

Attendance Policy

Trinity St Mary's CE Primary

2025 - 2026



Southwark
Supporting Children

Local Authority Board of Education



Status & Review Cycle: Statutory Annual
Reviewed: October 2025
Next Review Date: October 2026

Aims

- To achieve an attendance target of 96% or above.
- To work closely with the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) to monitor the attendance of children and respond to concerns about levels of absence promptly.
- To encourage parents not to take their children out of school during term time.

Purpose

Trinity St Mary's wants each and every child to have the best possible attendance at school to enable them to reach their full potential. There is a strong link between good school attendance and achieving good results for children. Children who frequently miss school may fall behind in their work, which may affect their future prospects. Absence may also have an effect on friendships. Young people who are frequently absent from school are more likely to become involved in, or be a victim of crime and anti-social behaviour. At Trinity St Mary's School, we work closely with families to support them to achieve the best possible outcomes for our children.

Promoting Good Attendance

Trinity St Mary's School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- Every half term we will hold an attendance ceremony. Children that have achieved 100% attendance receive a certificate, attendance badge and a small prize. Children who have the most improved attendance also receive a certificate.
- Every Tuesday the class with the best attendance, in each key stage, for the week is given an extra 5 minutes play at playtime.
- Every day that the whole class are on in and on time, the class receives a letter. Once the class has spelt 'Trinity St Mary's' then that class receives a non-uniform day.
- By publishing and displaying attendance statistics on the school website, parental portal and newsletter.
- By monitoring pupils, informing parents/carers in writing of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary and referring the family to the Education Welfare Service if the irregular attendance continues.

At the end of the year, any child achieving 100% attendance will receive an extra prize. If a child achieves two years' attendance at 100%, they are rewarded with a £10 voucher at the end of year service. This prize will be increased each year that the child achieves 100%. If the child gains a 100% attendance for the whole 8 years at Trinity St Mary's, then they will receive a prize of their choice, e.g. lunch, cinema or theatre trip.

Monitoring Attendance

The Three Letter System

Introduction:

The three-letter system is intended to enable schools and colleges continuously and consistently to monitor and address poor school attendance. The system offers schools the opportunity to target non-attendance methodically and progressively up to and including the point at which a referral to the Education Welfare Service may be necessary. The system is based on three model letters, which schools can send to parents when there are concerns about any emerging patterns of absenteeism.

It is intended to apply essentially to absence, which is unauthorised, but with some modification (and appropriate rewording of the letters) it might in certain circumstances be used to target patterns of

absence which are authorised but which are beginning to cause concern. Schools should, however, decline to continue to authorise such absences once doubts arise as to their legitimacy.)

Key Features and Potential Benefits:

- Headteacher/SENCo can focus on the attendance of all pupils at least once a fortnight. Headteacher/SENCo can quickly and easily identify those pupils whose attendance is becoming a cause of concern.
- In most cases Letter 1 (Appendix 1) brings about a rapid improvement in attendance and no further action is required. This will be sent when attendance drops below 96%
- The system provides a clear record of the school's own efforts to improve attendance should it subsequently be necessary to involve the Education Welfare Service.
- As the Education Welfare Service 'School Attendance' leaflet is sent with Letter 2 (Appendix 3), parents are made aware of the existence and role of the Education Welfare Service prior to any subsequent involvement should this prove necessary.
- The school can readily identify emerging attendance problems and therefore target support accordingly.
- The school builds up a consistent record of their own attendance interventions and is able to ensure that when they do need to involve the Education Welfare Service they do this only when their own efforts have proved unsuccessful.
- The school produces a record of attendance every week for all pupils whose attendance has fallen beneath 96%.
- These pupils are discussed monthly by the Headteacher & Schools' Attendance Officer (SAO), who then discuss any issues with the EWO, looking for emerging trends and patterns. Families are then targeted by the Headteacher / SENCo for support. A family worker is made available if lateness and attendance continues to be an issue.

Letter 1

- For those pupils who have been identified for the first time, a copy of Letter 1 (Appendix 1) is sent to the parents.
- Should the pupil's attendance improve but the improvement fail to be sustained, a further copy of Letter 1 may be sent again at a later date.
- This is recorded by saving a copy of the letter in the attendance folder.

Letter 2

- Following the sending of Letter 1, should the pupil's attendance fail to improve or should it fall below 90%, a copy of Letter 2 (Appendix 2), together with a copy of the Education Welfare Service 'School Attendance' leaflet is sent to the parent.
- This is recorded by saving a copy of the letter in the attendance folder. The parent/carer will be invited for a discussion with the Headteacher & SAO.

