Treales CE Primary School

Attendance Policy

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Other Information	See other attendance letters and guidance

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Treales CE Primary School

Equipped by God; We are Mighty

1 Introduction

This is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment which enables and encourages all pupils to achieve their potential and aspire to excellence.

For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly and every child should be at school, on time, every day the school is open unless they have an unavoidable reason to be absent. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

Absence or late arrival also disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class.

Government research shows a direct link between attendance and attainment and good attenders also make better progress socially, learn to work with others, and are better prepared for the transition to secondary school and, eventually, higher education, training and employment.

It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this.

Our attendance target this year is 96%, but all pupils should strive to achieve 100% attendance if they can.

2 Responsibilities and expectations

2.1 Families

Parents and carers have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly, if they are of compulsory school age and registered at a school (see appendix for details of how the law applies to school attendance and how "parent" is defined in law).

Parents and pupils should know the times the school day starts and finishes and when the register closes (see section 4, below); the processes for requesting leave (see section 3.4, below); and the process for informing school of the reason for unexpected absence (as follows).

If your child is going to be absent, parents must inform school as soon as possible and at the latest by 9.25 am on the first day of absence via the Parent App Connect school app or by calling school on 01772 684678.

Parents must also ensure that school has up-to-date contact information for themselves and emergency contacts.

Pupils' responsibilities depend upon their age, maturity and capability but they too must do their best to attend school regularly and punctually.

School contact information for other attendance-related matters is given below at the end of section 2.2.

2.2 School

Head Teacher

- Lead on giving attendance a high profile.
- Ensure there are designated staff with day-to-day responsibility for attendance matters and protected time allocated to discharge those responsibilities.
- Take overall responsibility for ensuring the school confirms to statutory requirements regarding attendance.
- Consider each request for leave against the school's criteria, decide whether some, all, or none of the leave will be authorised and notify parents of this decision.
- Where there is uncertainty regarding an absence, make the decision whether or not to authorise an absence, or to request further evidence to support the decision-making process.
- Provide regular reports to the governing body on school attendance, including persistent absence and vulnerable groups.

Attendance lead and other staff with designated responsibilities for attendance

- First day response: contact parents if a reason for absence has not been provided and record this information accordingly. Contact emergency contacts if parents cannot be reached.
- Update attendance registers.
- Regularly monitor and analyse data to identify pupil, class and whole school attendance concerns and to target attendance improvement support for those who need it most, particularly vulnerable groups.
- Regularly communicate pupil attendance and punctuality levels to parents.
- Work with children and parents to remove barriers to regular and punctual attendance, using parenting contracts where appropriate.
- Involve external agencies to support children and parents as appropriate to better understand and address the issues causing attendance concerns.
- Promote regular attendance through the school newsletter, website and displays and ensure the school's attendance policy is readily accessible.
- Use projects and strategies to improve attendance and punctuality for groups, classes or the whole school (e.g. incentive and reward schemes, certificates, traffic light letters).

All school staff

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for children and a safe learning environment.
- Be aware of factors that can contribute to poor attendance and punctuality.
- Adhere to the procedures in place within school to promote good attendance.
- Promote the link between attendance and educational attainment to pupils and parents.
- Complete attendance registers in accordance with the legislation and under the direction of the head teacher.
- Discuss attendance concerns at an early stage with children and parents.
- Raise any concerns about attendance with the attendance lead and/or head teacher.

Governors

- Ensure compliance with The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as amended.
- Agree an attendance policy and review it annually.
- Agree targets for attendance at Treales CE Primary.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance targets, or when the governors believe there is cause for concern, instigate a review of school's attendance procedures.
- Authorise the head teacher (or other designated person) to make decisions regarding leave of absence requests.
- Work with the head teacher in establishing equitable and consistent criteria against which leave requests will be considered.

Schools are bound by a range of attendance legislation and guidance; please see the appendix for further details.

School attendance contacts

Mrs V Harling, School Support Officer: contact for parents to notify school of a pupil's absence.

