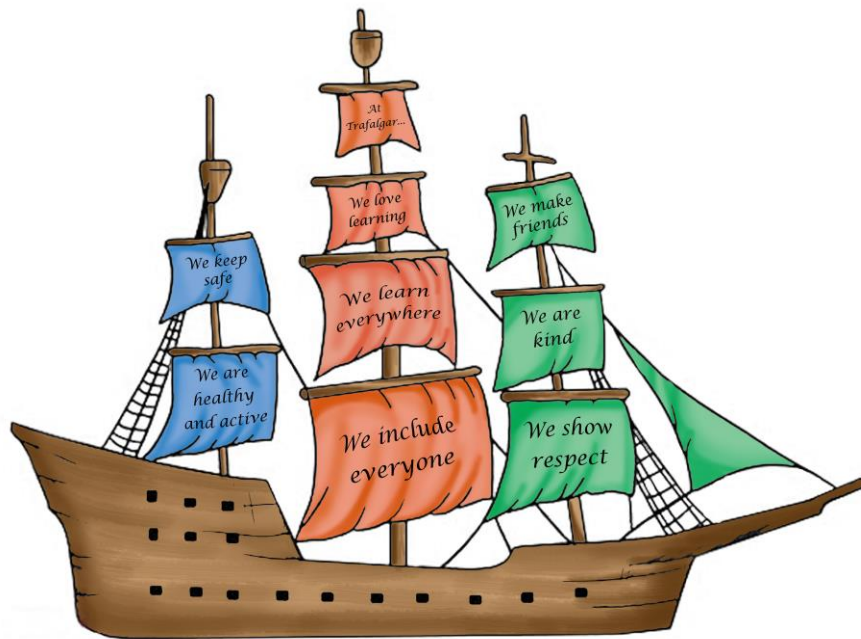


# Trafalgar Community Infant School



## Policy Document

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

**Reviewed: October 2023**  
**To be reviewed: October 2024**

By law, parents/carers are required to ensure that their children of compulsory school age (the term after their 5<sup>th</sup> birthday) are registered at school and attend regularly. For more information, please see the Department for Education 'School Attendance guidance for maintained schools and local authorities', which summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

At Trafalgar Community Infant School, we recognise that regular and punctual attendance at school, or at an AP (Alternative Provision placement), is not only a legal requirement but essential for children to maximise their educational opportunities. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. National research shows that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The government expects:

1. Schools and Local Authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and,
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

2. Parents/carers to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.

3. All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

Absence should only occur when a child is unfit to learn or when Leave from Learning has been requested in writing (using the appropriate form) from the Headteacher 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).

#### Arrival and Registration at Trafalgar Community Infant School

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 ends at 9.05am. If a child arrives late after the registration period, 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.

### Medical Appointments

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, please inform the school as soon as possible and the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

In cases where the school is concerned about a child's attendance, and a reoccurring medical reason is given by the parent/carer, then the school may ask the parent/carer for permission to contact the child's GP or other medical staff to confirm the medical reason. This will then be kept on the child's confidential file in the school office as part of our attendance records.

### Illness

The School Office should be informed during the morning of the first day of a child's absence due to illness and then each morning for the duration of the absence.

### Holidays or 'Leave from Learning' in Term Time

Government regulations state that schools should not authorise holidays during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/carers should only apply for leave from learning in exceptional circumstances.

Leave from learning may only be granted by an authorised person i.e. the Headteacher or Deputy Headteacher.

Pupils are only in school for 190 days each year. There are 175 days for holidays and other activities. Nationally, primary aged children are expected to have at least 96% attendance. At Trafalgar, any child falling below 96% may be discussed with the Pupil Entitlement Investigating Officer (West Sussex Local Authority) and the parents/carers may be contacted to emphasise that their attendance is a concern and is being closely monitored, or to seek more information about their child's absence.

If you need to apply for leave from learning and you think that you have an exceptional circumstance, then you need to obtain written permission in advance from the Headteacher. This should be done by completing and returning a 'request for leave from learning' form which is available from the School Office. A copy of the leave from learning form is also available on our school website in the 'Parent/Carer' section.

The completed form will then be returned to the parent/carer (and a copy kept in school) to inform them if the leave from learning is 'authorised' or 'unauthorised'. If a child has frequent unauthorised absences, then a PN (Penalty Notice) may be issued. For more information about PN's please see below.

If a child is absent without **prior** written permission from the school (the regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval), or is kept away from school for longer than was agreed, then this will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

### Arrangements for Absence in Other Circumstances

Sudden, serious circumstances do occur, rarely, when it is impossible for a family to bring a child to school. It is essential that school is informed by the parent/carer of the circumstances so that the appropriate code can be written in the register.

### Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN)

If a pupil has accrued a minimum of 20 sessions or more of unauthorised absence/10 days of unauthorised absence (because one session equates to a half day, either am or pm) we may make a referral to the Pupil Entitlement Investigating Officer (West Sussex Local Authority) who may implement a FPN or a legal

intervention. Local Authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not registered or receiving suitable education (Children at Risk of Missing Education).

Fixed Penalty Notices offer a timely intervention which West Sussex County Council use to address unauthorised absence before attendance behaviours become entrenched. An offence occurs if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at school, or at an AP (Alternative Provision placement), at which they are a registered pupil and that absence is not authorised by the school or alternative provision.

In addition, a Fixed Penalty Notice can be used to help ensure that parents/carers fulfil their responsibilities to ensure that their child is not out in a public place without reasonable justification during the five days of every exclusion from school.

For more information on Fixed Penalty Notices please view the leaflets from West Sussex on 'FPN' and 'Can I dispute a FPN', via the links below:

[https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/12554/fpn\\_leaflet.pdf](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/12554/fpn_leaflet.pdf)

[https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/1137/faqs\\_disputing\\_fixed\\_penalty\\_notices.pdf](https://www.westsussex.gov.uk/media/1137/faqs_disputing_fixed_penalty_notices.pdf)

Alternatively, you can contact:

**Pupil Entitlement: Investigation**

Fixed Penalty Notice Team  
West Sussex County Council  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Centenary House  
Worthing  
West Sussex  
BN13 2QB

Email: [FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk](mailto:FPN.EWS@westsussex.gov.uk)

Pupil Entitlement: Investigation Advice Line: 03302 228200

Pupils moving to a new address and/or School

Parents/carer must notify us as soon as possible if their child will be either living at another address, or moving to a new school.

Home Educated Children

Should you wish to home school your child, then we would encourage you to come and discuss this with the Headteacher as soon as possible. Parents have a duty to ensure their child of compulsory school age receives suitable full time education but this does not have to be at a school.

On receipt of written notification to home educate, we will inform the Local Authority that the pupil is to be deleted from our admission register.