Letter 3 – School Attendance Panel (SAP) Meeting

- Should the pupil's attendance still fail to improve or should it fall to a lower level, then a copy of a SAP letter (Appendix 3) is sent to the parents (and copied to the Education Welfare Officer). A record of each letter sent is kept in the attendance folder for each class. The case is formally referred to the Education Welfare Officer and the parent / carer will be invited for a SAP meeting.
- Should a pupil be absent for a longer period of time, with no satisfactory explanation, this may result in referrals to agencies that can support the family to improve attendance.

Responding to Non-Attendance

When a pupil does not attend school, we will respond in the following manner:

- On the first day of absence, if no note or telephone call is received from the parent/carer by 9:30am, the school will endeavour to contact them that morning. If the family do not answer the telephone, an email will be sent.
- If there continues to be no response, the school will continue to try to contact the parent/carer or any contact on the child's record. If by the end of the second day, there has still been no contact made, the school will visit the property listed to complete a welfare check. If no-one answers then a letter will be posted through the letterbox (Appendix 4).
- If contact is not made within a reasonable reason for absence, the school may contact additional services e.g. social care or the police for advice/support for the child and families safety. If we do not receive any contact or explanation for absence, the child may be classed as missing from education.

Penalty Notices

Penalty Notices will only be issued in accordance with the terms within the Code of Conduct set out for Wandsworth. They will only be issued in relation to absence from school, which is unauthorised. At Trinity St Mary's, Penalty Notices will be issued to parents / carers when their child's attendance falls below 90% over the previous 4-week period or after all other procedures have been followed and no improvement in attendance has occurred. Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will deploy other strategies to help the family improve attendance rates. Such strategies might include:

- writing to the child's parents / carers to remind them of their legal responsibilities
- meeting with the child's parents / carers;
- first day absence phone calls;
- setting targets for improvement;
- referral to the Education Welfare Officer;
- involvement of other services/agencies e.g. family worker
- In some cases, when the child lives within walking distance to the school, the attendance officer (accompanied by another member of staff) could collect the child and bring them into school.

In the first instance, Trinity St Mary's Primary will send a warning letter via the EWO (Appendix 4). If a family continue to take leave of absence without authorisation by the Headteacher, then a Penalty Notice Letter will be issued.

Holiday Leave during Term Time

Introduction

A minority of parents continue to cause disruption to their children's education by withdrawing them from school during term-time for the purpose of a family holiday / weddings etc. Many of these parents mistakenly believe that they have a 10-day holiday 'entitlement'. This is compounded by holiday companies offering out-of-season (i.e. outside of school holidays) bargains.

Absence during term-time as a result of term-time holidays interrupts continuity of teaching and learning, disrupts the educational progress of individual children and creates disruption in schools. Trinity St Mary's Primary School therefore aims to discourage parents from arranging family holidays / wedding etc. during term time.

Whilst it is acknowledged that for some parents the issue of choosing when to arrange annual family holidays may be problematic due to particular working patterns and restrictions on when leave can be taken in some occupations, Trinity St Mary's Primary School nevertheless believes that the vast and overwhelming majority of parents should be able to arrange for their annual family holiday to take place within the published dates for school holidays.

It is recognised that some parents may persist in taking their children out of school for the purposes of a family holiday regardless of the view and response of their child's school. Trinity St Mary's Primary School intends to make a clear statement regarding the issue of term-time holidays, to positively and proactively ensure that the amount of teaching and learning time lost to term-time holidays is, as a result, minimised.

Guidance for Parents

A child does not have a 'right' or 'entitlement' to term-time leave for the purposes of an annual family holiday and that term-time leave, like all leave, can only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Parents should understand that any request for leave of absence in term-time leave will be treated on an individual basis. Decisions to authorise absence will be based on individual family circumstances and historical attendance of the child. The school will not, as a rule, agree to leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. In all cases, absence will not be authorised unless the authorisation form has been completed (Appendix 5) with evidence of flights, a child's prior attendance has been 100% and the Headteacher deems the circumstance to be exceptional. Exceptional circumstances will not include financial restraints and making use of holiday discounts.

Any parent who takes a child out of school for term time leave, not authorised by the school (under exceptional circumstances rule), may receive a Penalty Notice. Such cases will have to be supported by evidence of previous unauthorised term time leave taken in the last 3 years and evidence of parents being warned about a potential Penalty Notice.

Trinity St Mary's Primary School will communicate the details of leave of absence taken in term time through:

- website;
- the school's overall attendance policy;
- school newsletters;
- translations into community languages as necessary;
- noticeboards;

- Arbor website link
- parent tours/parents' evenings.

Trinity St Mary's Primary School will use an Application for Leave of Absence' form (Appendix 6). Occasionally parents take their children on holiday without requesting a leave of absence. If the school suspect that this has happened a suspected holiday letter (Appendix 6) will be sent.

