



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, Attendance Advice Officer (AAO)

Responsibility for attendance: Headteacher, Governors, School Attendance Officer

Introduction

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

The school staff and Governors alongside the LEA 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 be served with a penalty notice or prosecution.

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

In line with School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024, all unexplained absences of 5 days or more are required to be reported to the LEA. In addition, schools are required to report all absence figures to the LEA 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 via Studybugs message, email or telephone call by 9.15am each day of a child's absence, giving the reason for the absence and advising of when she/he will be expected to return;
- provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

We expect that school staff (teachers/office according to job responsibility) 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 LEA's expectations with regard to regular school attendance;
- refer irregular, unexplained or unjustified patterns of attendance to Headteacher, School Attendance Officer and Attendance Advice Officer (AAO) where applicable;
- 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 School Attendance Officer 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 AAO and appropriate access to attendance data;
- consult and liaise closely with the AAO during half termly targeted support meetings and take responsibility for ensuring pupils are appropriately identified and referred without delay;
- promote good attendance through discussion and reward in assemblies;
- ensure that attendance percentages/data are available.
- set whole school attendance targets;
- monitor and evaluate attendance with the AAO 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;

Recording attendance

We will keep an electronic 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 and once during the second session. We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Scheme for Contacting Parents on the First Day of Unexplained Absence

When a pupil does not attend school and parents fail to notify the school by 9.15am we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no Studybugs message, email or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9.15 a.m. the school will endeavour to contact them that day.
- If there is no response from any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer and may carry out a home visit or call the Police and will seek guidance from the AAO.
- School pursues contact until satisfied a child is safe.

Lateness

The school gates will be opened at 8.40 a.m., for the school day start at 8.45 a.m., and closed at 8.50 a.m. After 8.50 a.m. pupils must be taken through the school office where they will be signed in as late with explanation required in the late book. School registers are closed 30 minutes after the school start time and pupils arriving after 9.15am 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 he/she starts new school and is entered on their admission register. We also require the following information:

- the date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;
- the name and 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 AAO.

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 1st September 2013 states that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Parents/carers need to complete and submit our school's Leave of Absence form (available on our website, in the school office or on request via email) in a timely fashion, noting the exceptional circumstances for the request. 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 AAO (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 (eg. child's record of attendance). Only the Headteacher can authorise absence using a consistent approach.

Leave of absence, for exceptional circumstances, will not be granted if additional leave is taken either side of this time without previous approval. Proof of flights or other documentation supporting the request must be produced if asked for.

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 may not be authorised without medical evidence.

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 authorised, parents will be informed. If no explanation is received and a leave of absence is taken without prior authorization by the school, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised. Unauthorised absence of 10 sessions/5 days or more may result in a fine.

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
- 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).

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 AAO 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 or is in danger of becoming persistently absent, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. Stage 1 letter sent to parents stating concerns about attendance (inviting them to call or meet to discuss the issues).
2. If the situation does not improve within 3 weeks and there has been no communication between the school and the family, the school will phone the family to inform them that the stage 2 letter will be sent.
3. Meeting at school with Headteacher and class teacher as appropriate.
4. If there is no improvement and/or parents/carers do not engage with the school, Notice to Improve will be issued.
5. Attendance will be monitored for 15 school days.
6. If the attendance issue is not resolved, the school can request Surrey County Council to issue a Penalty Notice.

Timeline for Managing Poor attendance

90 - 95% attendance - school intervenes with school intervention letters dependent on case by case circumstances where appropriate

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

Persistent and Severe Absence

A child becomes a 'persistent absentee' if their attendance falls below 90% and 'severe absentee' with attendance below 50% 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. The school will consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education. If needed, the school will support families, hold regular meetings with the parents/carers, provide access to wider support services and consider alternative support to help remove barriers to attendance.

Notice to Improve

A Notice to Improve is a final opportunity for a parent/carer to engage in support and improve attendance before penalty notice is issued.

The Notice to Improve will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and details of the offences;
- The benefit of regular attendance and parents' duty under section 7 of the Education Act 1996;
- Details of the support provided so far;
- Opportunities for further support and the option to access previously provided support that was not engaged with;
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued or prosecution considered if attendance is not secured within the improvement period;
- A clear timeframe of 3 weeks for the improvement period;
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

Failure to Ensure Regular School Attendance

The school may issue a Penalty Notice to parents/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. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence

A Penalty Notice may be issued as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school (absence without the agreement of the school or not covered by a medical note) and will be used by Surrey County Council in the following circumstances :

1. Pupils identified by police and Attendance Advice Officers (formerly Inclusion Officers) engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. Unauthorised Leave of absence in term time (5 days or 10 sessions or more).
 - Please be aware that The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 01 September 2013 state that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.
 - The Headteacher is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.
 - In such cases the Headteacher/Governing Body must decide whether there are exceptional circumstances. They may request that Surrey County Council issue Penalty Notices when the absence is not authorised.

Warnings will not be given where it can be shown that parents have been notified that such absences will not be authorised.

3. Finally, the issuing 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.

The national threshold for issuing a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be any combination of unauthorised absence (eg. 4 sessions on holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (eg. 10 sessions or 5 days on holiday in one week) or not (6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 session per week taken for the next 4 weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms of schools years (eg. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in Summer term and further 8 within the Autumn Term).

Penalty Notice relating to Exclusions

If a child is excluded from school, Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents/carers to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours.

This duty applies to the **first five days of each exclusion**. Failure to do so will render the parent/carer liable to a Penalty Notice. (Alternative education provision will be made available from the sixth day of any exclusion.).

Amount Payable for a Penalty Notice and Consequences for repeat unauthorised absences

1. If you have not incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children in a rolling 3 year period since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice - Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

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 year.

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 2024
Next Review Date	September 2025