Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Nurture, Believe, Thrive, Succeed

Attendance Policy

Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Academic Year

2026/27

Attendance Policy

Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Document History Log:

Author of document:	Mr Jack Peacock	**Job role:**	Assistant Headteacher
Date document created:	Sept 2024	**Approval by Governing Body:**	04.11.26

Annual Review History:

Task	Date Reviewed	Reviewed by	Signatories
First document review	18.9.2025	JPeacock	JPeacock
2nd Review	1.10.2026	JPeacock	JPeacock
3rd Review			
4th Review			

Revisions Log:

Revision	Date of revision	Reason for revision	Resulting version number	Signatories
Dates changed on cover and on leaflet in appendix. Pathway lead name update	18.9.2025	New school year	2.0	JPeacock
Dates changed on cover and on leaflet in appendix. Pathway leads x 2 updated PSA removed SMc name change	18.9.2026	New school year	3.0	JPeacock

Attendance Key Contacts

Please find the details of those with overall responsibility for attendance, attendance support and attendance improvement within our school below.

Name	Role	Contact details
Rachel Grimwood	Head Teacher	0191 386 4612
Jack Peacock	Assistant Headteacher - Designated senior leader with responsibility for attendance	0191 386 4612
Louise Wise	Pre-Formal Pathway Lead	0191 386 4612
Lorna Burns	Primary Semi-Formal Pathway Lead	0191 386 4612
Jo Henderson	Secondary Semi-Formal Pathway Lead	0191 386 4612
Emma Whitehouse	Specialist Autism Pathway Lead	0191 386 4612
Jack Peacock	Post 16 and Secondary Formal Pathway Lead	0191 386 4612
Sonya Wadeley-McAllister	Pupil Emotional Well-Being Lead	0191 386 4612

If a pupil is going to be absent from school the person who should be informed is:
School reception as early as possible on the morning and leave a message or speak to member of the office team.
Messages should not be passed on to taxi escorts or third parties. Information should come direct to school from a parent/carer.

Who in school can help if you are experiencing difficulty / require help and support?

In the first instance you should contact your child's class teacher to discuss your attendance query. If this needs to be escalated you can contact their pathway lead and then a member of the senior leadership team (details above).

Help & Support
Where help or support is needed with attendance the sooner school know about this, the quicker people can work together to support with this. Where needed this can involve other services to make sure that pupils and their families get the right support, at the right time from the right people.

See appendix 2 – Attendance Policy Statement that summarises key points of this policy

Children Missing from Education
If pupil's whereabouts are not known following enquiries, schools can legally remove pupils from the admission register (the school roll) after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. Pupils place in schools are at risk if whereabouts are not known. Children Missing from Education must be reported to the Local Authority and the matter may be treat as a safeguarding issue.

Introduction to our school attendance vision and ethos

Durham Trinity School & Sports College seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn within a culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.

Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn.

As attendance is the essential foundation to positive outcomes for all pupils', improving attendance is everyone's business, a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, the school and partners will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Specific roles and responsibilities have been published in the Working Together to improve school attendance statutory guidance.
We recognise the link between regular attendance and the well-being, development and achievement of our students / pupils. We expect everyone to attend every session they are able to, to benefit from the learning and pastoral opportunities and support we offer.

Communication is vital to ensure we are able to work with our parents and pupils and support attendance.

We ask that parents check the contact details, address and emergency contact information held by the school are up-to-date are communicated to school as soon as possible as it is extremely important school can contact parents in an emergency, keep parents informed of events and progress or discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

The school day

The school day is from 9.00am – 3.10pm

The majority of our pupils arrive on Local Authority organised transport and enter through the main gates before entering the school building. Some pupils are brought to school by parents/carers or other family members. They arrive and enter through the side gate near reception from 9.00am.

Registration is 9.00am – 9.30am. The register will close at 9.45. Pupils must be in school to be marked present, otherwise another appropriate code will be used (Attendance codes appended).

Pupils arriving late for registration, but before the register has closed will be recorded as late (L code).

In line with government guidance the registers will close at 9.45am.

