

TRINITY ACADEMY NEWCASTLE TRUST

ATTENDANCE POLICY

**Approved by the Committee – November 2018
On behalf of the Board**

Next Review Date – November 2019

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1. Introduction

Our job at Trinity is to prepare your child for life. The well planned Academy curriculum looks at the child as a whole person, preparing them for adulthood, relationships and the possibility that one day they may become a parent. Our aim is to give students knowledge and wisdom to make informed decision. Positive school attendance is central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential. Pupils who attend school on a regular basis and are offered access to high-quality teaching and learning opportunities will usually leave school with qualifications and access to greater employment opportunities. The links between attendance and achievement are strong, and high levels of attendance at school should be a right of each pupil.

The Trust Attendance Improvement Strategy

The Trust is focused and is striving to improve our overall Trust attendance. We believe in a proactive approach, this will be supported if we can reduce the percentage of our population who fall into PNA (persistent non attendees) category. The SLT have strategically recognised that a more flexible, responsive and personalised approach towards the curriculum could provide enhanced impact. This approach will further support our capacity to engage and educate our hardest to reach cohort. We will continue applying our corroborated strategies to improve attendance whilst looking to develop further strategies to support an overall attendance improvement.

When they are in The Trust they can:

Feel a sense of safety, acceptance and belonging and are therefore SAFE;
Access support, advice and opportunities to develop and grow physically, socially and emotionally in order to be HEALTHY; ENJOY and ACHIEVE through the experience of a stimulating and challenging educational environment which promotes, recognises and celebrates all achievements and therefore have greater opportunity to and realise later ECONOMIC WELL-BEING;
Make a POSITIVE CONTRIBUTION to our responsibilities, and beyond.

Good attendance is inextricably linked with academic attainment and personal fulfilment. At Trinity we will strive to provide an ethos and environment, which:

- Is welcoming, caring and supportive wherein all our students feel valued and accepted;
- Is stimulating and challenging wherein all our students are encouraged toward achieving their fullest potential;
- Promotes supports and celebrates student attendance and achievement.

2. Policy Aims

- To encourage full Trust attendance for all students;
- To make attendance a priority for all those associated with the Trust, including students, parent/carers, staff and governors;
- To develop a framework which defines agreed roles and responsibilities and promotes consistency in carrying out designated tasks;
- To establish a system for responding effectively to student absence;

- To provide support, advice and guidance to students and parent/carers;
- To develop a systematic approach to gathering and analysing attendance related data;
- To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and the Trust;
- To implement a system of rewards and sanctions where appropriate;
- To promote effective partnership with the Local Authority and with other services and agencies.

3. Entitlements & Responsibilities

Learners	
Are entitled to:	Are responsible for:
Benefit fully from the educational opportunities available to them; A stimulating and challenging curriculum that is geared to meet their individual needs; Experience a sense of safety and security; Feel a sense of belonging and participation within the Trust community; Have access to systems of student representation; Have their attendance recognised and celebrated; Support to overcome attendance difficulties; Be treated with respect and dignity.	Attending the Trust and all lessons regularly and punctually; Completing missed work owing to absence, where applicable; Informing Trust staff, parent/carers and/or other significant persons of difficulties affecting Trust attendance; Accepting the support made available to address attendance difficulties

Parents/Carers	
Are entitled to:	Are responsible for:
Feel welcome and valued in the Trust; Know about the Trust's attendance policy; Be informed promptly about attendance concerns; A named contact person responsible for attendance matters; Receive attendance data on their child's attendance record; Support to overcome attendance difficulties; Be treated with respect and dignity.	Ensuring that their child attends the Trust regularly and punctually; Ensuring that the Trust is promptly informed of any reason for absence; Ensuring that any holidays are not booked during term time. Working with the Trust staff to resolve attendance difficulties/issues.

Staff with specific responsibilities for managing attendance	
Are entitled to:	Are responsible for:
<p>Expect that learners will attend regularly and punctually; Support and guidance from the LA in managing attendance; Be treated with respect and dignity.</p>	<p>Ensuring that an attendance register is taken twice daily; Having clear registration procedures; Monitoring individual and overall attendance; Coordinating support to learners and parent/carers to maintain regular attendance; Developing positive communication/relationships with parent/carers; Ensuring that the Trust attendance policy establishes effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular attendance and investigating the causes of poor attendance; Setting attendance and absence targets; Promoting an attendance culture; Establishing systems to monitor and control post-registration truancy.</p>

Trust Staff	
Are entitled to:	Are responsible for:
<p>To expect that learners will attend regularly and punctually; Clear guidelines and expectations re-their role; Support from senior management as necessary to fulfil role; Be treated with dignity and respect.</p>	<p>Promoting the importance of attendance to all learners and parent/carers; Sharing information with attendance colleagues that may impact upon attendance; Ensuring that daily routines, lessons, events are adequately supervised and well organised; Ensuring that the curriculum and its delivery motivates and challenges learners and meets their individual needs; Holding high expectations of learners behaviour and achievement; Creating a sense of security, acceptability and belonging for learners.</p>

Senior Management And Trustees	
Are entitled to:	Are responsible for:
<p>Guidance from the LA on policy and practice issues; Be treated with dignity and respect.</p>	<p>Providing support and advice, as necessary, to enable Trust staff to fulfil their role; Reviewing and endorsing the Trust attendance policy annually Monitoring attendance and absence rates and setting targets for improvement within the Trust Improvement Plan</p>

4. Registration Procedures

Registration

Teacher/tutors are responsible for the twice-daily completion of the class/group manual registers. Registers are to be completed once during the morning and again during the afternoon.