School Response

Trinity St Mary's Primary School will make clear to parents the likely educational impact upon their child if extended leave is taken during term-time. The importance of being at school near and during SATs will also be stressed.

Should absence be agreed we will consider: -

- seeking to establish, and make explicit, if appropriate, the potential educational value of the visit;
- explaining what work the child will miss in school, how it can be made up on return if necessary, and how the parents can help the child;
- asking the pupil to make notes/observations in relation to a class topic or to keep a diary;
- sharing the experience, on return, in a positive way with other children;

Should the school feel unable to comply with the request for leave the reasons for this will be explained to the parents. This explanation should show an understanding of the parents' perspective. If the absence is a longer period of time, your child may lose their place at the school and you will need to reapply for a place on your return.

Persistent Lateness

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. The school gates open at 8:40am and if your child is not in class when the register is taken then they are late. This applies in all cases for being late, including travel delays.

The Headteacher will meet with parents of those children who are regularly late arriving at school to investigate reasons and suggest solutions to enable attendance that is more punctual. If there is no improvement in punctuality, then a late letter (Appendix 7) will be sent.

Collecting Children early

If there are any reasons why you need to collect your child early from school (e.g. medical appointment, Secondary School Induction) then you will be required to sign your child out and provide evidence. All appointments where early pick-up or late drop off is required must be relating to that child- not other family members.

Changing Schools

It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school they inform the Headteacher at Trinity St Mary's School as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- In-Year transfer form to be completed if it is a Wandsworth School
- 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 reasons for the transfer.

The pupil's school records will then be sent on to the new school within the timeframe set out by KCSIE. If a parent/carer appears to have removed their child from school or the child has completely stopped attending without providing the above information, the family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and will be reported as a child missing in education.

School Organisation

In order for the School's Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff will make attendance and punctuality a high priority and convey this to the pupils at all times. Parents/carers need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving a consistent message about the value of education.

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

- 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 timetabled periods for liaison and follow-up work with the EWO and appropriate access to attendance data.
- Consult and liaise closely with the EWS on a regular basis and take responsibility for ensuring appropriate pupils are identified and referred immediately.
- Work in close collaboration with the EWS during their termly/half termly register analysis.
- Institute an attendance / punctuality aware scheme with assemblies, certificates and rewards.
- Ensure that attendance / punctuality percentages/graphs are displayed around the school and to set whole school attendance targets.
- Monitor and evaluate attendance / punctuality with the EWO.
- Hold School Attendance Panel (SAP) meetings where appropriate in liaison, with the school EWO.



6 Balham Park Road London SW12 8DR

Tel 020 8673 4166

Email: sao@tsm.wandsworth.sch.uk

www.tsm.wandsworth.sch.uk

Headteacher: Lynn Anderson

Deputy Headteacher: Chloe Keys

Appendix 1 – Below 96% attendance letter

Date

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Below 96% Attendance Information for «First Name»

We are very keen to ensure that all children attend school regularly. As you are aware, it is important for your child's friendships and academic progress. In addition, it is proven that good attendance is linked with academic success. The school target for attendance is 96% and we send letters to parents whose child/ren have fallen below the school target.

For the ??? term of the 201?-201? Academic year.....'s attendance was ??%.

We understand that their absence maybe for a range of reasons, including illness, but as their attendance is below the school target, we feel it is important to share it with you. If the absence is due to medical reasons, please ensure we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details.

We will continue to monitor the situation and will inform you if ???'s attendance falls below 90%.

If you are having difficulties in getting to school, please do not hesitate to contact the office and make an appointment to see me. We are very happy to help.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes,

Mrs Vikki Didd
Attendance Officer



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Kindness, Unity and Courage

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Headteacher: Lynn Anderson

Deputy Headteacher: Chloe Keys

Appendix 2– Below 90% attendance letter

Date

Dear Parents/Carers,

Re: Below 90% Attendance Information for ???

The Education Welfare Officer, Yasmin Deane, reviewed our attendance records for the current academic term. She noted that <NAME>'S attendance is currently only X%. Please find attached a copy of <NAME>'S attendance record for your information.

I am sure you are aware that it is important that <NAME> maintains regular attendance, as any absence may interrupt HIS/HER academic progress and may have an effect on friendships. You should also be aware that regular attendance is a legal requirement.

Please note that the Education Welfare Officer comes into school on a regular basis to look at our attendance. She will challenge the school to improve the attendance of any pupil who falls below 96%.

If there are any particular circumstances that we may not be aware of which are having an influence on <NAME> attending school regularly, or if you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to speak to myself or Vikki in the office.

We will continue to monitor <NAME>'S attendance and we look forward to seeing an improvement. Please find attached our leaflet to explain the importance of school attendance. If you require any further information, please look at the Attendance Policy on the school website.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes,

Mrs Vikki Didd
Attendance Officer



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Appendix 3 – SAP meeting request

DATE

Dear Parent/carer name,

Re: Invitation to a SAP meeting

I am writing to inform you that <name>'s attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting <name>'s progress and we would like to meet with you.

