Transform Trust Attendance Policy September 2020

Mission Statement
Regular and punctual attendance is an essential prerequisite to effective learning. At *(School name)* **School we aim to develop an ethos which demonstrates to children, parents/carers and the wider community how much we value good attendance and punctuality. We expect all pupils to attend school every day.**

Legal Responsibility
The parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age is required by law to ensure that the child attends the school at which he/she is registered. Should a parent/carer fail to ensure that his/her child attends that school then the parent/carer is guilty of an offence. When a child of compulsory school age is absent from school, the attendance register must indicate whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and the appropriate register code will be used.

Authorised Absence
Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval in advance for the child to be absent or where an explanation offered afterwards has been accepted as satisfactory justification for absence.
Absence may generally be authorised for the following reasons:
• illness, medical or dental appointments;
• days of religious observance; With exception of Zaytouna Primary School who plan inset days for religious observance
• exclusion;
• traveller child travelling for the purposes of parents' employment
• 'exceptional' occasions (the nature of such occasions will be determined by school on an individual basis).
Whenever a child is absent from school it is the duty of the parent/carer to notify the school on the first day of absence before the start of school and provide a reason for absence.

Unauthorised Absence
Unauthorised absence is where no explanation has been given for the child's absence or where the explanation offered is considered by the school to be unacceptable.
Absence should **not** be authorised in the following circumstances:
• no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
• the explanation offered is unsatisfactory (e.g. shopping, minding the house, etc);
• family holidays (unless granted under 'exceptional' circumstances).

Persistent Absence
Persistent absence (or PA) is absence of 10% or more. An individual child is deemed to be a persistent absentee, therefore, if his/her attendance is less than 90% (regardless of whether or not the absences have been authorised).

Approved Educational Activity

Children who are educated off site, dual registered, or who are engaged in supervised educational activities away from school premises, need not be marked as absent, and will be recorded appropriately (Code B, D or V). This means that children attending educational visits, or approved sporting activities can be counted as statistically 'present'. The nature of the activity must, however, be recorded by use of appropriate code. This is important in order to ensure that an accurate record of those children physically present on site at any given time is instantly available.

Registers

We are required by law to call attendance registers twice daily - once at the start of the morning session and again during the afternoon session.

In considering attendance levels, the register is of paramount importance. Registers are legal documents. Should the parents/carers of a persistent non-attender be prosecuted by the Local Authority, then the information which the register contains will be the main source of evidence presented to the court. The regulatory requirements placed on schools with regard to the keeping of registers are to be found in the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006.

Punctuality

Once the doors are closed pupils must enter school via the school office. School staff will operate a daily "late gate". Any pupil who comes into school late will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those pupils who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each pupil. Registers should close 20 mins after the start of the school day in Derby and 10 mins in Nottingham (as recommended by the Education Welfare Services for Derby City and Nottingham City). Up to this point the L code should be used but after the close of register then this should be changed to a U code.

Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school late, before the session has closed will receive a late mark and a comment entered. If they don't return before the end of the session the absence will be recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will be advised of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues. Schools should be proactive in supporting parents ensure their children arrive on time and should support parents in addressing this issue.

Where a child is persistently late and has accrued sufficient 'U codes' in the register a referral may be made to the Education Welfare Service, who may in turn issue a Penalty Notice.

Prior to a referral for a penalty notice to be issued there should be evidence of the following for a successful prosecution to take place:

- A minuted meeting with parents to advise of concerns regarding attendance
- One home visit
- A letter to say that a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will be made
- Evidence of support offered by school in supporting parents with attendance and punctuality

A Penalty Notice incurs a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days increased to £120 if paid within the 28th day.

It is the responsibility of the Headteacher to monitor attendance and punctuality. Transform Trust in conjunction with the Headteacher set attendance targets annually and are kept informed on attendance figures.

<u>Leave of Absence</u>
There is no entitlement in law for any leave of absence from school in term time.
Any applications for leave of absence must be made in advance using the 'Leave Request' form and any request can only be authorised where School accepts there are 'exceptional circumstances'.

At *(school name)*, when considering such requests, we consider the following:

- circumstances of the request
- purpose of the leave
- length of the proposed leave
- the pupil's general absence/attendance record going back 12 months
- any attempts made to mitigate the length of absence
- the proximity of SATs
- general welfare of the pupil

If the school is informed or suspect that a family has been on holiday whilst suggesting to the school another reason of absence this will be unauthorised. It will be up to the family to prove that they have not taken a family vacation.

