



Thorpedene Primary School

Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Reviewed April 2022

1. Aims

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parent/carers to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Attendance Targets

The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Headteacher and Attendance Officer to ensure we are in line with the National Average. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

The school's attendance target for 2021-2022 is **95%**.

Attendance Matters at Thorpedene!

Why Attendance and Punctuality Matter?

Across one school year:

- Less than 5 days absence = 97.3% attendance
- 14 days absence (approx.) = 92.6% attendance
- 20 days absence (approx.) = 89.4% attendance
- 30 days absence (approx.) = 84.2% attendance

If a child reaches 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 39 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

2. 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.

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The Academy Committee

The Academy Committee 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.

3.2 The Headteacher

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School administration staff

School administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

4. School procedures

All parent/carers on admission to the school sign a copy of the Home School Contract which states that 'parent/carers will ensure their children attend regularly and punctually'

4.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day (AM) and once during the second session. (PM) It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils at Thorpedene Primary School must arrive in school by **8.50am** (KS2 Starboard) or **8.55am** (EYFS/KS1 Port) on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at **8.55am** in KS2 and **9.00am** in EYFS and KS1 and will be kept open until 9.15am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 12.45pm for EYFS, 1pm for KS1 and 1.30pm for KS2.

4.2 Unplanned Absence

Parent/carers must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – between 8.30m and 9.00am.

The school can be informed of the absence by:

- Contacting the school office on 01702 582225 or email office@thorpedene.secat.co.uk
- Using the school app: search Piota and then Thorpedene

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parent/carers will be notified of this.

Please note:

Sickness & Diarrhoea Bugs

The school has a 48-hour policy if your child has a sickness/diarrhoea bug. This means your child can return to school 48 hours after the last episode and providing they are fully recovered. If your child has been sick due to, for example, eating too quickly or coughing, there is no reason for them to be absent from school.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parent/carers can inform the school of an absence for a medical/dental appointment via the School Office.

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as **late**.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will also be marked as **late** and this will affect the pupil's overall attendance. Children regularly arriving at school late will be monitored by the Attendance Officer who will contact parent/carers as regular lateness has a detrimental effect on their attendance.

4.5 Following Up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

- **Parent/carers will be contacted on the day of the absence by the school by phone, text and email.**
- Where no contact has been made with the parent/carer on the first day of absence the school will mark this as an unauthorised absence and a letter sent home.
- If the school are **concerned about the child's absence** and are unable to contact the parent/carer, we may carry out a **home visit** and contact the children's emergency contact and/or **other professionals** or **contacts of the family** who we may reasonably expect to be able to advise us of the child's whereabouts.

4.6 Reporting to Parent/Carers

Parent/carers are informed of pupil's attendance in their annual school report. This includes information on the total % of attendance, any unauthorised absences and the school attendance target. Attendance information is also shared with parent/carers at Parent/Carer Consultation sessions where necessary.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent/carer writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parent/carers do not have this authority. Consequently, **not all absences supported by parent/carers will be classified as authorised.**

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school.

An absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of parent/carer, such as a shopping trip or for a birthday.

An absence is unauthorised if a child has low attendance which is being monitored at Level 2 and medical proof is not supplied by the parent/carer to evidence the absence. Medical evidence could be seeing the prescribed medicine, seeing the child's prescription, a doctor's or hospital letter or an appointment card etc. The school can provide the parent/carer with a medical form which can be completed and signed by a Doctor.

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013.

Head teachers shall not grant any Leave of Absence during term time unless they consider there are exceptional circumstances relating to the application. Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time.

Any application for leave must establish that there are exceptional circumstances and the Headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence can** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see section 4 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

The Education Act 1996 makes it a criminal offence for a parent or carer to 'fail to secure their child's regular attendance at the school.'

If a parent/carer does need to request leave of absence for exceptional circumstances they must complete a form available from the School Office.

6. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Pupils will be updated with attendance progress in weekly assemblies and display boards.
- Half termly reward for the class in each Key Stage with the highest attendance
- Annual Attendance Week
- End of year tiered rewards for attendance
- Rewards for most improved attendance
- Rewards for 100% attendance for the year

7. Attendance Monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis and reports to the Headteacher on a weekly basis.

The Attendance Officer works closely with parent/carers to support regular attendance in school.

If the school has concerns over a pupils' attendance, the Attendance Officer will contact parent/carers to discuss these concerns. If after contacting parent/carers, a pupil continues to have regular absences, we will invite the parent/carer to attend a meeting with the Attendance Officer in school.

Level 1 - If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, or when attendance falls below 93%, the parent/carer will be contacted by the Attendance Officer and the child's attendance will be monitored for a period of 4 weeks with the expectation of 100% attendance. If it does not improve, the case could escalate to Level 2 and the parent/carer will be made aware of this.

Level 2 – When attendance falls below 90% or meetings at Level 1 do not succeed in improving the child's attendance, the school will then contact the Local Authority Attendance Service, who will attend further meetings at school, along with the parent/carer and Attendance Officer. Targets will be set and reviewed at 4 weekly intervals. At this stage, the parent/carer will be asked to provide medical evidence for any further absences. Once attendance targets are met and the parent/carer understands the importance of children attending school regularly, the case will return to Level 1 and be monitored in school by the Attendance Officer. If after 2 reviews, the child's attendance does not improve and targets are not met, the case could escalate to Level 3.

Level 3 - If the attendance targets are repeatedly not met at Level 2, the child's case will escalate to Level 3. The Local Authority Attendance Service then take the lead role and commence home visiting and seek to ensure that the parent/carer understands the seriousness of the situation. The Local Authority will make it very clear that if the child does not begin to attend school regularly, the family are likely to face a fine or court proceedings.

7.1 Persistent Absence

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with the Academy Committee members.

The Attendance Officer reports termly to the Headteacher through an Attendance Report including information on attendance of the whole school, individuals and key groups of children.

8. Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice

9. Links with Other Policies

This policy is linked to our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy

This policy will be reviewed annually. At every review, the policy will be shared with the Academy Committee.