Should <name>'s attendance remain irregular; the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 Education Act 1996, and a fine of up to £2500 and/or 3 months in prison.

The Education Welfare Officer, Yasmin Deane, has requested that you attend a meeting to discuss <name>'s attendance. She will be visiting Trinity St Mary's on DATE and wishes to meet with you at TIME.

During the meeting, we will discuss any concerns you may have, so we can continue to support <name> in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve HIS/HER attendance. If you have any queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Please find attached our leaflet to explain the importance of school attendance. If you require any further information, please look at the Attendance Policy on the school website.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes,

Mrs Vikki Didd
Attendance Officer



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Appendix 4 – Referral to EWO service letter

Date

Dear Name,

Re: Referral to EWO service

I note that there has been no significant improvement in ***** attendance since DATE.

????'s attendance for this academic year has fallen to %. Furthermore, I have not received any satisfactory explanation for Name absences.

It has now become necessary to continue the referral of Name and the concerns around his/her attendance to the Education Welfare Service. An Education Welfare Officer will contact you in due course.

Should you have anything you wish to discuss this matter, I will continue to be available. Please contact the office, on the above number, if you would like to arrange an appointment.

Thank you for your continued support.

Best Wishes,

Miss Anderson
Head Teacher



Appendix 5

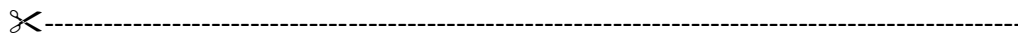
Request for Leave of Absence

This form should be used to apply for leave of absence for your child. This includes medical and educational appointments.

Holidays

Please note that following changes to the school attendance regulations in 2013 Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. This means that for holidays during term time a child's absence will be unauthorised. As far as possible holidays should coincide with the School's generous set annual holidays. We are duty bound to point out to you that taking your child out of school during term time will be disruptive to his/her education and there will undoubtedly be lessons that he/she will miss that he/she will not be able to catch up with on return to school. In addition to the interruption to your child's academic education, he/she will also, miss out on the invaluable social interaction with friends and the school community as a whole. If a child takes a holiday during term time then the teacher will set any necessary catch up work after the holiday.

Having read the above notes, should it still be necessary to request leave of absence for your child then please complete the cut-off slip below and return it to the School Office, giving as much advance notice as possible.



APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE

Child's Name:..... **Form:**.....

I request that my child be granted leave of absence from school

From:..... **To:**.....

Reason:.....
.....
.....
.....

(Please continue overleaf if necessary)

Signed:..... *(parent/carer)*

For Office Use Only

Absence Authorised:.....

Unauthorised Absence:.....

Signed:.....

Miss L M Anderson

Date:.....

Copied
To:

Parent

File

Form
Teacher



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Appendix 6

DATE

Dear Parents/carers,

Re: Suspected Term time leave

I am writing about «name»'s absence from school from <<date>> to <<date>>.

From information received from other sources, we believe that this was due to term time leave. You have not followed the correct procedure for requesting leave of absence during term time.

We would be grateful if you could confirm the reason for the absence within 7 days of the date of this letter so this period can be recorded appropriately on the attendance register. However, if the absence was not due to exceptional circumstances but due to illness, please provide medical information to support this.

If we do not hear from you within the next 7 days, «forename»'s absence will be recorded as 'G' denoting an unauthorised term time leave.

If unauthorised absences are recorded, a Penalty Notice Fine can be issued by the Local Authority to each parent/carer in respect of each child who is absent from school. Failure to pay will result in legal proceedings being initiated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Please note if 3 or more term time leave Penalty Notices have been issued over a 3 year period then prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may be considered as an alternative to a Penalty Notice fine being issued. Where a parent takes a child out of school during term time for an extended period (20 days or more), not authorised by the school, prosecution in relation to Section 444 Education Act 1996, may also be considered.

Yours sincerely,

Mrs V Didd
Attendance Officer



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Appendix 7

Date

Dear Name,

Re: Punctuality

I have noted during a recent attendance review that your child continues to show a pattern of lateness which has reached ?? minutes over the last ? weeks.

It is the duty of parents to ensure that children attend school regularly and punctually. This encourages habits of good timekeeping and lessens any possible classroom disruption. If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child's punctuality, please make an appointment at the office to discuss this further.

Please note that if your child is not in class when the register is taken they are classed as late and if your child arrives after registers close this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

I must remind you that as their parent/carer it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which she is registered, regularly and punctually.

Thank you for your continued support,

Best Wishes,

Mrs V Didd
Attendance officer