



## **Trumps Green Infant School**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

*Trumps Green Infant School is committed to safeguarding, child protection and promoting the welfare of children and young people. We expect all members of the school community including staff, parents, carers, volunteers and governors to share this commitment.*

**For distribution to: all school staff, Governors, parents/carers, Inclusion Officer (IO)**

#### **Introduction**

The staff of Trumps Green Infant School are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, pupils, Governors and the Local Authority (LA), to building a school which serves the community commendably, and of which the community is proud.

The school staff and Governors alongside the LA firmly believe that all pupils benefit from regular school attendance. Full and regular attendance at school is crucial for a child's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance from the very beginning of the school day, and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils are expected to achieve 100% attendance but when absence is unavoidable parents/carers will be required to inform the school at the earliest opportunity.

Parents/carers whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school full time. If they do not do so and the children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

In line with these Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 5 days or more are required to be reported to the LA. In addition, schools are required to report all absence figures to the LA and the Department for Education and to ensure they are recorded on a child's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

This policy should be seen in the context of all our school policies and in particular our range of safeguarding and equality policies.

#### **Expectations**

**We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school daily during term time;
- attend school punctually;
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;
- discuss promptly with their class teacher any problems that deter them from attending school.

**We expect that all parents/carers who have day to day responsibility for the children will:**

- encourage regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities;

- ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day;
- ensure that the child/children in their care have completed any homework they have been given;
- ensure that they contact the school whenever the child is unable to attend school. This is a safeguarding issue requirement so that all parties know that the child is safe and their whereabouts is known. Parents should update the school each day the child is absent and inform the school when their child is returning.
- discuss promptly, with the class teacher or Headteacher, any problems that occur that prevent or may prevent their child from coming to school;
- contact the school office by 9.30am each day of a child's absence, giving the reason for the absence.

**We expect that school staff will:**

- keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, at least twice daily;
- monitor every pupil's attendance;
- contact parents as soon as possible when a pupil fails to attend where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- encourage good attendance;
- provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and provide a safe learning environment;
- provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns;
- make initial enquiries of parents/carers of pupils who are not attending regularly to express their concern and to clarify the school's and the LA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular, unexplained or unjustified patterns of attendance to the Inclusion Officer (IO);
- meet, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention - The Rights of The Child - by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them.

In addition to this, the School has the following responsibilities:

**Headteacher, Governors and designated member of school staff with overall responsibility for attendance to:**

- ensure that the registration procedures are carried out efficiently and that appropriate resources are provided;
- initiate a scheme for contacting parents on the first day of absence;
- ensure that key staff have time for liaison and follow-up work with the IO and appropriate access to attendance data;
- consult and liaise closely with the IO during their half termly register analysis and take responsibility for ensuring pupils are appropriately identified and referred without delay;
- promote good attendance through discussion in assemblies and sticker rewards;
- ensure that attendance percentages/graphs are available.
- set whole school attendance targets;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the IO half termly.

In order for this Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. We expect parents/carers to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

**Encouraging Attendance**

Trumps Green Infant School encourages daily and punctual school attendance in the following ways:

- by providing a caring and welcoming learning environment;
- by responding promptly to a child's or parent's concerns about the school or other pupils;

- by marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration;
- by communicating individual children's attendance statistics to parents through the annual school report;
- by celebrating good and improved attendance through reporting to parents in monthly newsletter
- by monitoring pupil's irregular attendance;

### **Lateness**

Please note that, if pupils arrive after the school start time of 9:00am they will be recorded as late. School registers are closed 30 minutes after the school start time and pupils arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as 'late after close of register' which counts as an unauthorised absence for that session.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed (U) will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for prosecution or a Penalty Notice.

### **Dental and Medical Treatments**

Parents/carers are encouraged, whenever possible, to book medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. The school will grant requests for absence for dental and medical treatments during school time when these are unavoidable. The school should be notified in advance of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and returned to the school office. Evidence of the appointment will be requested.