Mrs L Hill, Headteacher: senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in school.

Mrs V Harling, School Support Officer: contact for day to day enquiries about attendance.

Mrs L Hill, Headteacher: support for specific and more serious attendance concerns.

The staff named above can be contacted on 01772 684678.

2.3 Lancashire County Council (the local authority)

School Attendance Consultants (SACs)

SACs are schools' first point of contact for attendance advice regarding individual pupils and the whole school.

Pupil Attendance Support Team (PAST)

For primary and special schools, Pupil Attendance Support Workers undertake direct work with pupils and parents, support attendance projects, and can provide supplementary evidence for legal interventions initiated by school.

School Attendance Legal Team (SALT)

Following requests from schools for legal interventions in the event of failure to attend school regularly, SALT undertakes enforcement processes, including penalty notices, prosecutions, parenting orders, education supervision orders and school attendance orders.

Children Missing Education (CME) Team

The CME team ensures the local authority fulfils its statutory duty to identify children in their area who are not registered pupils at a school and are not receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. For further information see section 7, below, regarding notifications schools must submit.

3 Types of absence

Every half-day absence from school is classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required from parents/carers. As a school, we will always work with parents (and other agencies, as appropriate) to understand the reasons underlying absence.

3.1 Authorised absences

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason like illness, medical/dental appointments which unavoidably fall in school time, emergencies or other unavoidable causes.

3.2 Unauthorised absences

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable. If school has followed its attendance procedures and a pupil continues to have unauthorised absences, the school may refer to the Pupil Attendance Support Team or request legal interventions from the School Attendance Legal Team. Examples of unauthorised absences are:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily.
- Truancy during the school day.
- Absences which are not explained satisfactorily.
- Children who arrive at school after the register has closed.
- Days off for shopping, birthdays or looking after other children.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed by the head teacher.
- Days that exceed the amount of leave agreed by the head teacher.

It is the head teacher's responsibility to decide if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. Hence, if there is any ambiguity relating to an absence, school may request further evidence from parents before an absence is authorised. This may be in the form of a prescription, appointment card or similar. Parents should not ask their doctor (GP) to provide "sick notes" to excuse absence.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school for other reasons. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to school as soon as possible to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home. As a school, we will always work with parents (and external agencies as appropriate) to understand and address the reasons behind absence.

3.3 Persistent Absence (PA)

Persistent absence is when a child misses 10% or more of their schooling across the school year for whatever reason, authorised and unauthorised (including illness, exclusion, holiday, etc). Absence at this level will damage any child's educational prospects and we expect parents' fullest support and co-operation to address this.

At Treales CE Primary School, we monitor all absence thoroughly, therefore any pupil whose attendance indicates they are likely to reach the PA threshold will be prioritised and parents will be informed of this promptly. Pupils who are persistent absentees are tracked and monitored carefully and the attendance procedures below (section 5) will be followed.

3.4 Leave during term time

By law, maintained schools cannot authorise any leave in term time other than in exceptional circumstances. Taking a child out of school in term time will affect their education and progress as much as any other absence. If leave is being requested for a holiday or extended leave abroad, approval should be obtained from the head teacher before making any bookings.

Leave of absence in term time **will not** be granted unless:

- a request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides (using the form available on the school website or from the school office), **and**
- the head teacher considers that leave of absence should be granted due to the **exceptional circumstances** relating to the request.

Due to the need to evidence exceptional circumstances, parents are advised to provide school with any relevant information regarding their request at the point of application if they believe the circumstances are exceptional.

In considering the request school will also consider other factors such as:

- The timing of the requested leave, e.g. when a pupil is just starting at school or during assessment periods, such as SATs.
- A pupil's attendance record already includes unauthorised absence.

- Attendance is already a concern, or could become a concern, as a result of taking leave.
- Other periods of leave which the pupil may have had, either during the current or previous academic year.

