

# Pupil Attendance Policy



*Learning together in a changing world, creating success for all.*

# Trinity Fields is a Rights Respecting School, a Healthy School and an Inclusive School.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our pupil friendly and adult version of our “**Shared Values and Aims**”.

## Trinity Fields is a Rights Respecting School

Trinity Fields is a Rights Respecting School and we are committed to the principles and values of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) across all areas of our work.

Trinity Fields is a school where pupils are at the heart of everything we do. As part of our aim to promote a happy and successful school we have successfully been awarded UNICEF’s “**Rights Respecting School Award**” (January 2017).

The ‘Rights Respecting School’ Award (RRSA) helps our pupils become more confident, caring and as independent as possible both in school and within the wider community. By learning about their rights our pupils, your children, also learn about the importance of respecting the rights of others, that is, their responsibilities.

Our pupils are encouraged wherever possible to reflect on how their behaviour and actions affect those around them, which allows us to build and maintain a positive and safe learning environment for all, both in the classroom and around the school site.

Refer to pupil friendly “**Pupil Participation**” policy and our whole school “**Pupil Participation**” policy for further details.

## Trinity Fields is a Healthy School

We are also a Healthy School and we take responsibility for maintaining and promoting the health and wellbeing of the Trinity Fields team (pupils, parents/carers, staff, governors etc.). This includes teaching pupils about how to lead healthy lives and enabling both pupils and staff to take control over aspects of the school environment which influence their health.

Refer to “**Health and Well-being for Pupils**” policy and our whole school “**Health and Well-being**” policy for further details.

## Trinity Fields is an Inclusive School (IQM Flagship School status)

We have demonstrated through national annual assessment that we have the capacity to play a strong leadership role in developing inclusion best practice across a network of schools; as well as being committed to extending those networks and publish classroom-based research.

Refer to “**Inclusion**” policy and to **IQM assessment reports** for further details.

## **Education in Wales: Our National Mission**

Our work with pupils and their families will be developed building upon Wales’ National Mission. This national mission is ambitious, innovative and confident ensuring that we all take responsibility for all of our pupils to have equal opportunities to reach the highest possible standards.

Trinity Fields will continue to develop as a learning organisation to ensure it has the capacity to adapt to and explore a range of new approaches which results in improved outcomes and well-being for all of our pupils.

In order to realise our shared vision and approaches in delivering Wales’ transformational curriculum that will enable all of the pupils at Trinity Fields to make the progress commensurate with their individual needs we are committed to the 4 key enabling objectives, detailed in “**Education in Wales: Our national mission (2017)**”. These are:

- **Developing a high-quality education profession.**
- **Inspirational leaders working collaboratively to raise standards.**
- **Strong and inclusive schools committed to excellent, equity and well-being.**
- **Robust assessment, evaluation and accountability arrangements supporting a self-improving system.**

## **Mission statement**

We are committed to providing a full, individualised and highly effective education for all of our pupils irrespective of their ages, ability and needs. We are fully committed to equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued, safe and welcomed. We are also committed to the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working with parents/carers is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and well-being of our pupils.

We follow the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (AWCPP) and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable welfare issues that prevent a pupil from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to achieve their full potential a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents/carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance. This said we recognise the very complex healthcare needs of many of our pupils.

School attendance, including that in special schools is subject to education law and guidance and our attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance developed by the Welsh Government (WG).

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for at least 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, Local Authority (LA), South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) and the WG.

This policy will contain the procedures that we use to work towards meeting our attendance targets.

### **Promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and pupils. We are fortunate that parents/carers work closely with us so that when their child is well and able then they are in school. However, we recognise that there are a number of pupils with highly complex health needs which often results in them having prolonged stays in hospital; this obviously has a significant impact on their attendance and upon our whole school attendance figures. Our whole school attendance figure is comparable to similar special schools across Wales.

Where appropriate, we will ensure that our pupils and their parents/carers are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them; we will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners. Examples may include, individual pupil support plans/contracts and Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) Scheme.

We continue to work with parents/carers to share details of specific strategies we will use and how we will work with parents/carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils' good attendance.

### **Leave of absence/holidays in term time**

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. However governors recognise that for many of our pupils taking holidays out of peak season, including taking holidays when respite support is available places far less stress upon the child and their family. For example, pupils with ASD would find it much less stressful and easier to travel out of the busy peak season.

The headteacher will consider granting leave for holidays in term time on an individual basis. Parents/carers are reminded that they do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

Parents/carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. The headteacher may only agree to an extended leave of absence in exceptional circumstances.

Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Child's healthcare needs;
- Child's respite care arrangements;
- Parent working abroad for a fixed, medium term period;
- Family are returning to country of origin;

- Parent returning from active tour of duty.

### Extended overseas trips

The headteacher may only agree to an extended leave of absence for more than 10 days in exceptional circumstances. Examples of these include:

- Parent working abroad for a fixed, medium term period;
- Family are returning to country of origin;
- Parent returning from active tour of duty.

When making judgements about extended absence for pupils from minority ethnic families, school will ensure that a full account has been taken, not only of the Statutory Regulations and WG guidance, but also of the situation of the minority ethnic families in general and the particular circumstances relating to each individual case. It is important that we can demonstrate an understanding of the parents' perspective, even though we may not be able to comply with a request for the absence.

### School procedures

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf (in our case this would be one of the assistant headteachers) can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (code N) and promptly followed up by the school, as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the WG.