Where parents/carers take children out of school without authorisation legal action may be taken (see section on Penalty Notices below).

Parents/carers risk losing their child's place on the School Roll if the pupil does not return to School on the agreed date of return and re-admission cannot be guaranteed as defined in legislation.

Surely 1 or 2 days absent a week doesn't seem much but this is how it is..

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day per fortnight	20 days per year	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 day per week	40 days per year	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years
2 days per week	80 days per year	16 weeks per year	Over 5 years
3 days per week	120 days per year	24 weeks per year	Nearly 8 years

If your child is late 10 minutes a day - surely that won't matter or affect my child..

Only missing just..	That equals..	Which is...	Over 13 years of schooling that's...
10 minutes per day	50 minutes per week	Nearly 1 ½ weeks per year	Nearly ½ a year
20 minutes per day	1hour 40minutes per week	Over 2 ½ weeks per year	Nearly 1 year
30 minutes per day	Half a day per week	4 weeks per year	Nearly 1 ½ years
1 hour per day	1 day per week	8 weeks per year	Over 2 ½ years

Penalty Notices

Where children accrue sufficient unauthorised absences school (including persistent late arrival) may make a referral to the Education Welfare Service, this may now include holidays/absence which have been attached to a school inset day or bank holiday.

The law gives powers to the Local Authority and other designated bodies to issue Penalty Notices where a parent/carer is considered able but unwilling to ensure their child's school attendance. Reducing absences from school is a key priority nationally and locally because missing school damages a pupil's attainment levels, disrupts school routines and the learning of others.

Parents/carers commit an offence if a child fails to attend school and those absences are classed as unauthorised. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to prosecution, which does not require an appearance in court unless the fine is unpaid after 28 days.

Full payment of the Penalty Notice means that parents/carers can avoid being prosecuted and convicted. Penalty notices are issued per parent per child at £120. However, if paid within 21 days the cost is £60.

The Education Welfare Service may also consider other options, such as taking further legal action.

Absence for religious reasons

The Local Authority has agreed with Religious Leaders and the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) that one day for each religious festival (no more than three days in any one academic year), should be counted as authorised absence. This will be marked as 'R' in the register.

Children Missing Education

It is the duty of both the Education Welfare Service and school to collaborate in finding the pupil before deleting them from the register. The school **must** complete all required checks (admissions, housing, social care, school health, NCAT) and home visits before deleting the child from the school register and completing the CME referral form.

Attendance incentives

Good attendance is rewarded in a variety of ways at *(school name)* l, using a mixture of individual, class and whole school incentives. These incentives might include:

- sharing weekly attendance percentages for each class, along with weekly winners with parents and pupils via assemblies, newsletters, dojo, attendance boards etc.
- Opportunities for the best attendance the previous week to be celebrated.
- The class with the highest weekly attendance % will receive a treat.
- The class with the best percentage for the half term will receive a class treat.
- Every child that has a 100% attendance figure for the term (allowing for authorised absences due to religious observance) will go in to the draw for the Termly Attendance Prize
- Children who have 100% attendance across the school year will receive a special prize.

IN ADDITION

- Classes may develop their own systems for celebrating and rewarding school attendance.
- At least 3 competitions/prizes will be awarded for specific attendance related targets throughout the year.
- Specific attendance targets may be met through the use of adult friendly incentives and/or individual prizes.

Monitoring Attendance

All pupils' attendance will be monitored regularly and at least half termly within school. Each term attendance reports should be submitted to the attendance chair with identified next steps to improve attendance. These actions should be reviewed regularly and should include quantifiable outcomes to show the impact of any actions taken. Regular meetings should be held between the Headteacher and the Attendance lead/officer so that whole school next steps can be planned and will be supported.

The principles of this policy will also be applied to all Nursery and Foundation 2 pupils.
Review date: September 2021

APPENDIX LIST

1   Transform Expectations

2   Unexplained Absence Guidelines

Appendix 1

Transform Trust

Attendance – Expectations

Transform Trust schools will:

- Achieve 96+% total school attendance, apart for those children with chronic health issues as identified by a specialist (0.6% unauthorised and 3.4% authorised) Schools over 96% to agree a specific target
- Create an ethos in which good attendance and punctuality are recognised as the norm and valued by the whole school community
- Work in partnership so that all children realise their potential unhindered by unnecessary absence
- Implement the Transform procedures for identifying, reporting and reviewing attendance and persistent lateness
- Implement the Transform protocols for following up on non- attendance
- Report half termly, termly and annual attendance data
- Set quantifiable next steps to improve attendance and to review the impact of these regularly with the Headteacher and with the Trust Attendance Chair
- Have a Trust appointed Attendance Officer if whole school annual return (September to May 31st) is below 95%

Expectations of Parents

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and, sometimes, puts pupils at risk. The school will share the attendance percentage with parents at each parent consultation meeting and more frequently where there are concerns.