Any period of leave taken without the agreement of the school, or in excess of that agreed, will be classed as unauthorised and may attract legal sanctions such as a penalty notice.

In certain circumstances, as outlined in regulation, parents risk losing their child's place on the school roll if leave is taken and the criteria governing removal from roll are met (see appendix).

3.5 Religious absence

School will authorise one day of absence per religious festival, e.g. Eid, and this will be marked as code R in the register. The day authorised will be that set aside by the religious body of which the parent is a member.

Parents must request any additional leave in advance and this can only be authorised if the head teacher agrees that exceptional circumstances apply; this would be marked in the register as code C.

3.6 Participation in sporting events

Parents can request leave of absence for their child to take part in regional, national and international sporting events. However, as always, granting leave is at the head teacher's discretion and she/he will need to discuss with you the length and frequency of the absence(s) requested and how learning will continue if absence occurs, e.g. the sports club or association providing an approved education tutor.

Leave for a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school can be marked in the register as code P.

Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late in order to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the head teacher and is unlikely to be approved if it would occur regularly.

3.7 Participation in performances (e.g. theatre, television, modelling)

Parents of a child performer can request leave from school for their child to take part in a performance. A local authority licence must be obtained before a child can take part in a performance. Before a licence is granted, school will be consulted and head teachers must be satisfied that the leave will not have a negative effect on the child's education.

Where the licence specifies the dates that the child is to be away from school, the head teacher should authorise those days. However, where the licence does not specify dates, it is at the discretion of the head teacher to authorise the leave request.

Any absence authorised for the child to take part in a performance will be recorded as code C.

Parents wishing to apply for a performance licence should go the Lancashire County Council Child performance licences webpage.

4 Registration

4.1 Attendance registration

Morning registration is between 8.55am and 9.00am.

Afternoon registration is between 1.10pm and 1.15pm.

The school day starts at 8.55am. Pupils are expected to be on the premises at that time and that is when the registration period starts (i.e. when the register is taken and remains open).

When the attendance register has been taken it remains open until 9.25am in the morning and 1.40pm in the afternoon.

School finishes at 3.30pm.

4.2 Late arrival

Pupils who arrive after 9.00am (or 1.15pm) must go straight to the school office at the main entrance to sign in and give a reason for their lateness.

Pupils who arrive after the register has been taken (9.00am or 1.15pm) but before it is closed (9.25am or 1.40pm), will be marked as code L. This is classed as late but present for the session (i.e. the morning or afternoon).

Pupils who arrive after the register has closed and without a valid reason for being late (such as attending a dental or medical appointment) will be marked as code U, which is classed as an unauthorised absence but indicates that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session.

4.3 Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher getting important news and information for the day. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. Being 10 minutes late every day throughout the academic year is the same as missing two weeks of school.

If your child is often late you will be asked to meet with the head teacher to discuss ways to improve punctuality, but you can approach us at any time if you are having problems getting your child to school on time.

Persistent lateness after the register has closed may result in further action, as outlined below, under section 5.

5 School attendance procedures

5.1 First day of absence

If your child is absent and we have not heard from you, we will telephone you on the first day of absence to find out what the reason is and when your child is expected to return. If we are unable to contact you, we will approach your emergency contacts and, if necessary, make a home visit. Please note that such home visits may be unannounced.

5.2 Attendance concerns

Parents are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with us in resolving any attendance problems together; this is nearly always successful. However, if concerns persist, school will use the following procedures and interventions, as required, to support parents in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality:

- Telephone calls and/or letters to make parents aware of school's concern about their child's attendance.
- Invitation to meetings to discuss concerns with our attendance lead and/or head teacher.
- Parenting contracts to identify barriers to regular attendance, ways to overcome these and agree targets for improvement.
- Incentive and reward schemes for individual pupils, if appropriate.
- The Early Help Assessment (EHA) process and/or referral to other agencies and services, including School Nurses and Primary Mental Health Workers, if appropriate.
- Request support from the local authority Pupil Attendance Support Team.
- For unauthorised absences, request legal interventions by the local authority, such as penalty notices, prosecution or other attendance-related court orders.
-

At any stage, we may seek advice from our School Attendance Consultant.