### **Changing Schools**

It is important that if a parent/carer decides to send their child to a different school they must inform Trumps Green Infant School staff in writing as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the address of the new school;
- the new home address, if it is known.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school as soon as possible. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information and the child is absent, the family will be referred to the IO.

### **Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances**

#### **Requests for Leave of Absence During Term Time-**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The Headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors and other local schools (in cases where leave has also been requested for siblings) or the IO (in cases of concern over school attendance), will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested.

Each request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for the request and any other relevant factors. Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach.

**School Holidays** - The school holiday dates are published in advance and are available from the school office, and on the school website. The Surrey website shows school holidays more than one year in advance. School INSET days will be published as far ahead as they are known. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates and are not normally deemed exceptional circumstances. Please note that any absences for illness that runs before or after school holidays or any holiday

absence will not be authorised without medical evidence. Unauthorised absence of 5 days or more may result in a fine.

The Headteacher is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter, email or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absence is not authorized, parents will be informed. If no explanation is received, absences will not be authorized.

Absence during term time can only be approved in "exceptional circumstances". The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping
- Inadequate clothing/uniform
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason
- Child's/family birthday or fun day out
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays (with some rare exceptions).

### **Scheme for Contacting Parents on the First Day of Absence**

When a pupil does not attend school and parents fail to notify the school by 9.30am we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no email or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.30 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- If there is no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer. If by the end of the second day no contact has been made, the school will send an email of concern. The school will inform the IO for further action.

### **Frequent Absence**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend, it is unhelpful to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse.

Our IO meets with the Headteacher on a half termly basis to discuss attendance concerns. In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. The Headteacher will contact the parents to discuss.
2. Stage 1 letter sent to parents stating concerns about attendance (inviting them to call or meet to discuss the issues).
3. If the situation does not improve within 3 weeks, the stage 2 letter will be sent.
4. Meeting at school with Headteacher and class teacher as appropriate.

If this does not resolve the attendance issues, the school will refer to IO.

### **Timeline for Managing Poor attendance**

90 - 95% attendance - school intervenes with school intervention letters/meetings with parents  
Where the level of attendance does not improve the school makes a referral to the Surrey Inclusion Service

For cases that require intensive family support or Early Help the school may make a request for support via cSpa.

### **Persistent Absence**

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90% across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging to a child's educational prospects and parents' fullest support and co-operation is needed to tackle this.

All absence is monitored thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the Persistent Absence mark or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and parents will be informed of this immediately.

Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and be invited to a meeting where a plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

### **Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance**

Inclusion 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 or IO. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

- The Headteacher and Governors can now request that the LA issue a Penalty Notice to parents, when students are taken out of school for 5 days (10 school sessions) or more of Leave of Absence in term time **without** school authorisation.
- The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where it is judged that a parent is failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance. This will be considered when a pupil has incurred 7 or more unauthorised sessions in the previous 6 school weeks, which may include a pupil arriving late after close of registration.
- Where a child is taken out of school for a Leave of Absence during term time for 5 days (10 sessions) or more without the authority of the head teacher, **each parent** is liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child**. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised.
- The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 if paid within 21 days, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice.
- If the Penalty Notice is not paid in full within 28 day period, the local authority is then obliged to prosecute for failing to ensure regular school attendance.

### **Children Missing Education**

No child should be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Headteacher and the Inclusion Service where appropriate.

Where a child is missing from Education, Local Authority guidance will be followed, by completing a child Missing Education referral for the following circumstances:

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school has failed to locate him/her
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form has been requested by another school.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

Attendance is monitored in line with the Strategic School Development Plan policy monitoring cycle. The Governing Body monitors the delivery of Attendance within the school to evaluate its implementation and effectiveness. This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body every three years, or earlier if the need arises. This policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the school in line with other local schools within the North Runnymede Learning Partnership.

### **Equality Statement**

In accordance with our Equality Policy we will promote equality across the full range of protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act (2010) as amended and restated from time to time and ensure that all pupils have equal access to all opportunities offered by the school.

Policy Status	
Agreed by Governors	September 2022
Next Review Date	September 2024