



Aireborough Trust & Tranmere Park Primary School Attendance Policy

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ATTENDANCE POLICY @ Tranmere Park Primary School



Section 1: Introduction, Ethos and Background

This policy sets out the procedures through which we seek to raise attendance, improve punctuality and, as a consequence, raise levels of achievement.

This policy is written with regard for the legal powers and duties included in the following:

- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 and current statutory *Working together* guidance.

The policy takes in to account the DfE Guidance on Attendance (2022), Improving School Attendance (2022), Working together to improve school attendance (2024) and operates within a series of principles that have been agreed between schools in the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust. It has also been developed alongside Guiseley School's Child Protection Policy.

All schools across the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust recognise that good attendance is essential in order to raise standards of pupil attainment and to give every young person the best educational experience possible

Each member school within the ALPT has its own Attendance Policy written with the above statement in mind that underpins the Trust ethos.

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

We believe that there is a clear link between attendance and positive outcomes for children and young people. Research findings and learning from best practice shows that:

- Students must attend regularly to achieve their full potential
- Students who miss out on school can feel vulnerable and left behind
- Leave in term time is disruptive and can seriously affect your child's education.
- Students who consistently miss 17+ days in a school year lose one full grade in their GCSEs

The following shows the link between % attendance at school and number of days absent:

- 98% = Fewer than 4 days absent in one school year.
- 95% = Fewer than 10 days absent in one school year.
- 90% = 4 weeks (20 days) absent in one school year.
- 85% = 5½ weeks (28 days) absent in one school year.
- 80% = 7½ weeks (38 days) absent in one school year.

Department for Education (DFE) guidance is clear that we should focus on improving attendance, reduce absence and respond to individual barriers. Over a period of 5 school years, students with an average attendance of 85-90% will have missed half a school year of education while students with an average attendance of 80% over the same period will have missed a whole school year. While we recognise some children face additional barriers to attendance, we are committed to working with parents and carers to remove those barriers as we understand the importance of great attendance.

Our aim is to encourage great attendance for all students at Tranmere Park Primary School.

We do this by:

- Creating a warm and welcoming environment
- Ensuring that students feel safe at all times
- Developing a strong sense of citizenship within our students
- Offering a curriculum that engages and inspires
- Ensuring high quality teaching at all times
- Working with the Local Authority to ensure an appropriate level of support and challenge for all students
- Promoting daily contact for students who are not in school
- Encouraging, praising and celebrating achievement and success
- Notifying stakeholders that unauthorised absence can lead to prosecution.

This policy outlines the process by which parents/carers can request leave under exceptional circumstances for their child/ren. In addition, this policy provides clear procedures regarding absence through illness and the school's response to illness and absence. This policy follows the latest Government legislation and guidelines and is the culmination of detailed consultation with Leeds City Council. It has been developed and agreed alongside the Aireborough Learning Partnership Trust (ALPT) agreed principles to ensure consistency, fairness and clear decision making in relation to school absence.

Section 2: Roles and Responsibilities

At Tranmere Park Primary School, we are clear that attendance is everybody's responsibility. By working in partnership with parents, carers, students and other professionals, we seek to ensure every child looks forward to attending school. Outlined below are the roles and responsibilities of key staff within school and how they will help to ensure this target is achieved:

Parents/carers

Parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure their child is in school and that they do not undertake periods of absence without good reason.

Parents/carers should ensure their child arrives to school before 8:50am. Any child arriving after the registers close at 9:00am will receive a late mark for the morning session.

Parents/carers should, wherever possible, arrange any medical/dental appointments outside school hours. If this is unavoidable, evidence of the appointments must be provided to school so that the absence can be authorised.

If a child is too ill to come to school, please see NHS guidance: (<https://www.nhs.uk/livewell/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school/>)

Parents/carers must contact school via telephone before 8am and leave a message on the school's answering machine during each day of absence.

Parents and carers should work with school to identify barriers to attendance including engaging in requests for meetings when attendance is flagged as a concern. Similarly, parents and carers should proactively engage in support offered, to prevent the need for formal intervention. Where formal intervention is required, parents and carers must engage to prevent the need for legal action.

