



TERRA NOVA
SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

This policy applies to all sections of the School, including the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

Last Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review date: September 2026

INTRODUCTION

According to law, every pupil has a right to a full-time education. At Terra Nova we see that education as a partnership between the family and the School. The School is committed to providing the highest quality of education for pupils and we look to parents to support this objective by ensuring daily attendance at the school of all children within their care of compulsory school age.

ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL

The School has a duty to make the child's time at school interesting and worthwhile and it is the parent's duty to ensure that their children attend school daily. The School is committed to working with parents to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Pupils must attend on time to be given an attendance mark for the day. As such, parents are expected to ensure that children are present for registration at 8.40am each weekday. Children may arrive at school and enter their classroom from 8.15am to ensure a settled start.

In line with government guidance, the School operates two registration points each day for the purposes of recording attendance: one at the start of the morning session (8.40am) and one at the start of the afternoon session. Pupils arriving late to either registration session will be marked as such in the attendance register.

Attendance at School is monitored by the School Office and overseen by the School's Attendance Champion, who is currently the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). The Attendance Champion is named in line with the requirements outlined in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. The Head, via the DSL/Attendance Champion is ultimately responsible for ensuring high levels of pupil attendance at Terra Nova.

For all matters relating to attendance and the safeguarding of pupils, the DSL/Attendance Champion may be contacted on safeguarding@tnschool.co.uk or 01477 571251.

ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

When an unexplained absence is identified, the School will telephone home between 09.30am and 10.30am in order to establish the whereabouts of the pupil. Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly, as stated in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)*, and must therefore communicate any reason for a child's absence from school as soon as possible. This is the case for pupils of all ages, including those in the EYFS, as required by the Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework.

Pupils who are absent for the duration of a complete session, either morning or afternoon, will receive an absence mark which is recorded either as authorised or unauthorised in the school registers. The guidance outlined in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* will instruct

the School on whether an absence should be recorded as authorised or unauthorised. It is for this reason that information about the cause of each absence is always required.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

The following procedures should be observed with regards to individual absences:

Illness

If a child is not well enough for school, parents should contact the School Office on the day of absence, in person, by email or by phone. Contact details may be found at the end of this policy document. When the child returns, parents should liaise with the School Nurse if any follow up or medication is required. Absences will not be authorised without this procedure.

Other legitimate reasons

Absence is permitted for other legitimate reasons, for example in an emergency such as bereavement, or for medical appointments which take place during school time. Authorised absence is granted for pupil spending any time in an alternative educational setting, either for the purposes of transition, interviews or dual-schooling. Where a pupil is attending an educational visit or an approved sporting activity, registers are updated as such.

Religious observance

The School recognises the different cultures and faith communities that reside within our community. We acknowledge that different faiths and cultures have different celebrations throughout the year. We treat religious observances as an authorised absence and in most cases, this is the day of the religious event. If more than one day absence is required per religious event, the parent should request a leave of absence for their child by following the process outlined elsewhere in this policy.

Family holidays

The School does not believe that family holiday should be taken during term time as every school day is important - we aspire to 100% attendance for all pupils, and believe that continuity in pupils attending school affords each and every child the best possible opportunity to thrive and to reach their potential. While the School recognises some implicit benefits of spending time together as a family, it is unlikely that term-time family holidays will be recorded as Authorised Absence.

Any requests to withdraw a child from school during term-time for the purposes of family holiday should be directed, in writing, to the Deputy Head, as per the Process for Requesting Absence form School outlined elsewhere in this policy.

PROCESS FOR REQUESTING ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL

Permission for any absence must be requested. For routine absences that will last no longer than one day, such as those outlined as legitimate reasons in the Absence Procedures above, requests should be made via the child's Class Teacher.

For absences longer than one day, all requests should be made to the Deputy Head, in writing. The Head retains ultimate responsibility for granting or refusing absence from school.

Absences will be marked as either Authorised or Unauthorised, according to legislative guidance.

SUPPORTING PUPILS WITH BELOW-EXPECTED LEVELS OF ATTENDANCE

The School understands and recognises that for a small minority of children, attending school may be a trigger for emotional stress, including anxiety, and that poor rates of attendance at school may be a symptom of wider concerns. Different pathways of pastoral support are available to all children and families for whom school attendance due to anxiety or other emotional stresses is a concern, including but not limited to the child's Form Tutor, an allocated Pastoral Lead Teacher or the School Counsellor. Coordinated support will be overseen by the Deputy Head or Designated Safeguarding Lead.

For all pupils whose attendance falls below 90%, the school will consider its responsibilities to intervene. Intervention will usually take the form of:

- An analysis of the child's absence and reasons for this;
- A request from the Deputy Head or Attendance Champion to meet with parents regarding the child's absence and the impact of this on wellbeing and attainment in school;
- The coordination of targeted support, as deemed necessary.

Where necessary, and according to legislative guidance, information on a child's attendance at school may be shared with the Local Authority, which may advise the School on subsequent actions to support the child in attending school. Guidance in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* states that a pupil's absence must be reported to the Local Authority if, at any point over the course of an Academic Year:

- the pupil fails to attend school regularly;
- the pupil is absent for a period of ten continuous days where the absence is unauthorised or no reason for absence has been received by the school;
- the pupil is, or is likely to be, absent for a total of 15 school days due to illness, either cumulatively or consecutively.

ATTENDANCE LEGAL INTERVENTION

Any specific interventions led by the School to improve pupil attendance, such as those outlined above, will continue to adhere to the guidance outlined in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. The School has a responsibility to remind parents of their legal obligation to ensure that children are attending school regularly, and that legal interventions may be considered by the Local Authority should a child's attendance continue to be of concern.

In accordance with the guidance outlined in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*, the Local Authority will always be notified within 5 days if a child transfers from one educational setting to another at a non-standard transition point.

USEFUL CONTACTS

School Office (to report absence): office@tnschool.co.uk, 01477 571251

To request a planned absence: Deputy Head, 01477 571251
matt.greenwood@tnschool.co.uk

School Attendance Champion: Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL), 01477 571251
safeguarding@tnschool.co.uk

RELEVANT DOCUMENTATION

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy and the Admissions Policy.

The relevant legislative guidance may be found in the document [*Working together to improve school attendance*](#), published by the Department for Education