



## Leatherhead Trinity School and Nursery

### Attendance Policy

**Status:** Non- Statutory

**Responsible Manager:** Headteacher

**Review Period:** 2 years

**Responsible Governor:** Chair of Governing Body

**Valid From:** Spring 2023

**Next Review Date:** Spring 2025

**For distribution to: All school staff, governors, parents/carers, pupils and the area education inclusion officer**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

Leatherhead Trinity School and Nursery, along with Surrey County Council, firmly believe that all pupils benefit from 100% school attendance. Full attendance at school is crucial for a child's/student's future life chances and establishes a positive work ethic early in life. To this end we will do all we can to encourage parents/carers to ensure their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent full attendance are identified and acted on promptly. Pupils will be expected to achieve 100% attendance unless the absence is authorised by the headteacher or delegated person in school.

Further information on encouraging attendance and individual school procedures can be found in individual school policies and procedures which should be read in conjunction with this policy.

Parents/carers, whose children are of compulsory school age (5 to 16) and are registered at a school, are responsible for ensuring that their children attend school whenever it is open. If they do not do so they may be committing an offence under the Education Act 1996 and could be liable to prosecution or to be served with a penalty notice.

In line with the Education Regulations (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006, all unexplained absences of 10 days or more are required to be reported to the Local Authority. In addition, schools are required to report all absence figures to the local authority and the Department for Education and to ensure they are recorded on a child's/student's annual report. Rates of absence are also taken into account by Ofsted as part of a school's inspection.

#### **Expectations**

**We expect that all pupils will:**

- Attend school 100% of the time
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school appropriately prepared for the day

- Discuss promptly with their class teacher or school office any problems that may affect their school attendance

**We expect that all parents/carers and persons who have day to day responsibility for the children will:**

- Ensure 100% school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities. (By law all children aged 5-16 must have an appropriate full time education. You are responsible for making sure this happens by registering your child at the school and ensuring they attend. Further information regarding your legal responsibilities can be found on the Surrey County Council website)
- Ensure that the child/children in their care arrive at school punctually, prepared for the school day and have completed any homework they have been given
- Contact the school by 9.15am whenever any problem occurs that may keep the child away from school. All absence's will be electronically logged so an accurate account of why the child is not attending is recorded. If the school has not been notified of the absence, we will contact parent /carers by telephone on the first day of absence and follow the procedures outlined in flow chart appendix 1.
- Contact the school office by 9.15 am any day that your child/children are absent, and every day thereafter giving the reason for the absence.
- Discuss with the class teacher or Headteacher any problems preventing their child/children from attending school.
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child;
- Notify the school immediately of any changes to contact details including providing at least two contact phone numbers;

**We expect that school staff will:**

- Keep regular and accurate records of attendance for all pupils, as required by current legislation
- Monitor every pupil's attendance
- Contact parents/carers on the day of absence when a pupil fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence. This may result in a Penalty notice or a referral to the Inclusion Service. It is the responsibility of a parent/carer to notify the school daily. If a child fails to return on the agreed date, parent/carers will be contacted again to explain the reasons why.
- Encourage good attendance
- Provide a welcoming atmosphere and a safe learning environment for children
- Provide a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns
- Make initial enquiries to parents/carers of pupils who are attending irregularly, expressing the school's concerns and clarifying the school and the local authority's expectations regarding regular school attendance
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the attached Inclusion Officer
- Fulfil, where possible, the requirements of the UN Convention – The Rights of the Child, by ensuring that children are consulted in all decisions that relate to them

In order for this Attendance Policy to be successful, every member of staff in every school must make attendance a high priority and convey this to pupils at all times. Parents/carers

should also need to support these views in the home to ensure that children are receiving corresponding messages about the value of education.

### **ILLNESS**

If a child is unfit for school, parents should contact the school on the each and every day of absence by 9.15am and every day thereafter either in person, completing an online absence form or by telephone. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave may be granted in an emergency (e.g. bereavement) An Absence Request Form for these absences should be completed in advance wherever possible.

### **DENTAL AND MEDICAL TREATMENTS**

Parents/carers should book routine medical and dental appointments outside of the school day or during the school holidays. When appointments during school hours are unavoidable, the school should be notified of the date and time of the appointment and when the child will be collected and/or returned to school. Children should be taken out of school for the minimum amount of time. A Medical Absence Form should be completed along with evidence of the appointment. This can be an appointment card or text message. Appointments made where no evidence is provided will be mark as unauthorised.

### **PUPIL'S LEAVING DURING THE SCHOOL DAY**

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- wherever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time;
- Parents are requested to advise the school, by completing the Absence Request Form, the reason for any planned absence, the time of leaving and the expected return time;
- Pupils must come to the office to be signed out on leaving the school and to be signed back in on their return;
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are requested to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site;
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission their parents will be contacted. Should the school be unable to make contact with the family it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the police and register the pupil as a missing person.

### **REQUEST FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE DURING TERM TIME**

No parent/carer can demand leave of absence during term-time for their child as a right and authorisation cannot be given retrospectively. Any absence from school has a disruptive effect on the children's learning and social development and therefore permission for absence during term time is at the school's discretion and will only be granted in exceptional circumstances.

If a family needs to request absence in term-time then the school's Application for Leave of Absence in Exceptional Circumstances form must be completed and returned to school, at least two weeks prior to the leave date. The Headteacher, who may consult with the Chair of Governors, will then decide whether or not to authorise the absence requested. Each

request will be considered separately and a decision made based on the reasons for each request.

