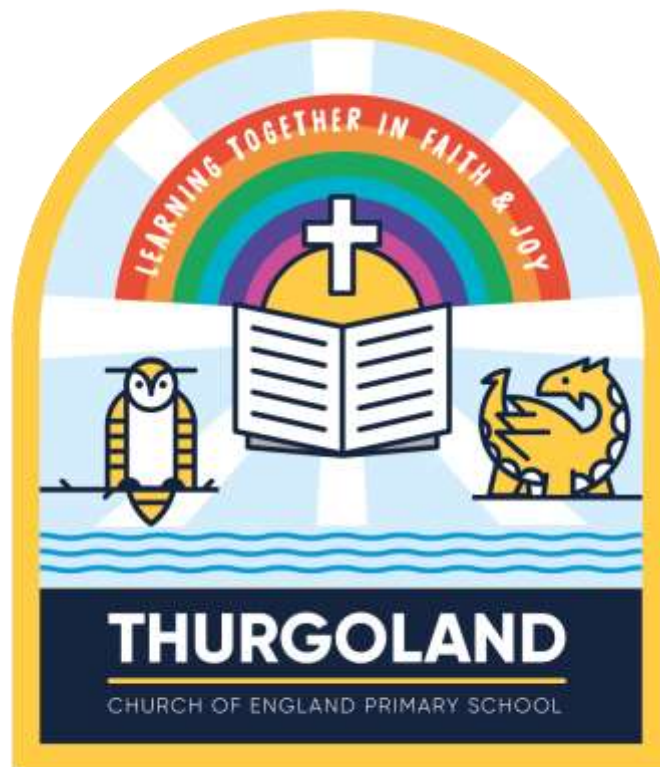


# THURGOLAND C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY



Approved by:

Headteacher Mr D Jordan

Date: 13.03.2024

Chair of Governors Mr N Shiggins Date: 13.03.2024

Review date: Spring 2025

## **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 be 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.

### **'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).

### **Holiday/absence requests- see Appendix A**

All requests for leave of absence 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.

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%.

### **Penalty Notices** can be issued for:

**Leave of Absence** - Penalty Notices can be requested by schools for leave of absence in term time for 5 or more days. This can be consecutive absence, or non- consecutive. The LA retains discretion to issue a penalty notice before the threshold is met.

**Unauthorised Absence** - Penalty Notices can be requested by schools when there have been 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a 10-week period. In these circumstances a Notice to Improve may be sent to the parent by the Local Authority on behalf of the school prior to the notice being issued.

**First Offence** – The first time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be: £80 per parent, per child paid within 21 days. This increases to £160 per parent, per child if paid after day 21, until day 28. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

**Second Offence (within three years)** – The second time a Penalty Notice is issued the amount will be £160 per parent, per child paid within 28 days. Any non-payment of the Penalty Notice may be referred to the Magistrates Court.

**Third Offence and any further offences (within 3 years)** – The third time an offence is committed a Penalty Notice will not be issued, and the case may be presented straight to the Magistrates Court under s.444 of the Education Act (1996) or other legal interventions considered. The Magistrates' Court can order fines up to £2500 per parent per child.

## **Approved Absence**

School leaders may authorise absence that will not affect attendance for visits to a potential new school setting, 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.

## **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.

## 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. Ensure your child arrives punctually for morning registration which is at 08.45. Registers close at 08:50 and after this time your child will be marked as late.
2. All pupils that arrive late (after 08:50) must report, with their parent, to the school office where the reason for lateness is recorded.
3. Please note that arrival after 9.30am without reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session.
4. 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 by 09:30. Note that the school office is staffed from 08:00 Monday to Friday.

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

5. 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.
6. Arrange medical and dental appointments outside of school time wherever possible.
7. If a pupil has a dental, or hospital appointment, parents should inform school. Pupils should be brought back to school immediately after appointments.
8. Promote a good attitude to learning by ensuring their child attends school in the correct uniform, PE kit and book bags as necessary.
9. 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 attendance and learning.