5.3 Pupils with medical needs who have difficulty attending school

Government guidance on supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (see appendix) emphasises the role of governing bodies in ensuring that pupils with medical conditions are able to fully access education in the same way as other pupils. A key element of this responsibility is reducing the amount of time missed by these pupils, whether their condition is short or long term.

School will work with parents and other relevant professionals to minimise absence for reasons of ill health. This may be in the form of specific support or resources used within school or by sourcing appropriate provision at another establishment. When education is to be provided at an alternative location, this should always be done via the use of a direction (please see section 6, below).

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, the head teacher, the class teacher and other support services will work with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

5.4 Pupils refusing to attend school

At Treales CE Primary School, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education, and we would not accept "school refusal" as a reason for non-attendance. In such cases, we will work with parents to identify the reasons why a child may be reluctant to attend school. We may request support from the Pupil Attendance Support Team and, with consent, make referrals to external partners such as the Children and Family Wellbeing Service, Primary Mental Health Workers, etc, as appropriate to try to ensure the correct support is secured for the child and their family.

5.5 Promotion of good attendance

Within our school Christian ethos, we will endeavour to support all children to attend school regularly. Where monitoring has identified an issue with attendance, school will work with the whole family to support their needs and ensure the child attends school. Our ethos does not support rewarding children directly for attendance as this is often out of their control.

5.6 Use of penalty notices

In accordance with the Lancashire code of conduct, we may request that the local authority issue penalty notices for unauthorised absence. This includes:

- Leave of absence which is taken without a prior request being made.
- Leave taken after a request has been declined.
- Days taken in excess of an agreed period of leave, without good reason.
- Other unauthorised absence that meets the required threshold, including sessions marked as late after the register has closed (code U).

The code of conduct for penalty notices and information and FAQs for parents can be found on the Lancashire County Council education penalty notice webpage.

6 Alternative provision and use of directions

There is a range of circumstances when pupils might be required to access educational provision at a venue other than their main school. The main reasons are:

- Pupils who have been excluded, either for a fixed period of more than 5 days or permanently.
- Pupils unable to access provision at their main school for medical reasons.
- Pupils required to attend another venue for the purpose of improving behaviour, either on a temporary basis or with a view to making a permanent move to the alternative provision (via a managed move).

When a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for the purposes of improving behaviour, the governors of the main school must issue a written direction or notice informing all parents of the alternative provision which their child is required to attend. Where a pupil is required to attend alternative provision for other reasons, the issuing of a written direction is considered best practice.

7 Notifications school must submit to the local authority

7.1 Admissions

All schools must notify the local authority within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the local authority with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year unless the local authority also requests for such information to be provided (currently Lancashire does not).

7.2 Leavers

All schools must notify the local authority when a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register under any of the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register. This duty does not apply where the pupil's

name is removed after they have completed the school's final year, unless the local authority requests for such information to be provided (Lancashire currently does not).

Where a school notifies a local authority that a pupil's name is to be deleted from the admission register, the school must provide the local authority with the required information as laid out in regulation.

In addition to submitting a notification about removal from roll, some circumstances also require school to make referral to other local authority teams such as the Elective Home Education team or the Children Missing Education team. Schools may also contact their School Attendance Consultant for advice on removing children from roll.

7.3 Pupils who fail to attend

All schools (including academies) must inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. In Lancashire primary schools, this can be done via a variety of means and school can contact their School Attendance Consultant for further advice.

7.4 Children missing education (CME)

Local authorities have a duty to put in place arrangements for identifying (as far as possible) those children of compulsory school age in their area who are not school registered or receiving suitable education otherwise than at a school. Local authorities should trace those children and ensure they receive a full-time education.