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### **Family holidays**

The school holiday dates are published a year in advance and are available from the school office and on the individual school websites. Family holidays need to be booked within the school holiday dates. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 remove references to extended leave and holiday and make it clear that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Family holidays are not exceptional circumstances and so are deemed as “unauthorised leave of absence”. All exceptional leave of absence forms must be submitted in advance.

### **Family weddings or significant events**

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013 require Headteachers to determine the number of school days that a child can be away from school if leave is granted and this would be for a maximum of 3 days.

### **Traveller Absence**

The aim for the attendance of Traveller pupils, in common with all other pupils, is to attend school 100% of the time.

To protect Traveller parents/carers from prosecution for failing to ensure regular attendance, the Education Act 1996, section 444, sub-section 6, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their pupil accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days or 100 full days) in a year. A Traveller absence code can therefore be used if a Traveller child is absent when their parent/carer is engaged in a trade or business of such a nature that requires them to travel from place to place. When travelling a parent/carer has the right to enrol their child at another school in the area they are engaged in their trade. Schools will require evidence that Traveller parents are travelling for work.

### **PUNCTUALITY AND LATENESS**

Punctuality to school is crucial and for registration at the beginning of the day. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The school grounds are open at 8.40am and the classroom doors open at 8.45.

- Registration takes place at 8.45am through to 8.50am. Students who arrive after this time will be recorded as late to school and receive a late mark in the register;
- Registers close at 9.05am and after this time lateness is recorded as an unauthorised absence and a missed session and can be subject to penalty notices and prosecution by the local authority;

- Persistent lateness by a pupil will be referred to the change to the Inclusion Service and can be subject to penalty notices.
- Late arrival after the close of registration on 7 occasions during a half term where the pupil's attendance falls below 90% will be referred to the Inclusion Service and can be subject to penalty notices if the late code is a 'U' code.

We appreciate that sometimes unavoidable circumstances can happen and that this would mean a child being late into school. If there are exceptional circumstances which mean your child is going to be frequently late then this should be discussed with the Headteacher. The school will monitor children's lateness and this will be looked at on an individual basis.

### **Additional**

Children arriving late after registration:

Children arriving after 8.50am will be recorded as late after registration closes. The school will:

- Update the child's records recording number of minutes late.
- Parent/Carers will receive an email informing them of the number of minutes late and when the school day begins.
- Following the email if a child continues to arrive late on 4 more occasions during a half term parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting with the Deputy or Headteacher.

### **Late collection**

If a child is collected after 3.20pm the school will:

- Update the child's records recording number of minutes late.
- Parent/Carers will be contacted in the first instance of late collection informing them of the number of minutes late and when the school day ends. This will be a phone call.
- Following this, if there is no improvement any future lateness longer than 10 minutes will result in your child being sent to our after school care, for which you will be charged for a half session which costs £7.50 per child.

## **CHANGING SCHOOLS**

It is important that if families decide to send their child to a different school that they inform Leatherhead Trinity School and Nursery

Primary School as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the next
- The address of the new school
- A new home address if appropriate

The student's school records will then be sent to the new school. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the local authority Tracking Officer and Inclusion Service.

## **PENALTY NOTICES**

### **Penalty Notices**

The Inclusion Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council, will issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The amount payable on issue of a Penalty Notice is £60 per parent per child, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per parent per child, if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.

If the Penalty Notice is not paid within 28 days, the Local Authority must prosecute the parent/carer for failing to ensure regular school attendance under Section 444 Education Act 1996.

If prosecuted, you could receive a community order, a fine of up to £2,500 per parent/carer or a custodial sentence.

### **School Attendance Order**

A parent who fails to ensure that their child receives an education other than at school and fails to register their child at a school will be served with an Attendance Order requiring them to register the child at a named school.

Failure to comply with an Attendance Order is an offence under Section 443 Education Act 1996.

### **Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued**

1. Pupils identified by police and The Inclusion Service engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

**The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which becomes law on 1st September 2013 state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Headteacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if absence is granted.**

2. Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for **each child** who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. A Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parent's failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or the Inclusion Service will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

**With the exception of unauthorised leave taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

Parents will be reminded of this policy on a termly basis.

### **HOME/SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP**

The school has a duty to make your child's time at school interesting and worthwhile. Parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. The school is committed to working with parents as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible. Parents/carers should encourage good punctuality and attendance at all times. They should endeavour to make all appointments and holidays outside of school time. They should inform the school immediately if their child is experiencing any difficulties with punctuality or attendance.

You will be informed of your child's attendance with our school reporting system. This will give parents/carers an overall picture of the child's attendance throughout the school year.

Incentives to encourage 100% attendance each month will be given to children at the end of each month. A special certificate for 100% attendance over the whole school year will be given at the end of the summer term. Also each week there will be an attendance motivator for each class e.g. certificates, class mascots etc.

### **EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES**

All children's attendance and punctuality is monitored and procedures are followed regardless of race, culture, gender, ability or religion.

### **Mental Health and Wellbeing**

The school has an established culture that promotes and enhances the positive mental health of the whole school community, recognising that healthy relationships underpin positive mental health and have a significant impact on learning, health and wellbeing. We champion the expectation that 'mental health is the individual's responsibility supported by the whole school community.'