

THURGOLAND C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY



Approved by:

Headteacher Mr D Jordan

Date: 18.01.2023

Chair of Governors Mr N Shiggins

Date: 18.01.2023

Review date: Spring 2024

Introduction

In line with the school's general aims, we respect the uniqueness of each child and nurture their personal and individual gifts to prepare them for a successful adulthood. Our children have Christian values at the heart of everything they do: caring for others; welcoming everyone regardless of differences; and working together to contribute to a thriving class, school and local community. We strive to provide a learning environment that promotes and develops each child to their 'BEST SELF'. We believe that if pupils are to benefit fully from education, then good attendance and punctuality are crucial factors.

We aim to make our curriculum, teaching and learning opportunities as stimulating and vibrant as possible by addressing individual learning needs in order to encourage our pupils to have a love of school and an accompanying reluctance to miss school sessions.

Staff and governors strive to create a safe and welcoming environment where high standards of health and safety and personal guidance enable pupils to grow in self-esteem. The resultant climate of security and well-being we provide contributes to high levels of attendance.

We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is a concern about attendance. If problems affect a pupil's attendance we will strive, in partnership with parents, to identify and resolve these problems as efficiently as possible.

The overall aim for all children should be for 100% attendance, therefore any absence should only be for unavoidable and genuine reasons.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

Parents' Responsibilities:

"All parents/carers have a legal responsibility to ensure that their children receive an efficient full-time education suitable for their age, ability and aptitude by regular attendance at school." (Section 7, Education Act, 1996)

1. Registration is a legal requirement that has to be undertaken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. This enables us to:
 - Monitor attendance regularly
 - Evaluate information and set targets/tackle areas of concern as early as possible
 - Target absence, punctuality and truancy and communicate with pupils and parents about expectations
 - Have the ability to publicise the above data within our school
 - Have the ability to give a clear and accurate picture to parents, carers and guardians
 - Have the ability to encourage and reward good attendance
2. Morning registration is at 8.45am each morning. Registers close at 8:50am. Afternoon registration is 1:00pm
3. Children should only be kept at home if they have a significant illness or injury. If this is the case, parents should contact the school at the beginning of the first day of absence.
4. If a child has a minor illness e.g. mild headache, mild stomach ache etc. parents should inform the school and bring them in. If a child deteriorates through the day, school will contact parents so that a pupil can be collected.
5. If a pupil has a dental, or hospital appointment, parents should inform school. Pupils should be brought back to school immediately after appointments.
6. Pupils should miss as little time as possible.

To report a child's absence, parents should contact the school office by phone: 01142 883300 or email: office@thurgolandprimary.org

Therefore, parents are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school.
- Ensure their child arrives on time every day.
- Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their children attend school in the correct uniform and with the basic equipment required for lessons.
- Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible.
- Telephone to inform the school on the first day of absence for their child – before 9:30am.
- Work in partnership with the school and other agencies in the best interests of their child; this includes informing the school about significant influences and changes in the child's life which may impact on learning.

'First Day of Absence' procedure

- This procedure is crucial in our efforts to raise the attendance profile of our school. The 'First Day of Absence' system is operated to communicate quickly and effectively with parents and carers regarding the reasons for a child's absence at the beginning of the first day away from school.
- When a child is absent and no reason has been given, parents will be contacted by school, normally by text message at first and then by telephone.
- It is a requirement for parents/carers to provide at least two appropriate telephone numbers as emergency contacts, ideally more. It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that these contact details are up-to-date at all times. This is also vital for safeguarding reasons so that we make contact with an appropriate adult quickly, should your child have an accident or become unwell.
- In cases where we are unable to make contact with an appropriate adult, we would visit the home address. Where leaders are concerned about a child's reason for absence or the welfare of a pupil /family the Headteacher, other designated leader(s) and/or Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit the family home to complete a safe and well check. This visit will be logged on the school's welfare records in CPOMS (our current online system to monitor safeguarding concerns).
- Teaching staff may also make telephone calls to families in relation to any issues concerning children. The office staff are responsible for making calls with regard to attendance to parents and carers and for recording absence correctly on the School Information Management System (currently SIMS).

