

Attendance Policy

Trinity St Mary's CE Primary

2025 - 2026



'Frame children as a heritage from God and carry strict warnings against harming or neglecting the vulnerable.'

Matthew 18:6



The Diocese of
Southwark



Status & Review Cycle: Statutory Annual

Reviewed: September 2026

Next Review Date: September 2027 (or earlier if statutory guidance changes)

Policy Lead: Headteacher / Attendance Officer

Aims

Trinity St Mary's CE Primary School is committed to securing high levels of attendance and punctuality so that every pupil can benefit fully from education, relationships, safeguarding and wider school life. Attendance is everyone's responsibility and is approached through high expectations, early identification, respectful partnership with families, appropriate support and, where necessary, formal intervention.

- ✚ Promote a whole-school culture in which regular attendance and punctuality are valued.
- ✚ Set high expectations for all pupils while recognising individual circumstances and barriers.
- ✚ Use attendance data to identify emerging patterns early and target support effectively.
- ✚ Work in partnership with pupils, parents/carers, the local authority and other services to remove barriers.
- ✚ Safeguard children by responding promptly to unexplained and prolonged absence.
- ✚ Apply attendance law, national attendance codes and the National Framework for Penalty Notices fairly and consistently.

Legal and statutory framework

This policy has been updated with regard to the Department for Education's July 2026 statutory guidance, Working together to improve school attendance, the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, relevant provisions of the Education Act 1996 and the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework effective from 1st September 2026.

Parents of pupils of compulsory school age have a legal duty to ensure that their child receives a suitable full-time education. Where a child is registered at school, parents must ensure regular attendance unless a statutory reason for absence applies.

Roles and Responsibilities:

Senior Attendance Champion

In line with guidance, Trinity St Mary's has identified a Senior Attendance Champion (SAC), who is a member of the senior leadership team (SLT). The SAC at Trinity St Mary's is Miss Anderson and she will provide strategic leadership for attendance, ensure the policy is implemented, oversee analysis of attendance data, coordinate support and challenge, and work with our Attendance Officer, Mrs Didd, the local authority, SDBE and other outside agencies.

Attendance Officer / Day-to-day attendance contact

The Attendance Officer at Trinity St Mary's is Mrs Didd and she is the day-to-day contact for reporting absence, attendance queries and routine follow-up. Mrs Didd can be contacted at the school office on 020 8673 4166 or sao@tsm.wandsworth.sch.uk.

All staff

- ✚ Promote the benefits of regular attendance and punctuality.
- ✚ Complete registers accurately and at the required times.
- ✚ Report concerns and emerging patterns promptly.
- ✚ Maintain respectful, supportive relationships with pupils and families.
- ✚ Follow safeguarding procedures when absence raises concern.

Parents and Carers

-  Ensure their child attends every session for which they are expected, on time and ready to learn.
-  Notify the school promptly of an unexpected absence and provide the reason.
-  Keep the school informed of changes to contact and emergency contact details.
-  Arrange routine appointments outside school hours wherever possible.
-  Request any leave of absence in advance and provide relevant information or evidence when reasonably required.
-  Engage with school and local authority support where attendance is a concern.

Attendance and Punctuality Expectations

The school gates open at 8:40am. Pupils are expected to arrive in sufficient time to be in class when the morning register is taken. The precise register opening time is 8:50am and the register closes at 9:00am

Arrival between 9:00am and 9:30am when will be recorded as late on the register. Any child arriving at the school gate at 9:00am, will be marked as late on the school register. Any child arriving after 9:30am will be recorded using the appropriate national absence code and this will count as unauthorised absence.

Persistent lateness will be monitored. Trinity St Mary's work with parents to understand the reasons, agree practical solutions and review improvement. Where lateness persists, further attendance support and formal action may be considered.

Registers and attendance codes

The school will maintain electronic admission and attendance registers. The attendance register will be taken at the start of each morning session and at the start of each afternoon session, at the same time for all registered pupils. Absence will be recorded using the national attendance and absence codes. Register entries and amendments will be retained in accordance with statutory requirements.

Registers are legal records. Any amendment will preserve the original entry and record the reason, date and person making the amendment.

Reporting and following up absence

Parents/carers should report an unexpected absence to the school as early as possible and before 8:30am, on each day of absence, giving the reason and expected duration.