If a pupil has stopped attending and her or his location is unknown, schools must make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the child jointly with the local authority, before deleting the pupil's name from the register. In such cases, school should undertake a home visit, prior to a referral being made to the local authority Children Missing Education team.

Appendix: School attendance and the law

There are many pieces of legislation and government regulations and guidance that are relevant to school attendance and to children and their parents and carers. The list below relates to this attendance policy but is not exhaustive.

Parents and carers

Duty to ensure children receive education

Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 covers the duty of parents to secure the education of children in their care who are of compulsory school age and states:

> *The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable—*
>
> *(a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and*
>
> *(b) to any special educational needs he may have,*
>
> *either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.*

Offence if a child does not attend regularly

Under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, if a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly, their parent is guilty of an offence.

The offence is absolute as the only defences available to the parent are those statutory defences listed within that section of the Act, ie:

- the child was absent with leave granted by the school;
- the child was prevented from attending by reason of sickness or any unavoidable cause;
- absence was on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which their parent belongs;
- that the school is not within statutory walking distance and that the local education authority has made no suitable transport arrangements or enabled the pupil to become registered at an alternative nearer school.

Compulsory school age

Section 8 of the Education Act 1996 establishes that a child becomes of compulsory school age on the start date of the term following her/his fifth birthday, or that day if her/his fifth birthday falls on the day term starts.

A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June in the academic year in which he/she reaches the age of 16 or if he/she reaches 16 after the last Friday in June but before the start of the new school year.

Legal definition of "parent" in relation to attendance

The law requires that all "parents" are held responsible for their child's attendance. This definition can include any person who has care of the child. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states:

> *Meaning of "parent".*
>
> *(1) In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires, "parent", in relation to a child or young person, includes any person—*
>
> *(a) who is not a parent of his but who has parental responsibility for him, or*
>
> *(b) who has care of him.*

Thus, the definition of "parent" means all natural parents, whether they are married or not, and includes any person who, although not a natural parent, has parental responsibility and/or care for a child or young person.

Schools

Attendance and absence registration codes

Working together to improve school attendance, DfE, published May 2022, applies from September 2022 and will become statutory no sooner than September 2023.

Data protection

Schools must ensure that personal data is handled in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018. See Treales CE Primary School's Privacy Notice for information about how personal data will be used.

Duty for schools to include attendance information in reports for parents

The Education (Pupil Information) (England) Regulations 2005

Duty for schools to notify the local authority when pupils join or leave school

Regulation 12 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Duty for maintained schools to publish attendance data

What maintained schools must publish online, DfE guidance

Duty for schools to report attendance concerns about individual pupils to the local authority

Regulation 12 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Duty for schools to report attendance data to Government

Section 537A of the Education Act 1996 and

Complete the school census, DfE guidance for schools and local authorities on what data government requires

Duty for schools to safeguard and promote the welfare of children

Keeping children safe in education: Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, DfE, regularly updated

Leave in term time *

September 2013 amendment to The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

* This regulation does not apply to academies, though many adopt this as good practice.

Legal interventions

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child who is on a school roll fails to attend regularly and those absences are recorded by the school as unauthorised.

Legal interventions are available under the following Acts, Guidance and Regulations:

- Section 444 of the Education Act 1996

- Section 36 of the Children Act 1989
- Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- School attendance parental responsibility measures 2015

Pupils with health needs who cannot attend school

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions: Statutory guidance, DfE, 2015

Pupils with individual needs and specific barriers to attendance

When considering the individual needs of pupils and families who have specific barriers to attendance, schools should be mindful of their obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Equality Act 2010. Schools may wish to refer to the Technical Guidance for Schools in England, published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission, which outlines the requirements of the Equality Act 2010 for schools.

Regulations regarding participation in performances

The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014

Regulations regarding removal from roll

Regulation 8 of The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Regulations regarding the school day and number of sessions

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999

Requirement for state-funded mainstream schools to deliver a school week of at least 32.5 hours by September 2023.

Minimum expectation on length of the school week: information note