Procedures to be followed by attendance leaders

- School staff monitor attendance and punctuality daily. When a child's attendance begins to present concern, without good medical reason/evidence, parents will be informed as outlined below:

Step 1: Below 96% attendance and/or 2 or more instances of lateness after at least a full half term: first letter home

This is to inform parents of potential concerns and to ask for co-operation in trying to improve their child's attendance

Step 2: Below 94% attendance and/or 2 or more instances of lateness after at least a full term: second letter home or below 96% and/or no improvement since last letter.

At this point parents will be contacted directly or invited into school to discuss issues relating to their child's attendance, depending on the context of the absence. At this meeting:

- Senior Leadership Team (including parent champion) and, where appropriate external support agencies, will offer any relevant support or guidance to the family and they may make referrals as required for further intervention
- A clear target will be set for improvement (and monitored in the following period)
- Expectations will be made clear and the impact on future learning.
- A copy of the school policy will be shared either electronically or in hard copy for future reference
- Parents may be reminded to provide medical evidence for any future absence from school for a set period of time.

Step 3 and beyond: No improvement has been seen despite the actions at step 1 and 2 above or attendance is below 90%.

The school will refer for support and guidance from an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The EWO will be in contact with the family to advise them and if no improvement is seen, or attendance levels fall further, the school and EWO will organise a face to face meeting to discuss the health of the child and concerns about attendance.

Arriving late for school

Letters and/or reminder text messages may also be sent out for incidents of lateness. Our doors open at 8:40am. Pupils are deemed to be late when arriving at or after 8.50am and their late mark is recorded at the main reception. Children arriving after 8.50am should be accompanied by a parent/carer to the main reception so that a reason for absence/lateness can be given. The number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.

Please note that arrival after 9.30am without reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session.

Holiday/absence requests- see Appendix A

All requests for leave must be documented on a school request form (see Appendix A). Parents should share details about the request (including the specific dates) and give any special circumstances that explain the need to take your child out of school during term time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and on a case-by-case basis. School will respond to the request in writing and it is possible - in line with DfE and Barnsley Local Authority guidance - that a penalty notice may be issued.

Legal Action (Fixed Penalty Notices) – see Appendix B

The school and Governing Body do not wish to take legal action against parents/carers for unauthorised absences or incidents of persistent lateness.

However, we may consider legal action as we aim to ensure that every child receives their legal entitlement to be in school every day so that they can meet their full potential. Recurring unauthorised absence may lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment. The unauthorised absence may also result in a Fixed Penalty Notice being issued through the local authority. This penalty will be £60 (per child, per full school week) if paid within 21 days; payment after this time, but within 28 days, is £120. The school will apply a fixed penalty notice through BMBC if attendance over the last twelve months presents concerns or if the holiday itself will ensure that attendance drops below 96%.

Approved Absence

School leaders may authorise absence that will not affect attendance for visits to a potential new school settings, attending sporting/performance activities (like sports coaching /competition, or musical instrument examinations) or attend school visits or sporting competitions. This absence will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and it will only be approved if a child's attendance and behaviour are exemplary. This absence cannot be taken at key times of the year like formal assessments such as SATS and nor can it be taken during key learning dates like school visits, for example. Where potential absence for sporting talents clash with a school sports event, the school's programme of events will always take precedence. Absence that will affect a child's ability to achieve their potential in end of Key Stage assessments will not be granted. Families must work with us to ensure that children in such a position keep up with any learning missed from school.

Governing Body Responsibilities

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

Management Responsibilities

The school managers will:

- Consult with all members of the school community and the Educational Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.
- Set unauthorised absence and attendance targets for each school year.
- Monitor and analyse attendance data monthly / termly and reports to the governing board.
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures.
- Follow the registration guidelines issued by Barnsley Local Authority (LA).
- Ensure that all staff follow registration procedures.
- Ensure staff receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
- Ensure that attendance procedures are followed.
- Ensure procedures are followed including checking message service, calling parents when the reason for absence has not been reported
- Communicate clearly to parents the school's expectations and procedures in respect of attendance, giving reminders where they have failed to inform school about absence.
- Contact parents where there are concerns about a child's attendance
- Remind pupils and parents about the importance of good attendance.