-  Where no reason has been received, the school will make first-day contact with the parent/carer and, where needed, other emergency contacts.
-  Unexplained absence will be followed up promptly and repeatedly until the pupil's whereabouts and safety are established or safeguarding action is required.
-  The school will consider the pupil's vulnerability, family circumstances and any pattern or trend in absence when deciding the urgency and nature of follow-up.
-  Where concerns remain, the school may undertake a welfare check and/or refer to children's social care or request police support in line with safeguarding procedures.

Children missing education procedures will be followed where applicable.

EYFS child absences

For children within the EYFS, the school will follow up absences in a timely manner. If a child is absent without notification or for a prolonged period, attempts will be made to contact parents/carers and alternative emergency contacts. Patterns and trends will be considered

alongside the child's and family's circumstances. Safeguarding concerns will be referred to children's social care and/or a police welfare check requested where appropriate.

Promoting good attendance

Trinity St Mary's CE will promote the benefits of attendance through clear communication, assemblies, curriculum and pastoral work, displays and regular information to families. Recognition may be used for good or improved attendance where this is sensitive, inclusive and does not disadvantage pupils whose absence is linked to disability, ill health or other circumstances beyond their control.

The school's attendance aspiration is 96% or above. This is a school improvement ambition rather than a legal threshold for individual enforcement. The legal threshold for individual enforcement regarding primary school attendance in England is **10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks**. A school day consists of two sessions (one morning and one afternoon). Therefore, 10 sessions equal **5 full school days** of absence.

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

- ✚ Every **term** we will hold an attendance ceremony. Children that have achieved 100% attendance receive a certificate, attendance sticker and a small prize. Children who have the most improved attendance will 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 display boards and newsletters.
- ✚ 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 and use of attendance data

Attendance and absence data will be reviewed regularly at individual, group and whole-school level. The school will identify patterns, compare cohorts where useful, and pay particular attention to pupils whose attendance is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

- ✚ Emerging concerns will be identified early rather than waiting for a fixed percentage before support begins.
- ✚ Pupils with SEND, physical or mental ill health, a social worker, young-career responsibilities or other vulnerabilities will be considered carefully and offered appropriate support or reasonable adjustments.
- ✚ Attendance actions will be recorded, reviewed and adjusted according to their impact.
- ✚ Governors will receive appropriate attendance information and challenge leaders on trends, vulnerable cohorts and the effectiveness of improvement work.

Support-first response to attendance concerns

When a pattern of absence emerges, the school will listen to the pupil and family, seek to understand barriers and agree actions. Support may include adjustments in school, pastoral or SEND support, family support, early help, referrals to external services and joint work with the local authority.

Where voluntary support is not effective or is not engaged with, the school and local authority may formalise support, for example, through an attendance contract or other appropriate legal intervention. Enforcement is considered when support is not appropriate, has not worked or has not been engaged with.

Persistent and severe absence

Persistent and severe absence will be treated as a priority. The school will use attendance data and professional judgement to identify pupils at risk, understand the causes, coordinate support and work with the local authority and other partners. The response will reflect the pupil's individual circumstances and safeguarding needs rather than relying solely on a percentage threshold.

Where absence is linked to disability, SEND, physical or mental ill health, the school will consider reasonable adjustments and additional support. Part-time timetables will only be used exceptionally, for a temporary and time-limited period, with parental agreement and a clear plan for returning to full-time education.

Illness and medical/dental appointments

Parents should notify the school office, **no later than 8:30am**, either through a phone call, 020 8673 4166 or email to sao@tsm.wandsworth.sch.uk, when a pupil is too ill to attend. The school will not routinely request medical evidence for every illness. However, evidence may be requested where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness or where it is needed to support the pupil and understand barriers to attendance.

Routine medical and dental appointments must be arranged outside school hours, any routine appointment taken during school hours will mean that the child will be marked as unauthorised absent. **In cases where an emergency dental or medical appointment** is necessary, parents should seek the school's agreement in advance and the pupil should be absent for the minimum time necessary.

Leave of absence and term-time holidays

Leave of absence is granted at the school's discretion and, for exceptional circumstances, for example and bereavement in the immediate family. These leave of absences will be considered individually on the specific facts, circumstances and relevant background. The school will not operate a blanket policy that automatically grants leave for particular events.

A holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation (e.g. a birthday) will not be regarded as an exceptional circumstance. Requests should be made in advance by the parent with whom the pupil normally lives. Where leave is granted, the school will determine the number of days authorised.

Unauthorised leave may contribute to the national threshold for considering a penalty notice.

Penalty notices and legal intervention

Penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution and will be considered in accordance with the National Framework and the local authority's Code of Conduct. They are not automatic in every case; the school and local authority will consider the individual circumstances, whether support is appropriate and whether a penalty notice is the best available intervention.

The national threshold for considering a penalty notice is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence within a rolling period of 10 school weeks. The sessions may be consecutive or non-consecutive and the 10-week period may span terms or school years.

Where support is appropriate but has not worked or has not been engaged with, a Notice to Improve will usually provide a final opportunity to improve before a penalty notice is issued. The improvement period will normally be between 3 and 6 weeks in line with the local Code of Conduct.

For attendance offences under the National Framework, the first penalty notice issued to a parent for a particular pupil is £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A second notice to the same parent for the same pupil within three years is £160 with no reduced rate. A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent for the same pupil within that three-year period; alternative action, which may include prosecution, will be considered.

Only authorised persons may issue penalty notices and the school will follow Wandsworth's current local Code of Conduct and agreed referral/issuing arrangements

Safeguarding and children missing education

Absence can be a safeguarding warning sign. At Trinity St Mary's CE Primary School, staff will remain alert to unexplained, repeated or prolonged absence and to changes in attendance patterns. Where the school cannot establish a child's whereabouts or has concerns for their safety or welfare, safeguarding procedures will be followed without delay, including referrals to children's social care, police welfare checks and children missing education procedures where appropriate.

Changing schools and removal from roll

Parents should inform the school as soon as possible if a child is moving school or home and provide the new school, start date and new address. A pupil's name will only be deleted from the admission register where a lawful ground under the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024 applies. Records will be transferred securely within statutory and safeguarding requirements.

Early collection from school

Where a pupil needs to leave school early, the parent/carers must follow the school's sign-out arrangements. Evidence will be requested prior to any pupil being released early from school. **Appointments should relate to the pupil being collected** and should be arranged to minimise lost learning time. **Pupils will only be released early from school if the appointment relates to them.** In extreme circumstances that early collection does not relate to the pupil, evidence must be given to the school, prior to collection.

Equality and individual circumstances

This policy will be applied fairly and consistently while taking account of individual circumstances. Trinity St Mary's CE Primary School will consider its duties under the Equality Act 2010 and make reasonable adjustments where required. Attendance support will recognise that some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than others.

Communication, publication and review

This policy is published on the school website, made available to staff, pupils and parents/carers, shared with families when pupils join the school, and highlighted at the beginning of each school year and whenever it is updated.

The policy will be reviewed at least annually and sooner if legislation, statutory guidance, local authority arrangements or the school's circumstances change.



Appendix A - Attendance response pathway

Stage	School response
1. Expect and promote	Set clear attendance and punctuality expectations; make school safe, supportive and welcoming.
2. Monitor	Use daily registers and regular data analysis to identify unexplained absence, lateness and emerging patterns.
3. Listen and understand	Contact the family, meet where appropriate and understand barriers and individual circumstances.
4. Facilitate support	Agree actions, remove in-school barriers and connect the family with appropriate support.
5. Formalise support	Where absence persists, consider an attendance contract, Notice to Improve or other formal support with the local authority.
6. Enforce where necessary	Where support is inappropriate, unsuccessful or not engaged with, consider penalty notice or prosecution in line with the National Framework and local Code.



Trinity St Mary's C of E
Kindness, Unity and Courage

Appendix B - Key contact details

School address: 6 Balham Park Road, London SW12 8DR

Telephone: 020 8673 4166

Attendance email: sao@tsm.wandsworth.sch.uk

Website: www.tsm.wandsworth.sch.uk

Senior Attendance Champion: Lynn Anderson
(Headteacher & DSL)

Attendance Officer: Vikki Didd

Education Welfare / Local Authority attendance contact:

Arlene Armstrong

Arlene.Armstrong@RichmondandWandsworth.gov.uk



Appendix C - References used for the 2026 update

Department for Education, Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, July 2026.

Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework for group and school-based providers, dated 13 July 2026 and effective 1 September 2026.

School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024.

Education Act 1996, including sections relating to parental responsibility for regular school attendance.