Parents/carers should not book holidays during term time. If parents/carers wish to take their child out of school during term time, they must submit an Exceptional Circumstances form (available from the office) for the headteacher's consideration before the requested leave of absence.

Headteacher

The Headteacher will consider any exceptional circumstances request for absence and choose whether to authorise based on the school's policy. This can be delegated to a senior leader in the Headteacher's absence.

Deputy Headteacher (Attendance)

The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will provide a strategic lead, at the head teacher's discretion, throughout the school by line managing key members of attendance staff, supporting other school leaders in the effective deployment of resources, ensuring compliance with the policy outlined and having oversight of cases that are being prepared for formal prosecution.

The Deputy Headteacher will also be responsible for quality assurance of all processes, data analysis and reporting to the Senior Leadership Team and Governing Body.

The Deputy Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will also work alongside the Local Authority to address attendance concerns and to agree a joined-up approach for severely absent pupils.

Phase Leaders

Phase Leaders will have an overview of attendance and priorities within their key stage. Alongside the Headteacher and Pastoral Lead, they will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of students. Alongside this, Phase Leaders will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help students overcome these barriers. Phase Leaders will be integral in ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children within their key stage and will do so through regular communication, sharing of data, supporting difficult cases and recognising improvement and the removal of barriers.

Teachers

It is the class teacher's responsibility to ensure the register is done within the first ten minutes of each morning and afternoon, without exception. Class teachers should plan for and provide catch up work and have a dialogue with students about positive or negative attendance patterns and the impact on learning in their subject. They will support the Phase Leader and Pastoral Lead in using data to identify priorities, recognise barriers to attendance and plan to overcome them as they are best placed to spot general attendance patterns, reasons for absence, who the persistent absentees are in their class and support all efforts to improve attendance. Teachers and phase leaders will be involved in the communication around attendance to other staff, students and home.

Pastoral Leaders

Pastoral Leaders will have an overview of attendance.

Alongside the Deputy Headteacher, they will be instrumental in identifying attendance trends for both individuals and cohorts of students. In addition, Pastoral Leaders will be responsible for identifying barriers to attendance and developing and implementing strategies to help students overcome these barriers.

Pastoral Leaders will be integral in ensuring attendance remains a priority for staff and children within their key stage and will do so through assemblies, regular communication, sharing of data and supporting difficult cases.

Pastoral leaders will ensure they monitor and support attendance routines for vulnerable or persistent absentee students including alternatives to registration, absence calls and the quality assurance of trackers and other interventions.

SENDCo and Wellbeing Team

The SENDCo and Wellbeing Team (Safeguarding and Mental Health) will work closely with all parties to ensure that barriers to attendance are removed as far as possible, while continuing to uphold the culture and ethos of the school.

Colleagues within these teams will have an input into attendance interventions, considering any reasonable adjustments where necessary. All referrals for part time programmes will be submitted to the SENCo/DSL for agreement so that safeguarding measures can be agreed and for ongoing monitoring.

The School Administrative Team

The School Administrative Team plays a critical role in the management of absence through illness, leave or other means. They are the initial point of contact between home and school and will ensure contact is made in all cases on the first day of absence either by text message, email or by phone call.

They also monitor punctuality, communicating with home to determine the reasons for students arriving late to school where a reason has not already been provided.

As well as the attendance of children in the school building, the Administrative Team will also monitor and record the attendance of all students attending any offsite learning opportunities.

Whilst maintaining and ensuring the accuracy of all registers, they will also be responsible, alongside the safeguarding team, for reporting children as missing education in line with the locally agreed CME protocols.

Working with the Pastoral Leads and Deputy Head, they help to identify any children where additional support is required. In these cases, the Deputy Headteacher will track and log (case studies) all actions and interventions and, where attendance remains persistently low, they will prepare the evidence for prosecutions. They will also be responsible for reporting children as missing education where this is appropriate.

Local Authority

Where parents and carers are not fulfilling this responsibility, the Local Authority have a statutory responsibility to uphold the rights of children and young people to full time education. Where necessary, this includes taking legal action against parents.

After a 10-session continued period of absence within a rolling 10-school-week period, the Local Authority will send a letter to parents/carers warning them of a possible escalation to a fine or prosecution if attendance does not improve.