Pupils who are not present before the register closes but attend during the session will be recorded as a U code unless the reason means another code is more appropriate. The U code is an unauthorised absence.

Arriving late to school can be disruptive and unsettling to the child and the rest of their class. Parents should contact Mr Jack Peacock if there are any issues which are affecting a pupils ability to attend school on time.

If your child is late for school:

Children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness (where appropriate) or parents may be contacted, and this will be recorded on Arbor on the child's registration page.

If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with Attendance Lead or deputy for a 'planning meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality

School leaders will work with families to consider what further interventions and support can be put in place to support with punctuality. However, failure to see improvements may lead to a referral into the DCC Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

Term dates and planned Inset days

Details of planned terms dates and inset days can be found on the school website at this link: https://durhamtrinity.co.uk/parents/school-holidays/

Parents can also call the school office on 0191 386 4612 to request this information in printed form.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head teachers are expected to restrict leave of absence in term-time to the specific circumstances in regulation 11 of the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. There is discretion to consider exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts, circumstances and background behind the request. Permission should be (academies)/ must be (maintained schools and non-maintained special schools) requested in advance by a parent the pupil normally lives with completing the form.

Parents/carers can make a leave of absence by completing the form on WEDUC app or by requesting a paper form or electronic version by contacting the school office on 0191 386 4612.

Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. If an application is not made for leave then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

The DfE have stated that generally they do not consider the need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure or recreation to be an exceptional circumstance.

On the first day of absence

If a pupil is to be absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to contact the School Reception as early as possible on 0191 386 4612 and leaving a voicemail or speaking with a member of staff, providing a reason for the absence. If a pupil is absent from school and there is no contact from parents/carers by 10.00am, then school office staff will attempt to contact home to find out why the pupil not in school. If there is no response to the calls, school office will call parents a final time by 10.30am to ascertain a reason for absence.

No reason for absence provided

If there is still no contact and reason provided by 11.00am, office staff will pass on details to the school safeguarding team, one of whom will make a door step visit and to get 'eyes on the child'. This is part of the schools commitment to safeguarding all pupils.

Appointments should be made outside of school time where possible. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment they should do.

If the school do not receive a reason for any absence it will be recorded as unauthorised. Regular absence and unauthorised absences could result in more formal action.

Where 10 or more unauthorised absences are recorded in any 10 school week period the school must consider whether a penalty notice may be appropriate and if so will refer the matter to the local authority.

Absence authorisation

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. In some circumstances, the school may request that parent's provide medical evidence to support absences.

We want to support all our pupils to ensure they can access their education and will take a support first approach. This will sometimes require communications and conversations to better understand the circumstances which may lead to absence.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

As part of our commitment to promoting attendance and punctuality, Durham Trinity School & Sports College will:

- Build strong relationships and work jointly with families to identify barriers to attendance and strategies to support. This collaborative approach will ensure individual needs of pupils and families are thoroughly considered.
- Submit a daily attendance return to the Department of Education, in line with the legal expectations placed on all schools;
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absences
- Regularly analyse attendance data and look for patterns in absence and write to parents/carers should there be a need to draw attention to their child's attendance

Attendance data

We will use data we have such as whole school, year group, form/class and individual pupil level to analyse for patterns of absence which may require some support to improve.

We will also consider different pupil cohorts such as all pupils, those who have free school meals, those with special educational needs or disabilities, pupil premium, children who have a social worker or are looked after etc. to identify where additional support may be required.

We will use the information to inform what we do to support and aid discussions between staff, pupils and families.

We will monitor the data to understand the impact of what we do.

We will communicate information to parents/carers through written communications following data analysis. This information will be shared with other professionals involved with the family such as Early Help, TAF, Virtual School etc)

Absence concerns

Parents may identify concerns about school attendance early if there is a change in child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns should be shared with school so people can work together to ensure that school attendance does not decline. The earlier concerns are identified and shared, the quicker they may be resolved.

Persistent absence

Pupils who miss 10% or more of their sessions at school are persistently absent

School will identify pupils who are persistently absent through regular data analysis of attendance. Parents or carers will be written to and there may be phone calls from class teachers, pathway leaders or senior management regarding attendance to discuss barriers and establish a collaborative approach to improving pupil attendance. Allocated social workers or One Point workers will be notified through TAF meetings.