Registers are closed after a thirty-minute period, the maximum time recommended by the DfE. The attendance data is input into the SIMS electronic register by teaching staff.

The Pastoral team will use the SIMS registers to invoke the Trust's absence response continuum as necessary (see below)

Off-site learning provision

Where learners are educated off-site and/or are in receipt of work related learning then external providers are required by the Trust to submit a weekly breakdown of attendance, including details of any absence. The relevant data information is submitted on Friday afternoon via e-mail and input into the SIMS electronic register. It is incumbent upon external providers to provide the Trust with immediate notice of any learner's absence – irrespective of reasons for the absence.

Un/authorised Absence

The Trust is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. Telephone conversations and/or letters from parent/carers do not in themselves automatically authorise an absence. The appropriate Deputy Head/Pastoral Manager will authorise an absence on occasions when they are fully satisfied as to the validity of explanation/s offered by parent/carers.

Late Arrivals

Learners arriving at the Trust late, post-register closure, will be allocated a late mark in the SIMS electronic register. Learner punctuality is regularly promoted. Any emerging patterns of learners 'lateness' will be promptly addressed by the site designated site lead for attendance and/or Pastoral team.

Term Time Holiday absence

Learners are not entitled to holiday absence during term time. Holiday absence may only be granted by the Head of School in exceptional circumstances. Any request must be made in writing to the Head of School.

5. Responding To Unauthorised Absence

A designated member of staff is responsible for managing the absence response continuum on each key stage site. The site Pastoral Manager, where the functions are separate, will maintain an overview of this process.

Stage 1

On the first day a learner is absent, without notification, then the designated lead member of staff will contact home on the same morning, elicit reasons for absence and allocate attendance status accordingly. Should they fail to make contact by telephone then the Trust will continue to try establish contact.

The Trust will notify Children's Services if there is an unexplained absence of a student on a Child Protection Plan of more than two days duration (or one day following a weekend); or as agreed as part of any Child Protection Plan or core group meeting.

Stage 2

Should a learner remain absent without explanation following this then a further phone calls will continue and 3rd day of absence a Safe and Well home visit will be made to try source a reason for learner absence.

Stage 3

If there are frequent shorter periods of unauthorised absence, then parents/carers will be invited in for a meeting with the Pastoral Manager/Officer. This will result in a Parenting Contract, which will outline the commitment from the parent/carer as well as the expectations and support from the Trust. The Head of School will be informed and the academy will continue to support/track the impact of the Parenting Contract.

Stage 4

Where a Parenting Contract is in place, but the expectations within it have not been fulfilled, then the Pastoral Manager/Officer should again meet with parents/carers to address any issues or concerns. Regular liaison between the Trust and the LA Attendance Officer should also take place in order to decide if and when formal attendance monitoring should begin (this is the stage that must precede a prosecution). If the learner fails to achieve the targets stipulated in their Parenting Contract and/or fails to respond positively to the formal monitoring process, then the Local Authority may decide to prosecute the parent/carer.

Effective monitoring of attendance is essential. Key staff, such as the learner's teacher and/or support workers may have some valuable insight into factors, which may contribute to non-attendance and truancy in particular cases. If so then they are obligated work collaboratively with senior staff, parents and the learner to address the situation.

At any stage following the first day of absence the Pastoral Manager/Officer and/or Head of School may sanction a home visit by an appropriate member of Trust staff (in most cases this would be the Student Engagement and Attendance Officer), where such a visit could be productive in supporting a student's attendance.

6. Strategies for Prioritising and Maintaining Good Attendance

Within the Trust good attendance is prioritised, supported and maintained in a variety of ways. The following practices are common to all Trust key stages sites, with a modicum of differentiation as suits the differing age and developmental stages within the key stage continuum.

Attendance Rewards

Each site operates an online reward system, ePraise which gives the 'Power of Choice' which is explicitly geared to rewarding good attendance. Points are awarded to learners for acceptable behaviour, attitude and regular attendance. A learner's points are allowed to accrue and totalled at the end of each week. Learners may then exchange points earned for access to a variety of planned activity options at the conclusion of each week. In the longer term points totals are more formally acknowledged, rewarded and awarded at end of term celebratory meetings.

Tutorials

Weekly tutorial sessions afford teacher/tutors the opportunity and time to meet regularly with learners to review progress and plan personal targets. Where attendance is an issue then progress will be reviewed discussed with additional pastoral support offered as necessary.

Weekly Celebrations

On each of the sites a weekly celebration is held with the singular purpose of publicly acknowledging and celebrating learner achievement. Both individual and collective attendance successes feature regularly.

