



**Thorndown Pre-School**

# **School Attendance Policy**

Our aspiration is that Thorndown Primary will be an outstanding school.

We value and respect everyone in our community and work as a team to:

- Provide learning experiences which support and inspire high achievement for all;
- Ensure a caring, safe and welcoming environment;
- Promote co-operative and responsible attitudes to make a positive contribution;
- Actively encourage independence and confidence to thrive in a changing world.

**Approved at Learning & Development committee meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2022**

**Review Period: Every 2 years**

**Date for next review: Spring 2024**

## School Attendance Policy

### Aims

Our school attendance policy aims to:

- support pupils and their parents/carers in the establishment of the highest possible levels of attendance and punctuality;
- ensure that all pupils have full and equal access to the best education that we can offer in order to increase learning;
- enable pupils to progress smoothly, confidently and with continuity through the school;
- make parents/carers aware of their legal responsibilities; and
- ensure attendance meets Government and Local Authority legislations ,polices and aims.

### Being at school

School education lays the vital foundations of a child's life. Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. Parents/carers and the school staff should work in partnership in making education a success and in ensuring that all children have full and equal access to all that the school has to offer. As a school, we will encourage parents and carers to ensure that their child achieves maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted upon promptly. We follow the **Department for Education** guidelines and expect pupils to maintain an attendance figure above **95%** throughout the academic year. It is parents' responsibility to ensure that their children arrive at school and return home safely.

### Expectations

**We expect that all pupils will:**

- attend school every day;
- arrive at school between 8.50 and 9.00am; and
- attend school appropriately prepared for the day;

**We expect that all parents/carers will:**

- ensure regular school attendance and be aware of their legal responsibilities as **regular attendance is a legal requirement**;
- Contact school promptly whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school;
- ensure that their child arrives at school punctually and prepared for the school day;
- Notify the school by 9.30am if possible of the pupil's absence by phone: 01480 375103. This needs to be done daily (unless the child is in hospital or has a long term illness related absence for a period of time; in this instance the parents do not need to ring daily);
- Notify the school of any home circumstances that might affect the behaviour and learning of their child;
- Notify school immediately of any changes to contact details as soon as possible; and
- Take family holidays in the school holiday period.

### Examples

Authorised Absence	Unauthorised Absence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• genuine illness of the pupil</li><li>• hospital/ dental/ doctor's appointment for the pupil;</li><li>• major religious observances;</li><li>• visits to prospective new schools; and</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;</li><li>• a birthday treat;</li><li>• oversleeping due to a late night;</li><li>• looking after other children / other family member;</li></ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>external exams or educational assessments.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>appointments for other family members; and</li> <li>family holiday when it is cheaper.</li> </ul>
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#### **We expect that the school will:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere;
- Provide a safe learning environment;
- Provide a sympathetic response to any child's or parent's concerns;
- Keep regular and accurate records of AM and PM attendance, punctuality and monitor individual children's attendance;
- Contact parents when a child fails to attend and where no message has been received to explain the absence;
- Contact parents when pupil absence is impacting on achievement;
- Follow up all unexplained absences to obtain explanations from parents. Although parents may offer a reason, only the school can authorise the absence. In the case of long term or frequent absence due to medical conditions, verifications from an appropriate health professional or other relevant body may be requested;
- Encourage good attendance and punctuality through a system of reward and recognition. Each term we will celebrate attendance as a whole school. Children who have achieved 100% attendance for the current term will receive a sticker or certificate.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority Attendance Officer (LAAO) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the LAAO. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the LAAO may result in further actions, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order;
- Will notify LAAO after 10 days' unexplained absence;
- To have a named member of the Senior Leadership team responsible for attendance (Headteacher);
- Update the governing body termly on the overall attendance figures.

#### **Registers, Punctuality and Lateness**

Punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupils in the class. It is paramount therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. The main playground entrances are supervised from 8.50am and the school doors are open at this time.