It may be that through these discussions, parents are signposted to external services or discussions could be had about referrals into One Point or Social Care. School can support this process for families.

On occasions there may need to be an escalation in approach, requiring formal attendance meetings with families.

Severe absence

Pupils who miss 50% or more of their sessions at school are severely absent

School will identify pupils who are severely absent through regular data analysis of attendance. Parents will be contacted by senior leaders to establish the reasons for such absence. Once fact finding has taken place, there will be regular discussions about to support the child and family to improve attendance. In cases where school support has no impact or families are unwilling to engage, this will be escalated to the Attendance Improvement Team at the local authority where penalty notices or legal interventions could be issued.

National framework for penalty notices and other legal intervention

To improve consistency of practice across the country there is a national framework for penalty notices.

At the point where there are 10 unauthorised absence sessions recorded in any 10 school-week period, schools must consider if:

- further support is appropriate
- support is appropriate but is not being engaged with
- support is appropriate but is not improving attendance
- support is not needed, such as in cases of term-time leave of absence

If support is appropriate, this should continue.

If support is appropriate but is not improving attendance or is not being engaged with, then a referral for consideration of legal intervention should be made to the local authority. This can include, but is not limited to a Notice to Improve, an application for an Education Supervision Order, Penalty Notice or Offence investigation Interview (PACE caution).

If support is not appropriate, such as where a holiday in term-time has taken place, a referral for a penalty notice will be made. (DCC - Penalty Notice Code of Conduct)

Penalty notices offer the opportunity to deal with an irregular attendance offence without the need to go to court. Penalty notices are issued at a rate of £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

There is an escalation policy which means that if a second notice is issued within a three-year period, the second notice will only be payable at the rate of £160. Further offences will not be eligible for the offer of a penalty notice and parents may be prosecuted in court. (DCC - Penalty Notice Leaflet)

If penalty notices are not paid then a prosecution for the original irregular attendance offence will take place.

If convicted at court under section 444 of the Education Act for failing to secure the regular attendance of a registered pupil at school, a parent may be fined up to £1000 for each offence. If there is evidence that a parent knowingly failed to secure the attendance and there is no reasonable justification for this, they can be fined up to £2500 and/or face up to 3 months in prison, be subject to probation supervision or have a curfew imposed as maximum sentences.

Pupils with specific needs

This Policy should account for the specific needs of individual pupils and pupil cohorts, This Policy must be applied fairly and consistently and consider the individual needs of pupils/ families who have specific barriers to attendance.

In development and implementation of the policy, consider obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

This policy is supported by our policies on:

- Safeguarding
- Behaviour and Emotional Wellbeing
- Anti-Bullying
- CLA and PLAC
- Supporting Pupils with Medial Conditions
- RSE
- SEN

APPENDIX 1

The school and all partners will work together to:

EXPECT

Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR

Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND

When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

FACILITATE SUPPORT

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Expect

We all want the best for pupils and therefore aspire to have the highest attendance possible for each individual to allow them to access the education on offer to them in a culture they feel safe, part of the community and where they want to be.

Monitor

Attendance data will be regularly analysed and reviewed to identify where support or intervention may be required.

Listening to and understanding barriers to attendance

Attendance is everyone's responsibility and it is therefore imperative that barriers to attendance are identified and communicated either by home or school at the earliest opportunity so that these barriers can be understood and a collaborative approach to plan for attendance improvement is established. The Senior Attendance Champion in school is Mr Jack Peacock (Assistant Headteacher) and if families have any queries, questions or concerns relating to attendance, he can be contacted on 0191 386 4612.

Facilitate support

We know all of pupils and families are unique and therefor support mechanisms will be personalised when barriers are identified and strategies are discussed. This will be a collaborative approach and may include linking in with other professionals e.g. social workers, One Point workers.

Support may come in many forms such as, but not limited to, being able to modify aspects of the curriculum, discussion around transitional objects, motivators, support with symbols to promote communication, sensory integration ideas, support for transport providers etc.