### The registration system

CODE	DESCRIPTION	MEANING
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
B	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
C	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)	Authorised absence
D	Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
F	Extended family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence

G	Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement)	Unauthorised absence
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence
I	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
J	Interview	Approved Education Activity
L	Late (before registers closed)	Present
M	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
O	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
P	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence
S	Study leave	Authorised absence
T	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
U	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
V	Education visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
W	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
X	Un-timetables sessions for non-compulsory school –age pupils	Not counted in possible attendances
Y	Enforces closure	Not counted in possible attendances
Z	Pupils not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
#	School closed for all pupils	Not counted in possible attendances

## Lateness

The majority of our pupils arrive by LA arranged transport. Inevitably there may be delays (roadworks, pupil being upset, alternative route etc) which may cause pupils to arrive in school late.

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes, in accordance with WG guidance. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late (L).

Afternoon registration will be at 1.15pm and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation. Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon registration will be coded as late (L).

Parents/carers are reminded that The LA may issue a FPN for persistent lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct, if in excess of 10 sessions.

### **First day absence**

Parents/carers are reminded that it is their responsibility to advise school on any day their child is unable to attend. However, for safeguarding purposes, School will endeavour to ascertain the specific reason for non-attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call or texting service. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code.

Priority will be given to pupils who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, e.g. those known to child protection/safeguarding services or are looked after (LAC).

The Children with Disabilities Team (CWDT) will be notified of unexplained absences of more than two days of a pupil on the child protection register, or one day following the weekend.

### **Third day absence**

On the third day of absence and if school has not received an adequate explanation, a letter will be sent to the parent or carer requesting this information. The absences will remain unauthorised, until an adequate explanation is received.

School will make use of all numbers held as additional contact details for each pupil. In exceptional circumstances, school may refer to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). However, should there be any concerns around well-being or safeguarding, a referral will be made to Children's Services.

### **Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes should be retained in line with education retention schedule. Parents/carers are aware that only the Head Teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or Consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

### **Continuing and frequent absence**

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher, supported by one of the assistant headteachers to be aware of and bring attention to the headteacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible, before a referral is made to the Education Welfare Service (EWS). This will involve inviting the parents or carers and the pupil into school for a meeting.

The school acknowledges that for some pupils, a range of personal and / or complex circumstances can impact negatively on attendance. We will therefore aim to work with the pupil, family and partner agencies to help address any issues identified.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a rolling 12 week period (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon) and following a period of monitoring, the school can request that the LA issue a FPN in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

### **Persistent absence**

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (80% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

The action plan will include engagement with relevant agencies that can support the pupil's attendance and could include the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

### **Absence related to discrimination**

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

It is against the law for a school, governing body or the LA not to take action where this type of bullying takes place between pupils.

As a school, we are required to monitor and report on discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, must take action to deal with the situation.

### **A welcome back**

The school will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

### **Attendance awards**

The school will use an awards system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

Any reward system must be meaningful to the children. The timing of rewards needs to be taken into account to ensure that the children can make the link between their attendance and any rewards.

## **Categorisation of absence**

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

## **Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

## **Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid; only the headteacher can authorise an absence.

## **Approved educational activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and or the LA.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

## **Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)**

The provision where the pupil is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.

Arrangements are in place to identify pupils who are absent from providers of EOTAS, in order that the school where the pupil is registered can reflect any absences and apply the appropriate code.

## **Retention of records**

Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

## **Register checks**

The LA will formally check the registers on a regular basis to ensure there is compliance with legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

## **Attendance targets**

Each year the school and governing body, will set absence targets and submit to the Local Authority by no later than 31<sup>st</sup> December in every school year.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the headteacher or senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing body will make use of the attendance data available from the SEWC and the LA when setting its targets.

## **Action Plan**

The school will use the information as identified through the self-evaluation toolkit (appendix 1), in order to complete an action plan that will highlight what strategies we will use, to achieve our attendance targets.

## **Legislation and Guidance**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 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 needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term 'parent' means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011.

### **22.1. Registers and admission arrangements**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010;
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

## 22.2. Attendance targets

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

### Guidance documents relating to attendance

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures;
- All Wales Missing Child;
- Caerphilly Local Authority, Policy and Guidance on Attendance;
- Keeping Learners safe;
- The All Wales Attendance Framework;
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme;
- Statutory Guidance to help prevent children and young people from missing education (CME);
- Welsh Government guidance document 203/2016 Inclusion and Pupil Support;
- Welsh Government guidance document 215/2017: Supporting learners with healthcare needs;
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school;
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes (2010).

Further guidance on school attendance and support to learners, can be found by visiting:  
<http://gov.wales/topics/educationandskills/?lang=en>

### Policy review

Responsibility for the success of our work-life balance strategy lies with the Governing Body and with each employee. In light of the ongoing and rapid developments within Welsh education this policy will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure that it reflects current legislation and best practice.

<b>Signed</b>		<b>Headteacher</b>
<b>Signed</b>		<b>Chair of Governors</b>
<b>Date of review: Spring 2020</b>		

As a Rights Respecting School we are committed to embedding the principles and values of the United Nation Conventions for the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

This policy enables our pupils to access and enjoy the following articles of the convention:

**Article 12:** Every child has the right to be heard.

**Article 28:** Every child has the right to an education.

**Article 29:** Education must develop every child's personality, talents and abilities to the full.

**Article 42:** Every child has the right to know their rights.