# School Attendance Policy

**Approved at Learning & Development committee meeting on 12th May 2024**

**Review Period: Every 2 years**

**Date for next review: Summer 2026**

## 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 |
|---|---|
| • genuine illness of the pupil<br>• hospital/ dental/ doctor's appointment for the pupil;<br>• major religious observances;<br>• visits to prospective new schools; and<br>• external exams or educational assessments. | • shopping /day trip / visit to a theme park;<br>• a birthday treat;<br>• oversleeping due to a late night;<br>• looking after other children / other family member;<br>• appointments for other family members; and<br>• family holiday when it is cheaper. |

**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 whole year will receive a sticker or certificate.
- Make initial enquiries regarding pupils who are not attending regularly;
- Meet regularly with the Local Authority (LA) to monitor and support school attendance and punctuality;
- Refer irregular or unjustified patterns of attendance to the LA. Failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by school may result in further actions being taken by the LA, e.g. a Penalty Notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education Supervision Order or Parenting Order;
- Will notify LA 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 8.40am 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 8.55am and pupils who arrive after 8.55am but before 9.00am will be recorded as late to school;
- Registers close at 9.00am 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 1.20pm 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. When a child accumulates 8 unauthorised lates in an eight-week period, the school may refer the child to the LA who will analyse the situation and may issue all those with day-to-day care of the child with a penalty notice and/or prosecution through the magistrates' courts.

**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%**

The below staged model of support will be followed including:

1. The school 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 school 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 school has the right to unauthorise any absence without the support of medical advice; and

4. The school may refer the matter to the Local Authority for a child who is absent for;

- 8 unauthorised absences in an 8-week period, with no authorised
- 90% or below attendance with majority unauthorised over a longer period

| Stage of Support | Attendance Thresholds | Strategies to be used |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage 1: Universal Support** | 95% - 100% attendance | **All families in school will receive this level of support.**<br><br>**<u>Communicating expectations</u>**<br>• Whole school expectations communicated<br>• Regular reminders of the importance of attendance through the newsletter and other parent communications<br>• Weekly attendance awards<br><br>**<u>Direct contact with pupil/parents/carers</u>**<br>• First day of absence phone call<br>• All parents can access regular attendance figures on Arbour<br>• Text sent to parents at the start of each half term informing them of the number of days of absence<br>• Requests for term time holidays to be declined, unless exceptional circumstances<br><br>**<u>Monitoring procedures</u>**<br>• Attendance tracked through the school's management information system (MIS)<br>• Attendance officer to monitor individual, group and whole-school attendance to identify any concerns<br>• Class teachers/form tutors to be on alert for any absence patterns |
| **Stage 2: Initial targeted support** | 93% - 95% attendance, and/or<br><br>Three or more late arrivals over a half term period, and/or<br><br>An unexplained or unauthorised absence | **<u>Communication expectations</u>**<br>• Families will continue to receive the universal support offered at the previous stage<br><br>**<u>Direct contact with pupil/parents/carers</u>**<br>• Text sent to parents at the start of each half term informing them of the number of days of absence<br>• An appropriate member of staff will have an informal discussion with the pupil to explore whether they have any concerns or issues that could be a barrier to attendance<br>• Parents/carers will be contacted via phone to discuss any concerns and barriers to attendance. Minutes of the phone call will be generated, logged on Arbour and sent home to parents as a letter (Letter 1)<br><br>**<u>Support</u>**<br>• Consider the external agencies that can address the individual needs of the pupil/family and make referrals as required e.g. pastoral supporting, parenting support, Early Help Assessment.<br><br>**<u>Monitoring procedures</u>**<br>• Attendance tracked through MIS<br>• Attendance officer to do **weekly** checks on the pupil's data<br>• Class teachers/form tutor to monitor pupil more closely |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Stage 3: Enhanced targeted support** | 90% attendance, and/or<br><br>Five or more late arrivals over a half term period, and/or<br><br>Subsequent unexplained or unauthorised absences | **Communicating expectations**<br>• Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond<br>**Direct contact with parents/carers**<br>• Text sent to parents at the start of each half term informing them of the number of days of absence<br>• Issue a letter to parents/ carers requesting them to attend a Parent Contract Meeting to discuss attendance (Letter 2).From this meeting attended or not) targets be generated, and sent home to parents as a letter (Letter 3)<br>**Support and Enforcement**<br>• A parenting contract will be put into place which includes:<br>o a statement by parents/carers that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are set out in the contract;<br>o a statement by the school/local authority/academy trust agreeing to provide support to the parents for the purpose of complying with the contract.<br>**Monitoring procedures**<br>• Attendance tracked through MIS<br>• Attendance officer to do **weekly** checks on the pupil's data<br>• Class teachers/form tutor to monitor pupil more closely |
| **Stage 4: Intensive support for persistent absentees with Local Authority support** | Attendance below 90%, and/or<br><br>Continued late arrivals despite previous support offered, and/or<br><br>Continued unexplained or unauthorised absences despite previous support offered | **Communicating expectations**<br>• Pupils will continue to receive the universal support offered to all pupils at Stage One and beyond<br>**Direct contact with parents/carers**<br>• Text sent to parents at the start of each half term informing them of the number of days of absence<br>• Review parenting contract however no further notification to parents will be needed.<br>**Support and Enforcement**<br>• Support initiated at previous stages will continue as appropriate<br>• The local authority referral will be made to share the school's concerns<br>**Monitoring procedures**<br>• Attendance tracked through MIS<br>• Attendance officer to do **daily** checks on the pupil's data<br>• Class teachers to maintain regular individual support as required<br>• School to liaise with the local authority regularly to support any measures that are being taken |