The Local Authority will work with the school to provide formal support including parenting contracts and Education Supervision Orders.

There are a number of statutory options available to the local authority for parents whose children miss school:

- Penalty notices, fines of £80 per child, per parent have been available to the local authority since 2007, but their use has increased since the change in legislation around term-time holidays. This fee will now double to £160 should the fine not be paid within 28 days. If a second notice occurs within the next 3 years, it will be £160 from the outset. The local authority can prosecute parents in the Magistrates Court for non-payment of penalty notices, which can lead to a fine of up to £1000, a Parenting Order, and a criminal record.
- The local authority can apply to the Family Court for an Education Supervision Order, which means that the local authority can act directly on behalf of the child to ensure they attend school, removing some parental rights.
- The local authority can also submit a case directly to the Magistrates Court. There are two types of such prosecution and, if found guilty of the most serious offence, parents can face a fine of up to £2,500 and/or a community rehabilitation order, or even a custodial sentence of up to 3 months.

Section 3: Supporting Attendance

In order to support great attendance, we will record two attendance sessions a day (AM and PM) and report on student attendance at fixed periods throughout the year. Each morning and afternoon, we will ensure registers are complete and that all children are accounted for as this is a key part of our safeguarding protocols. Students who we feel need to improve their attendance will be set targets and supported in identifying barriers to attendance and, wherever possible, removing or overcoming these barriers.

Attendance data will be used to plan for effective strategies, analysis the impact of the school's work and identify priorities and areas for improvement. Data will be used to:

- Monitor individual absence and lateness to both school and lessons
- Identify patterns and trends in attendance and punctuality
- Identify students who should be celebrated for great attendance or significant improvement

Term-Time Absence and Requests for Leave

Parents/Carers do not have the right to remove their children from school during term-time without prior permission and agreement by the Headteacher or those granted that level of authorisation by the Headteacher. In the event of exceptional circumstances, parents may request leave during term time in writing and using an Exceptional Circumstances request form available the school office. Each application will be considered by the Headteacher and/or Governors who will decide whether or not the absence is to be authorised and the number of days. **Please note leave will not be considered retrospectively.**

In the event that unauthorised leave is taken, then the school will consider a fixed penalty fine.

Please note, it has been agreed across the Aireborough Trust that we cannot take into consideration the impact of other Local Authority school holidays, continental shift patterns or public service shift patterns when considering holiday and leave requests.

The Attendance Policy operates within an agreed set of principles across the Aireborough Trust. As such, we may liaise with other schools within the Trust and the Local Authority to moderate decision-making processes and consistency of approach.

Fixed Penalty Fines

Under the latest Government Legislation, parents / carers who take their children out of school during term time, without authorisation, may be issued with a fixed penalty fine by the Local Authority and could face possible prosecution in court.

In Leeds, a penalty notice can be issued for 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling 10-week period (these can include a combination of G, N, O and U codes). As a school, Kirsten Finley will liaise and consider fines on a case by case basis with our governors following 10 sessions of absence.

The penalty notice includes absences for holidays as well as other unauthorised absence. If a penalty notice is issued, it will be for the whole period of absence. Fines are issued for each parent following the model of £80 per child, per parent. This means that, a family of four with two parents and two children, will be fined a total of £320. The penalty will double if the notice is not paid

within 21 working days. If it remains unpaid, it will be passed for prosecution at the Magistrates Court

Students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

The Equality Act 2010 states schools must not discriminate against a pupil because of either additional needs or a disability. Tranmere Park Primary will take positive steps so that all pupils can access and participate in the education and other activities we provide.

In cases where students with poor attendance have SEN, disabilities, or other medical needs, and we feel a change of provision or support may be required, we will seek advice from the SENCo, Wellbeing Team and other professionals to work with parents/carers to support them in improving their child's attendance and/or punctuality.

In cases where students are experiencing mental health difficulties, Pastoral and Wellbeing Teams will work with the student, parents/carers and professionals to ensure plans are in place to support the student in accessing school. In instances where a medical professional has written to school to confirm the student cannot attend school, the absence will be authorised on medical grounds.