It is the **parents' responsibility** to contact the school on the **first day** their child is absent. This is a **safeguarding matter** so that all parties know that your child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive by **(insert time i.e. 8:50am).** All pupils who **arrive late must report to the school office** where they are registered, their meal requirements noted and the reason for lateness is recorded.

Illness and Medical Appointments
When a child is unwell, parents should contact the school **before (insert time i.e. 8.45am)** on the **first day** of absence informing the school of the reason for absence.

When a child is absent, the class teacher will record the absence in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will endeavour to contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if **no message** has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child.

a) Every effort should be made to arrange **medical appointments outside school hours.**
b) An **appointment card or verification** by the doctor/ dentist/hospital is required.
c) If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be **returned to school directly** after the appointment.
d) If a child is absent due to **vomiting,** they should not return to school for the next 24 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.
e) For **more than three days of absence** the school require a **written** explanation of why the child was absent. The school office will request this if it is not produced.
f) **Medical certificates** are required for absence **greater than five days.**

Responsibilities:

All members of school staff have a responsibility for attendance. The following includes a more specific list of responsibilities, which role specific (attendance) individuals have:

Class Teacher:

- Maintain a daily register as per the law
- Keep an overview of class and individual attendance looking particularly for poor overall attendance, anomalies in patterns of attendance and/or unusual explanations for attendance offered.
- Pass on all relevant information shared by parents/carers ensuring logged according to policy
- Report on attendance at half termly Pupil Progress meetings.
- Provide background information for referrals
- Emphasise with the children the importance of good attendance
- To role model good attendance and punctuality
- Follow up absences and lates with immediate requests for explanation where none is recorded
- Discuss attendance at parent's evenings/consultations
- Establish good relationships with parents so that early support can be offered to ensure pupils have good attendance and punctuality at school

Headteacher:

- Overall monitoring of school attendance
- Responsible for ensuring data is submitted on time (Friday after any holiday)
- Observance of trends in authorised/unauthorised absence
- Contact families where concerns are raised, meeting as appropriate
- Monitoring individual children where concern is raised
- Liaising with other professionals
- Making referral to EWO (final sign off)
- Process any applications for any holiday/special leave
- Identify and implement strategies to address poor attendance and celebrate excellent attendance
- Ensures the attendance policy is followed by staff, taking relevant and appropriate action where it is not.
- Ensure the governor responsible for attendance complete a termly monitoring
- Ensure attendance and punctuality is high profile in school through assemblies, incentives etc
- Communicate regularly with parents about the importance of bringing pupils to school each day and on time.

Attendance Administration Staff:

- Collate and record attendance information using Sims/Integris by completion of daily registers using appropriate codes
- Take and record messages from parents related to absence
- Make first point of contact by phone by **9.30am** to parents/carers of absent children, recording as per policy
- Follow-up text by **10.30am** for absent children, as per policy
- Record details of children who arrive late or leave the premises
- Send out standard Transform letters regarding attendance at various trigger points as per policy
- Ensure all registers are complete and no missing marks or unexplained absence remain
- To ensure records prior to census are complete so that attendance is accurately reported
- To collate, maintain and update attendance data on relevant information management system
- To provide regular updates to staff on attendance
- Complete a report on attendance of any children below 95% for action by Head/Attendance lead
- Any school below 95% to send weekly report to Attendance Co-ordinator
- Prepare and submit online referral form to EWO regarding families identified for legal action, assisted by the Attendance Officer (AO)
- Order and prepare relevant certificates/rewards etc.