0 days of school	100%	Perfection
Equates to 2 days off school each year	99%	Excellent
Equates to 5 days off school each year	97%	Good
Equates to 10 days off school each year	95%	Slight Concern
Equates to 20 days off school each year	90%	Concerned
Equates to 30 days off school each year	85%	Very Concerned

## **Administrative Responsibilities**

The school office will:

1. On arrival to school at 08:00, office staff check emails and answer machine to note any reported absences.
2. To log the absence on SIMS immediately, including correct coding, and any appropriate notes. DfE attendance and absence coding can be found on page 76 of the latest version of [Working Together to Improve Schools Attendance](#) – see appendix C
3. Inform HT or Parent Champion, via email, if any of the absentees' attendance are being monitored.
4. From 08:50 welcome any children who are late into school and request reason for lateness with child or parent.
5. Record any children arriving from 08:50 as late (L) on SIMS and The number of minutes late is recorded in order to measure the impact of lost education due to late arrival.
6. Contact parents by telephone / text by 09:30 on the day of absence, if no information has been received regarding their child's absence.
7. Please note that arrival after 9.30am without reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session.
8. All steps will be taken to contact parents. Further investigation, alongside HT or Parent Champion, into the whereabouts of the child will be initiated if contact with parents has not been made.
9. On a Friday before 10:00, a weekly attendance breakdown by class to be given to Parent Champion.
10. Ensure that all staff follow registration procedures including accurate marking of AM and PM registers.
11. Issue any Legal Action (Fixed Penalty Notices) to parents and inform the LA.
12. All requests for leave e.g. holiday must be documented on a school request form (see Appendix A) and filled appropriately.
13. Ensure each child's parents/carers have provided at least two appropriate telephone numbers as emergency contacts, ideally more.
14. Administer School Information Management System (SIMS) Register Module.
15. Supply attendance data on request.
16. Maintain a record of children granted authorised absence.

## Headteacher

1. Set unauthorised absence and attendance targets for each school year.
2. Monitor and analyse attendance data weekly and termly. Report this to governing body.
3. Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures.
4. Follow the registration guidelines issued by Barnsley Local Authority (LA).
5. Ensure that all staff follow registration procedures.
6. Ensure staff receive in-service training on registration regulations and education law.
7. Ensure that attendance procedures are followed.
8. Ensure procedures are followed including checking message service, calling parents when the reason for absence has not been reported.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. Meet with Parent Champion weekly to discuss attendance analysis
12. To visit the family home accompanied by another member of staff, if no information is received by the school about the child's whereabouts before, at the latest, the end of the school day.
13. Refer to the school's Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if contact is not made.
14. Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is followed if there are concerns for a child's safety.
15. Contact parents by letter to inform them if there are concerns about a child's attendance. 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. Offer the parent the opportunity to meet with senior staff to discuss any issues that may be affecting attendance which school could assist with.

## **Parent Champion**

1. Be available from 08:30 to 09:30 in the PPA room, to check in and discuss any concerns with children and parents.
2. On a daily basis, check in with office team at 9:30 to be updated on non-attending children.
3. Ensure procedures are followed including checking message service, calling parents when the reason for absence has not been reported.
4. At this stage, if there are any attendance / safeguarding concerns, inform the HT.
5. On a weekly basis, monitor and analyse attendance data weekly and report to HT.
6. Hand out weekly class attendance award.
7. On a regular basis, check in with children / families who are identified on an attendance watch list – including children who are persistently absent from school.
8. When a child returns to school following a significant period of absence (after 3 days), parent champion to meet with child.
9. 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.
10. Ensure that the Child Protection Policy is followed if there are concerns for a child's safety.
11. Work with the HT to identify any contact needed with parents, if there are concerns about a child's attendance. When a child's attendance begins to present concern, without good medical reason/evidence, parents will be informed as outlined below:

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Offer the parent the opportunity to meet with senior staff to discuss any issues that may be affecting attendance which school could assist with.



## Teacher's Responsibilities

Teachers will:

- Welcome children into school from 08:40 – classroom doors opened and supervising adults (all of Teaching Team) to be present in the classroom so that they are visible for children and parents.
- Close classroom doors at 08:50.
- Close complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning (by 08:50) and afternoon session (by 13:10).

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent

- Work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. Create the ethos whereby absent pupils feel they will be missed.
- The school has a motto 'the best ability is availability' which is communicated regularly by all staff.
- To ensure the curriculum is delivered in an engaging way that motivates pupils to be their best self.
- Help the pupil's re-integrate where a pupil is returning to school after an absence e.g. with friendships and procedures which allow absentees to catch up on key learning experiences without disrupting the learning of others in the class.
- Establish good and effective links with parents and work together to meet the needs of the pupils. All attendance 'events' to be accurately logged on CPOMS.
- Give feedback to parents about attendance and punctuality at parents' evenings and through mid year and end of year reports.

**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.

**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