It may be discussed with families where there is no external agencies involved, about the support that maybe available following a referral to services such as One Point / Social Care.

Formalise support

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners will work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through an attendance contract and regular attendance meetings that may also include professionals already working with the family and others such as school nurse and Education Welfare Officer.

Enforce

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, attendance may be enforced where necessary through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

What school expects you to do:

To help your child achieve their very best in school please ensure that:

- Your child attends school regularly
- Is dressed appropriately or wearing school uniform
- Is not taken out of school at any time unless absolutely necessary
- Contact school on the first morning of absence with a reason and provide a note/appointment card on return.

Please work with us regarding any problems. Contact us at the earliest point to discuss challenges and support. If we are concerned about your child's attendance, we may refer to the Attendance Improvement Officer who may visit your home.

Attendance Improvement Officer Schools

Philippa Lythgoe
03000 265566

The Local Authority and School can use various legal powers if your child is missing school without a good reason e.g.

- Parenting Order
- Educational Supervision Order
- School Attendance Order
- Penalty notices within a three-year period:
  - The first penalty notice is **£160** if paid within 28 days, reduced to **£80** if paid within 21 days.
  - A second penalty notice is **£160** to be paid within 28 days.
  - A third penalty notice cannot be issued. **Legal action** may result (for example, prosecution).
- Prosecution notice – you could get a fine of up to £2,500, a community order or jail sentence up to 3 months.

Celebrating Progress through Attendance

Attendance has a direct impact on the progress made by children.

Together, through high levels of attendance, both school and home can celebrate the progress made by your young people.



Durham Trinity School & Sports College

Nurture, Believe, Thrive, Succeed

Attendance Policy Statement

Essential Information for Parents – September 2026

If your child is absent, you must:

- Contact school on the first morning of absence with a reason.
- Keep school informed on a regular basis if your child is absent for a longer period

DO NOT SEND MESSAGES WITH TRANSPORT / ESCORTS

Attendance Safeguarding

As part of Durham Trinity School's commitment to safeguarding pupils, the steps below highlight our approach to pupil absence and the steps that may be taken:

- If a child is absent from school and there is no message from home, then school will contact home via call/text message by 10am to inform parents that the child is not in school and request a reason why.
- If there is no response to the call/text message, school office will call parents a final time by 10.30am to ascertain a reason for absence.
- If there is still no contact and reason provided by 11.00am, office staff will pass on details to the school safeguarding team, one of whom will make a door step visit and to get 'eyes on the child'. This is part of the schools commitment to safeguarding all pupils.

Attendance Policy Statement

The attendance of pupils at Durham Trinity School & Sports College is of vital importance.

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.

If pupils do not attend school regularly, their learning is fragmented, their acquisition of skills and knowledge is interrupted and their education achievements are potentially damaged.

In order to help us achieve this aim it is essential that your child attends school regularly and punctually.

To meet these challenges our school will maintain effective and efficient systems of communications with pupils, parents and appropriate agencies.

1 or 2 days doesn't seem like much, but...

If your child misses...	That equals...	Which is...	And over 13 years of schooling that's...
1 day every 2 weeks	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 of school
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

Every day counts!

Reasons for Absence

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence (this means to record an absence as allowed). There are many reasons for absence given but only a few are acceptable. All absences are recorded on your child's record. The below examples are illustrative rather than exhaustive:

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
Illness (genuine)	Birthdays
Medical Appointments (Although we would encourage appointments to be made out of school where possible)	Visiting relatives
Family Bereavement (e.g. to attend a funeral	Tiredness
Religious observance	Not wanting to attend school
	Not ready for transport pick-up
	Shopping / treat trips
	Siblings were ill

Leave of Absence in Term Time

There is significant disruption to a child's education during any period of absence. Parents do NOT have the right to take a child on holiday in term time. Please be aware that since 1st September 2013, Head Teachers have not been able to grant any leave of absence in term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances.**

Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation **would not** constitute an exceptional circumstance.

You must seek permission from school before booking a holiday by completing a leave of absence request which can be obtained from school. The completed form will then be considered by the Headteacher who will notify you of the decision in due course.