- By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil;
- Registration takes place at 9.00am and pupils who arrive after 9.00am will be recorded as late to school;
- Registers close at 9.05am and after this lateness is recorded as an **unauthorised** absence and can be subject to prosecution by the local authority;
- When children arrive after 9.00am they will need to be signed in at the main school office by a parent or adult with the reason for lateness given;

- Afternoon registration is taken at 1.05pm for KS1 and 1.20pm for Years 3 and 4 and 1.50pm for Years 5 and 6 ; and
- Pupil's attendance is recorded on their report and will be passed on to future schools as necessary.

### **If a child is regularly late**

1. The Headteacher will write to parents to inform them of the number of days the child has been late and to reinforce the school policy and expectations;
2. If lateness persists the Headteacher will invite parents to a meeting to discuss ways in which the school can support the family in getting the child to school on time;
3. The Headteacher may withdraw the privilege of the late mark for children who arrive persistently late after 9.05am. An unauthorised late would be recorded and;
4. When a child accumulates 18 unauthorised lates in a six week period, the Headteacher will refer the family to the LAAO (Local Authority Attendance Officer). They will take the late issue as a case and will investigate why a child/ren has been late on the dates given. This investigation could result in parents receiving a warning notice. Alternatively, a fixed penalty fine could be issued per child to each adult who has parental responsibility.

### **Pupil Leaving During the School Day**

During school hours, the school staff are legally in loco parentis and therefore must know where the pupils are during the school day.

- Pupils are not allowed to leave the premises without prior permission from the school;
- Whenever possible, parents should try to arrange medical and other appointments outside of school time;
- Pupils must be signed out on leaving the school and be signed back in on their return through the main office door;
- Where a pupil is being collected from the school, parents are to report to the school office before the pupil is allowed to leave the site; and
- If a pupil leaves the school site without permission, their parents will be contacted. *Should the school be unable to make contact with the family, it may be appropriate, in certain circumstances, to contact the Police and register the pupil as a missing person.*

### **Leave of Absence**

The school holiday dates and end of Key Stage Assessment dates are published a year in advance and leave of absence **will not** be authorised during these assessment periods. INSET days are published as soon as the school has agreed these, but may be subject to change.

In line with the Government's amendments to the 2006 regulations , holidays during term time will NOT be authorised. The Headteacher and Governors have determined that:

- Where leave of absence in term time is due to exceptional circumstances, an application form must be requested from the school office and submitted for consideration by the Headteacher on behalf of the school governors, no less than 4 weeks prior to the requested date. Consideration will then be given to the pupil's previous school attendance and that the time requested does not exceed five school days in any one academic year; and
- If leave is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the Local Authority Attendance Officer will be notified.

### **If a child's attendance falls below 95%**

1. The Headteacher will write to the parents to inform them that their child's attendance has fallen below 95%. Parents will be reminded of their legal duty and of the school's policy and expectations;
2. If attendance does not improve, the Headteacher will invite parents to a meeting to discuss ways in which the school can support the family in getting the child to school every day;
3. If persistent absence from school continues, the Headteacher has the right to unauthorise any absence without the support of medical advice; and
4. The Headteacher will refer the family to the LAAO when a child continues to be absent (unauthorised) for;
  - 9 full days over a 6 week period
  - 18 sessions over a 6 week period
  - 15% unauthorised absence in an academic year
  - 10 consecutive days with no reason for absence

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

Thorndown Primary School holds regular attendance panels in conjunction with the LAAO. The LAAO works in partnership with school and parents to support pupils who are failing to attend school on a regular basis.

The Local Authority may also issue a Penalty Notice to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school or Local Authority Officers. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Changing Schools**

It is important that, if families decide to send their child to a different school, they inform Thorndown Primary School as soon as possible.

A pupil will not be removed from the school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

- The date the pupil will be leaving the school and starting the new school;
- The address of the new school; and
- A new home address if appropriate.

The pupil's school records will then be sent to the new school through the S2S system when the next school requests information. In the event that the school has not been informed of the above information, the family will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Team and be classed as missing education.