- Contact AO with details of home visits as a result of no reason for absence from parents/carers or if named on the monitoring list
- Notify the AO of other safeguarding reasons which may be applicable and may result in a home visit

Attendance Lead (AL): (*the person employed directly by the school, who works alongside key staff to promote excellent attendance, reduce levels of absence and works directly with children and families to promote high levels of attendance*)

- Assist in the identification of children/parents who will receive support in improving their attendance
- Work with parents/carers/other organisations in improving children's attendance
- Develop positive relationships with parents so that they are an approachable point of contact if parents are struggling to bring children to school/on time
- Review attendance data
- Undertake home visits, where appropriate/suitable for role
- Liaise with designated persons for safeguarding
- Keep up-to-date with sims training and all relevant policy/government announcements
- Meet parents on admission or at other events such as assemblies to promote good attendance
- Prepare evidence/case files for EWO to support further action
- Attend half termly meetings with the Headteacher where actions/decisions are made regarding attendance/monitoring list and termly meetings with Trust Attendance Group
- Complete half termly data (with vulnerable groups) with the assistance of attendance administrative staff

Attendance Officer (AO):

Daily:
- Contact individual schools to ascertain caseload i.e. home visits required
- Late gate for each designated school
- Details of all home visits to be recorded as per policy
- Home visits to be considered where no reason for absence has been received
- Arrange meetings with all parents requesting absence from school for their children
- Wear appropriate identification
- Develop positive relationships with parents so that they are an approachable point of contact if parents are struggling to bring children to school/on time

Weekly:
- Early intervention in the Foundation Unit, visits with incentives and rewards and to build positive relationships with parents from entry to school
- Attend an assembly for each designated school to promote positive attendance and punctuality
- Prepare evidence/case files for EWO to support further action

Half termly:

- Evaluate the impact of incentives/rewards for attendance and identify new actions each term
- Attend all attendance meetings arranged by the TRUST
- Attend half termly meetings with the Headteacher where actions/decisions are made regarding attendance/monitoring list and termly meetings with Trust Attendance Group

Appendix 2

Unexplained Absence Guidelines

At any point if anyone is concerned about the pupil's well-being, the police should be contacted and asked to conduct a safe and well check.

1st Day of Unexplained Absence

- Phone call made and text message sent to parents/carers.
- Headteacher and SLT to be notified of absence for pupils with safeguarding concerns.
- In addition to this a home visit by the Attendance Officer may be requested. Priority factors to consider:
  o Any children for whom there are safeguarding concerns.
  o Any absence for pupils with Safeguarding concerns should be logged onto My Concern
  o Any children on the Low Attendance list.
  o Any instance where the absence seems suspect – i.e. it seems possible/likely that the absence is not illness related (e.g. birthdays, possible holiday etc).
  o Any instance where the absence may have an additional impact on the child, (e.g. child has an exam/is on a trip in the afternoon etc).
  o Any child where there is a history of unexplained absences.
  o Any child whose parent is known to have a life-limiting condition.
- If AO is unavailable it should be considered whether a visit from other school staff may be necessary.

3rd Day of Unexplained Absence

- Ensure that all contact numbers have been tried. If a number is incorrect or does not connect, new numbers MUST be chased. Each child should have at least 3 numbers to try.
- Ensure that somebody has visited the property (visit card left if no one is present). Every effort MUST be made to gain access- ask neighbours if they have seen the child.
- Email sent to all appropriate staff including Headteacher, reporting absence (although this should be done on 1st day of absence for pupils with safeguarding concerns).
- Memo given to Class Teacher asking that they report any relevant information to the office.
- Absence to be logged onto MyConcern if no contact made with parents/reason provided for absence (for pupils with safeguarding concerns this should be an update to previous logged concern from day 1)
- Transform Trust to be notified using the cmie@transformtrust.co.uk email account.

7th Day of Unexplained Absence

- Re-check that all contact numbers have been tried.
- A second visit to the property to be made (visit card left if no one is present).
- Email sent to all appropriate staff and Headteacher reporting that child remains absent.
- A letter to be sent (copy to be retained), requesting contact from the parents/carers and informing them of imminent referral to Education Welfare and the potential impact.
- Concerns to be updated on MyConcern.
- Transform Trust to be updated using the cmie@transformtrust.co.uk email account.

10th Day of Unexplained Absence

- Senior Management Team to be updated.
- Home visit to be made.
- Concerns recorded on My Concern.
- Trust to be updated using the cmie@transformtrust.co.uk email account.

20th Day of Unexplained Absence

- Senior Management Team to determine if a child is removed from roll following consultation and agreement with the Local Authority. If so:
  - Letter issued to parents/carers.
  - Transform Trust to be informed using the cmie@transformtrust.co.uk email account.
  - CME form to be completed on the Schools Information Portal.
  - CTF to be uploaded.
  - Child to be removed from roll once agreed by Local Authority.