While we recognise that part-time timetables are occasionally necessary, we will only seek to utilise them as a last resort. Professional requests for reduced timetables will be considered as one factor within a wider eco-system and will be balanced with the professional judgement of school-based staff, parent voice and student voice. This means we will look to consider reasonable adjustments in school, prior to reducing a student's educational entitlement, as this is consistent with our commitment that part time programmes should only be used as a last resort and must be regularly reviewed with a view to returning to full-time education.

Section 4: Managing Absence

At Tranmere Park Primary School, we value great attendance and work in close partnership with parents and carers to ensure every child is accessing their education. As with every school, and in line with DFE guidance, we make a distinction between 'authorised absence' and 'unauthorised absence'. Below are some examples of both, but please be aware this list is not exhaustive:

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised absence
• Medical appointment (with letter) • Family bereavement • Religious observance (exclusively the days set apart for religious event) • Participating in a Sporting event	• Unexplained absences • Family holiday in term time • Truancy • Birthdays

Our responses to non-attendance are evidence based and intended to be implemented at the point of most impact. Below are the key stages for parents and carers to be aware of:

- 96% +** Attendance is positive and a cause of celebration
- 90% - 96%** Attendance is reasonable but could be improved. School will monitor.
- <90%** Attendance is a concern. Parents will be contacted outlining the risk of persistent absence will be issued other than in exceptional circumstances. Children will be monitored through Attendance Case Studies for the duration of their time at Tranmere and supportive monitoring will be available. E.g. Is there a medical or emotional issue that we could support? Can we make adjustments to reduce anxiety?

Although we are aware that there are times absence may be inevitable or unavoidable, we commit to undertaking a thorough process for cases under 90% to ensure that our decision making is fair and consistent.

Safeguarding & Responding to Absence

Safeguarding is the highest priority for all staff at Tranmere Park Primary School. We recognise the clear relationship between children being in school and being able to effectively discharge our safeguarding duties. As DFE guidance states: when children are not in school, they miss the protection and opportunities school can provide and can become more vulnerable to harm. Therefore, the following steps are undertaken to ensure the safeguarding of all Tranmere Park Primary School students:

- First day absence texts and calls
- Follow up phone calls if there is no response
- If a student has five days unauthorised and unexplained absence, we will undertake a home visit. If the absence continues and it reaches 10 days, the authority will be informed.

- If a student has between five- and ten-days authorised absence, we may also undertake a home visit in order to support their return to school

Appendix 1: Guidance on authorising absence / leave requests

Leave categorisation	Authorised?	Number of days	Other information?
Death of close family member	Yes	5 + 1	5 days + one day for funeral with additional consideration where required
Death of extended family member	Yes	1 + 1	One day + one day for funeral
Religious Observance	Yes	2	2 days i.e. Eid = one day for each observance. If in doubt, consult with local place of worship
Hospital Appointment	Yes	1	Only authorised with letter from hospital / professional
Medical / dental Appointment	Yes	.5	Unauthorised without letter
Sports Representation	Yes*	HT's Discretion	Representation at city, regional and above
Weddings	Yes	1	One day for family
Graduation	Yes	1	One day for immediate family

As a Trust, we recognise that there will always be exceptional circumstances that sit outside the confines of this policy. The Headteacher reserves the right to consider individual applications on the merits of each case.

Attendance codes:

/ = present am \= present pm

B = offsite educational activity

C1 = leave of absence granted for employment (acting job, sport etc)

C2 = leave of absence granted for reduced timetable.

D= Dual registered at another school

E = excluded

G = holiday, not approved

I = Illness (not medical appointment)

K = The child is attending provision arranged by the local authority

L= late before register closed

M = Medical appointment/dentist appointment (where evidence has been provided)

N= No reason for absence

O= absent without authorisation

P= Approved sporting activity

R = Religious observance

S = study leave

T = Traveller absence/parent taken the child on a work trip.

U = arrived after registration closed

V= educational visit/trip

Y1 = Usual transport is unavailable

Y2 = Widespread disruption to travel (train strikes etc)

Y3 = Cannot attend because part of our site is closed.

Y4 = Cannot attend because the entire site is closed.

Y5 = Cannot attend because of criminal justice detention

Y6 = Cannot attend because of public health guidance.

Y7 = Any other unavoidable circumstances