## Appendix One

### **The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006**

Amendments have been made to the 2006 regulations in the **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013**. These amendments, as described below, came into force on 1 September 2013.

#### **Term-time holiday**

The **Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006** currently allow Headteachers to grant leave of absence for the purpose of a **family holiday** during term time in “special circumstances” of up to ten school days leave per year. Headteachers can also grant extended leave for more than ten school days in exceptional circumstances.

Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Headteachers should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

## **Appendix Two**

### **Pre-school Attendance Policy**

#### **Aim**

It is our aim to give every child the best start in education. To do this, we aim to encourage children to attend regularly and punctually.

The Pre-School has an Attendance Officer responsible for monitoring pupil attendance.

#### **Attendance**

It is the school's belief that children learn best by consistent care. Attendance plays an important part in this. A child needs to attend regularly to gain a full understanding of pre-school life.

We understand that good attendance sets good boundaries for the future.

Attendance registers will be kept and records passed on to future settings.

#### **Absences**

The Pre-School understands that, on occasions, children may be too ill to attend. On these occasions, it is the parents' responsibility, to contact the Pre-school by telephone, before the session begins, so the absence can be registered as authorised. The Pre-School can be contacted through the Primary School office on 01480 365103. Parents are asked not to pass messages through other parents or members of staff. Absences can be notified by telephone, email or personal visit.

The Pre-School must be notified of absences and the reason for the absence on the first day of absence, and then updated regularly throughout the absence.

If a child's attendance is below 80% in any term, parents will be contacted and invited to a meeting and if no reasonable explanation is given, the Pre-School reserves the right to withdraw the space.

If a child is receiving the free nursery place, all attendance is required to be reported to the Local Authority and parents may be charged for absences if the reason is deemed to be unacceptable.

### **Appendix 3**

#### Example of an Initial Letter

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

**Child's Name**

I have just completed a review of pupils' attendance over the last term with the Local Authority Attendance Officer and have discussed NAME reasons for absence with her/him. There is no need for you to be overly anxious or concerned regarding this, but you should be aware that we have noted that his attendance level is below the 95% expected of a primary school pupil.

NAME has missed important school time, however I am aware that s/he has had a number of appointments, days holiday and some illness.

If we can support you in improving attendance for your son/daughter, please do get in touch.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

Vicci Godbold  
Headteacher



## **Appendix 4**

### Example of a Letter 2

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

**Name of Pupil:**

I am writing to inform you that your child's attendance is still causing concern. We are very worried that continued poor attendance is affecting his/her progress and we need to meet with you urgently.

You are required to attend a meeting with myself to discuss this matter further at the date and time below:

Date:

Time:

Should your child's attendance remain irregular, the Local Authority may be requested to take more formal action. This could result in a penalty notice and/or prosecution through the Magistrates Court for failing to ensure regular school attendance of your child under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and a fine of up to £2500 and/or three months in prison.

Medical evidence is still required for any future absences to be authorised.

I look forward to meeting you to discuss any concerns you may have so we can continue to support our pupils in making good progress and I hope that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance and therefore avoid the need for legal proceedings to be implemented. If you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact Mrs Cook, School Secretary, on the above telephone number.

Yours sincerely

Vicci Godbold  
Headteacher

## **Appendix 5**

### Example of Letter 3

Date

Dear Parent/Carer

**Name of Pupil:**

It has come to my attention that your child has been absent from school for a number of sessions this school year. I enclose a record of his/her attendance.

As the parent/carer it is your legal responsibility, under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he or she is registered, regularly and punctually.

With effect from September 2015, schools were advised by the Government's Department for Education (DfE) that the persistent absence threshold is reduced to 10%. Until this date it was 15%.

This means that if a child has an overall attendance of 90% or less over a given period, they will be classified as a persistent absentee pupil.

I am therefore writing to inform you that if attendance fails to improve during the next four weeks (not including weekends or school holidays), the case may be referred to Cambridgeshire County Council for a penalty notice fine to be issued.

Yours sincerely

Vicci Godbold

Vicci Godbold  
Headteacher