office on 01403 254925, as soon as possible, to report absence for a planned or emergency medical or dental appointment. They must report their child's full name, class, and reason for absence.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

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.

4.4 Arrival, lateness and punctuality

All children should be in the playground with a supervising adult ready to come into school at 8.50am each day although children are able to enter the playground with their adult from 8.40am to make a calm start to the day. Staff will welcome the children into school through their identified entrance near their classroom at 8.50am. This is when the school day begins, and staff take responsibility for the children.

The register is taken twice a day. For the purposes of reporting attendance figures to the Local Authority, a day counts as two sessions (am and pm). Morning registration is at 9.00am, and the registers are closed at

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

9.05am. If a child arrives late after the register is closed, he/she is marked as **late** in the register**.** The afternoon register is taken at 1.15pm.

It is essential that children arriving and leaving school with a supervising adult outside the normal hours are signed in or out at the School Office. The signing in/out books in the School Office are used in the case of fire as an appendix to class registers.

Registers are checked daily by our school attendance officer and unauthorised absences are followed up (usually by a phone call to parents/carers) on the same day if possible. The Pupil Entitlement Investigating Officer (West Sussex Local Authority) also monitors attendance regularly to ensure they are kept accurately by teachers and to assess the reasons and incidence of any absence.

4.5 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. The attendance officer (or office staff in their absence), will call the parent/carer on the first day of absence. In the event that they cannot speak to the parent/carer, they will call others on the child's emergency contact record.
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, led by the Designated Safeguarding Lead, or Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead. Absence in school is a potential safeguarding risk, and will therefore be monitored carefully and dealt with swiftly.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not (Co-Headteachers)
- Identify the correct attendance code to use (Attendance Officer)

4.6 Reporting to parents/carers

At Trafalgar Community Infant School, we report to parents/carers on their child's attendance record annually in the written end-of-year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Co-Headteachers 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 Co-Headteachers' discretion.

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
- A close family member's wedding or funeral (please note that authorised absence may only be given for the day of the service).

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

At Trafalgar Community Infant School we will aim to reduce persistent absence by targeting persistent unauthorised absences. The Co-Headteachers may call to discuss the persistence absence and to emphasise their concern and the impact of this absence on their child. The Co-Headteachers may ask to meet with parents/carers in person, to discuss the persistent absence, to emphasise the seriousness of this absence, and to identify ways to support the parent/carer to improve this as quickly as possible. The attendance officer and Co-Headteachers will continue to monitor absences closely, and will aim to retain an open-dialogue with the parent/carer. The Co-Headteachers may also write to the parent/carer to share their concerns, and may also discuss and seek advice regarding individual cases with the Pupil Entitlement team at West Sussex County Council.

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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 (West Sussex).

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 suspended (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 (West Sussex) can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

At Trafalgar Community Infant School, leaders have a clear vision for attendance, which are clearly communicated to all staff, parents/carers and children. Attendance data will be monitored and analysed termly to ensure that swift intervention is implemented by the Co-Headteachers, SENCO or ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant), to overcome barriers to attendance.

Good attendance and punctuality is expected by all members of the school community (staff and children). We will aim to reward and improve attendance by celebrating whole class attendance on a termly basis, and including this in the weekly newsletter, in assembly, on social media and on our school website.

Good attendance will also be promoted by leaders through –

- Giving clear messages about the importance of good attendance given at parent/carer events and documents such as the website, new intake evening, 6 weeks' in evening, weekly newsletter, new intake tour, welcome tour etc..
- Being present on the school gates, where possible, to celebrate attendance and punctuality, and to reinforce routines and expectations.
- Monitoring whole school data termly, to identify patterns of absence for individual and groups, and to monitor the impact of interventions.
- Implementing, monitoring and reporting systems for Children Missing in Education (CME).
- Ensuring that effective Care Plans are in place for those with medical needs, and that those with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disability) and mental health needs are also supported appropriately.
- Consulting groups of pupils through pupil conferencing about our approach to attendance.

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

- Ensuring that parents/carers are informed about the demands and responsibilities of elective home education, where appropriate.
- Liaising with other professionals e.g. the IFD (Integrated Front Door), and carrying out joint home visits if required, in the interest of safeguarding.

7. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer (Mrs Jo Tilley, School Secretary) 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 (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence continues to be a concern, 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 consider involving an education welfare officer from West Sussex.

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.

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.

At Trafalgar Community Infant School, we collect and store attendance data for internal purposes. For example, to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils,
- Contribute to a safeguarding concern,
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum bi-annually by the Co-Headteachers. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour for Learning 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

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

****	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
	Authorised absence	
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms

		public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	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)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day

© The Key Support Services Ltd | thekeysupport.com/terms