**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 1**

**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 2**

## 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 375103. 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 letter 1

Date

Dear [parent/carer's name],

**Attendance Support**

I am writing to you following our discussion regarding [insert pupil's name] school attendance. It currently stands at [add percent].

Regular attendance is an important factor in a child's academic success. When pupils are frequently absent, it is difficult for them to keep up with their school work and this could affect their life chances. For this reason, we take school attendance very seriously.

I have enclosed a copy of the attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the attendance is authorised or unauthorised. As your child's attendance is below the 95% expected of a primary school pupil, please ensure that we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details in order for the absence to be authorised.

We are keen to work with you to address any barriers to your child's attendance.
Today, we have discussed [include minutes from the phone call including any barriers or challenges to attendance and what the agreed actions are.]

OR

If there are no barriers or challenges [Today, you have shared that you feel there are no challenges or barriers to your child increasing their attendance in school to 95%.]

If there is a change in circumstances or there are any additional factors that are having an impact on your child's school attendance and you would like further support, please do not hesitate to get in touch.

Thank you for your co-operation.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of Thorndown Primary School

**Appendix 4**

Example of a Letter 2

Date

Dear [parent/carer's name],

**Parent Contract Meeting Invitation**

I am writing to you following our previous discussion regarding [insert pupil's name] school attendance. There continues to be a cause for concern and since the letter dated [insert letter date] there has been no improvement. Our records show that your child's attendance is currently at [add percent].

I have enclosed a copy of the attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the attendance is authorised or unauthorised. As your child's attendance is below the 95% expected of a primary school pupil, please ensure that we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details in order for the absence to be authorised.

School attendance is an important issue and has a significant impact on children's progress in school, mental health and life outcomes. I am therefore requesting that you come into school to discuss the current situation.

I have arranged for this meeting to take place in school on [add date] at [add time.] Please could you contact the office to confirm you are able to attend this meeting. If you are unable to attend, please contact the office to make an alternative arrangement.

Regular school attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers. If your child's attendance remains at the current level, a referral will be made to the local authority who may need to start legal proceedings.

I must remind you that as parent(s) it is your legal responsibility, as stated under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that your child attends the school at which he/she is registered, regularly and punctually. Failure to do so may result in a Penalty Notice being issued against you and/or legal proceedings being considered

We look forward to your support in resolving this matter and that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of Thorndown Primary School

**Appendix 5**

Example of Letter 3

Date

Dear [parent/carer's name],

**Attendance Target and Actions**

I am writing to you following our previous discussion regarding [insert pupil's name] school attendance. There continues to be a cause for concern and since the letter dated [insert letter date] there has been no improvement. Our records show that your child's attendance is currently at [add percent].

I have enclosed a copy of the attendance record which shows an analysis of attendance, punctuality and whether the attendance is authorised or unauthorised. As your child's attendance is below the 95% expected of a primary school pupil, please ensure that we have relevant doctor's notes and appointment details in order for the absence to be authorised.

School attendance is an important issue and has a significant impact on children's progress in school, mental health and life outcomes. I am therefore requesting that you come into school to discuss the current situation.

Thank you for attending the meeting on [add date] at [add time.] At the meeting we agreed on the following actions and support address the barriers to your child's attendance. [include minutes from the phone call including any barriers or challenges to attendance and what the agreed actions are.]

Regular school attendance is the responsibility of parents/carers. If your child's attendance remains at the current level, a referral will be made to the local authority who may need to start legal proceedings. We look forward to your support in resolving this matter and that you will work with us to improve your child's attendance.

Yours sincerely

On behalf of Thorndown Primary School