Displays

The importance of attendance and learner achievement in attendance receive further public acknowledgement via display boards on each site.

Celebrating good attendance

Good attendance is recognised and celebrated on both sites. Each school will hold a dedicated weekly assembly, ensuring that staff and students have a good level of understanding and ownership of the site's attendance.

Curriculum

Good attendance will be continually reinforced through an engaging curriculum, with external speakers/agencies brought in as appropriate.

Working with parent/carers

At the Trust we actively promote and encourage the involvement of all parent/carers through regular consultation on all aspects of their children's education care and safety. Parental/carer involvement is fundamental to the fostering of good working relationships with parent/carers. We endeavour to achieve this in the following ways:

- Teacher/tutors are expected to maintain regular telephone contact, weekly at minimum, with parent/carers unless agreed otherwise to keep informed of progress and/or share concerns;
- News and information about each site is relayed to parents and other stakeholders using the Trust's website;

- Parent/carers are encouraged to attend and contribute to termly Education Inclusion Plan (EIP) reviews and behaviour management planning meetings as required;
- Termly progress reports are sent to parent/carers – which include information on attainment, behaviour and attendance;
- Parent/carers are invited to attend end of term ‘achievement celebration meetings’;
- The Trust facilitates and supports a parent/carer group on site.
- Any attendance concerns and associated targets to be enshrined in a Parenting Contract signed by all parties

Working with Others

To assist us in achieving the best outcomes for our learner we fully recognise the importance of working in partnership with our colleagues and other professionals within LA as well as the voluntary sector.

7. Welcoming and Re/Integrating

All Trust staff share the responsibility for the creation of a safe Trust community wherein all learners, irrespective of presenting behaviour and circumstance, feel welcomed and wanted. Such an environment can contribute significantly to the minimising of non-attendance and the success of reintegrating students following lengthy absence or period’s exclusion.

We recognise that most learners may benefit from additional support following a period of absence. The Pastoral Manager/Officer is responsible for determining and coordinating the support necessary to facilitate a satisfactory and welcoming return to Academy. The Pastoral Manager /Officer will therefore:

- Ensure that all cases are responded to sensitively and on the basis of individual need;
- Involve parent/carer/s and other relevant stakeholders in any subsequent planning and monitoring process;
- Agree reintegration plan, support package, behaviour contract and timescales as part of a student EIP, as necessary.

Any additional support needs may be identified and addressed within a Individual Education Plan by respective teacher/tutors.

8. Reduced and Alternative Offer Plans and Parenting Contracts

A Reduced/Alternative plan may be agreed between the appropriate Head of School, Deputy Head, Outreach Teacher or Pastoral Manager/Officer and a learner’s parents/carers. This will stipulate any special arrangements (including, where appropriate, a reduced timetable) that are set out to ensure that the learner can re-engage/maintain engagement in learning. This will be reviewed at the end of Stage 1 (6 weeks), with parents/carers invited to meet with the appropriate Trust staff. The aim should always be to return to a full-time timetable as soon as possible or appropriate.

A Parenting Contract is put in place specifically where an issue or concern with a learner's attendance has been identified, usually where a learner is classified as persistently absent. The Parenting Contract will provide a clear outline of the expectations on parents/carers and the in securing improved attendance from the learner. As with the reduced/alternative plan this should be reviewed half-termly, and can be brought to an end once the learner has demonstrated the capacity to maintain regular good attendance.

9. Policies Supporting Attendance

- The consistent application of the principles, advice and procedures within the following policies collectively represent our endeavour to ensure, together with our Trinity Improvement Plan, that our learners experience the Trust as a place wherein:
 - Their rights and responsibilities are equally respected and promoted;
 - Staff are found to be accepting, supportive and caring;
 - The limits of acceptable behaviour are clear, rules are applied consistently and expectations are high;
 - The environment is welcoming, safe and valuing;
 - The curriculum and related activities are developmentally appropriate, stimulating and challenging;
 - They feel their views and opinions are important and acted upon wherever possible;
 - Where differences are celebrated and all forms of discrimination are prohibited;
 - Systems are established to enable them to seek additional support, to make their views known and/or complain.

Anti-bullying	Behaviour & Discipline	Safeguarding Children
Equality & Diversity	Complaints	Health and Safety
Curriculum	Risk assessment	

10. Monitoring & Evaluation

In addition, weekly and termly attendance statistics are collated and disseminated in relation to:

- Whole Trust targets for attendance and persistent absence
- The attendance and persistent absence rates of identified cohorts
- The rate at which learners are improving their attendance, both within the Trust and in comparison to their last Academy
- Key themes and trends, such as difficulty of travel to the Trust
- The designated Trust lead for attendance will monitor the implementation and effectiveness of all systems on a termly basis.

The Deputy Head and Pastoral Manager/Officer will meet fortnightly to discuss attendance for all learners; current plans are evaluated and new strategies put in place where necessary.

Academy Improvement Plan (SIP)

Improving attendance remains one of our key Trust priorities and as such has a specific place on our SIP.

Signed on behalf of the Board:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'P. J. Carter', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Peter Carter (Chairperson of the Board)

Date: November 2018