Teacher's Responsibilities

Teachers will:

- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session.
- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Create the ethos whereby absent pupils feel they will be missed.
- Have in place procedures which allow absentees to catch up on key learning experiences without disrupting the learning of others in the class.
- Help the pupil's re-integrate where a pupil is returning to school after an absence.
- Celebrate excellent attendance weekly, termly and yearly by: the class with the highest weekly attendance will be awarded a trophy in assembly; raffle tickets are handed out on a random day each week to children who are punctual on that day; the school has a motto 'the best ability is availability' which is communicated regularly; and at the end of each term and year certificates are awarded to children with 'excellent' attendance.

- Establish good and effective links with parents and work together to meet the needs of the pupils.
- Remind pupils and parents about the importance of good attendance.
- Give feedback to parents about attendance and punctuality at parents' evenings.

Administrative Responsibilities

The school office will:

- Administer School Information Management System (SIMS) Register Module.
- Supply attendance data on request.
- Update registers for students arriving after registers closed.
- Maintain a record of children granted authorised absence.
- Support / assist with the following procedures.

Procedures

- Through the school's weekly newsletters, ensure that all parents are informed that absences need to be reported by telephone on the morning of the first day of absence.
- Contact parents by telephone / text by 9:30 am on the day of absence if no information has been received regarding their child's absence.
- All steps will be taken to contact parents. Further investigation into the whereabouts of the child will be initiated if contact with parents has not been made.
- The Designated Safeguarding Lead or deputy will visit the family home accompanied by another member of staff if no information is received by the school about the child's whereabouts before the end of the school day.
- Refer to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if no information or if contact is not made.
- Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is followed if there are concerns for a child's safety.
- Contact parents by letter to inform them if there are concerns about a child's attendance.
- Offer the parent the opportunity to meet with senior staff to discuss any issues that may be affecting attendance which school could assist with.

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See Appendix C for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Safeguarding

The school recognises that ascertaining the whereabouts of pupils is a safeguarding issue and will communicate this to parents to ensure their support with regard to early notification of absence, lateness etc. If senior managers have concerns that a pupil's non attendance at school could be a result of, or could result in, them being in an unsafe situation, then the EWO or the Police will be notified as appropriate.

A pupil's attendance record will be given full consideration in any monitoring of their general well being.

Staff will refer to Barnsley Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Protection Procedures if they suspect there is a link between attendance and well-being / safety.

Monitoring

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum annually by the Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies: Child protection and safeguarding policy; Behaviour policy

Appendix A – Absence request form

APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL
FOR PARENTAL HOLIDAY

In line with the Pyramid and Penistone Grammar School, the Governors of Thurgoland CE Primary School will not authorise any holidays unless under exceptional circumstances.

The attendance target agreed between Thurgoland CE Primary School and the LA of 97.5% per pupil has been submitted to the DFE.

Full name of child (ren):

Reason for application:

Dates requested:

Full name of parent(s)/carer(s)

Telephone Number

Signature of parent(s) / carer(s)

Date

We are no longer able to authorise absence unless under exceptional circumstances i.e. family bereavement

Office use only

Notes

Current attendance for this academic year:

Outcome and context:

Authorised

Unauthorised

Referred to LA for penalty notice

Signed..... Date.....

Appendix B – PN2 Form**PN2 Request Form****Barnsley MBC**

Confirmation of pupil absence in relation to the issue of a Warning Letter / Penalty Notice relating to unauthorised absence from school.

School			
Pupil Name			
DOB:		Year Group	
Address			
Telephone			
Male/ Female			
Parent Full Name			
Parent address (if different from above)			
Parent DOB			
Parent telephone			

Dates of absence:

I confirm that the pupil named above was absent from school during the period below and that this absence has been recorded by the school as unauthorised (G code)

First date of absence		Last date of absence		Total number of G codes (sessions)	
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	Tick	Date
Leave of absence form received		
Reply letter sent		
Reason to believe letter sent		

Declaration:

I confirm that the details contained on this form are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

At this stage the Local Authority will NOT require supporting documents. By signing the below you agree to have followed process and to store these documents for 6 months. If this case proceeds to court the Local Authority will require the documents to be sent to us.

I understand that the Local Authority will process this Penalty Notice on behalf of the school.

Signed: Head teacher Date:

Name:

Please return the completed form and associated documents to the Education Welfare Penalty Notice Inbox - EducationWelfarePenaltyNotice@barnsley.gov.uk

Please ensure that a current attendance certificate with G codes is attached with this form.

Appendix C: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness

M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day