



Thameside Primary School: Attendance Policy

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Policy reviewed by:	Sophie Greenaway
Key Changes:	<p>Additional information added to page 7 about what must happen if a child is late to school i.e. the parent/carer must sign them in.</p> <p>Page 9 updated to include recent LA instruction to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for unauthorised leave of absence during term time of 15 sessions or more (this equates to 7.5 days).</p> <p>The rest of this policy remains fit for purpose.</p>



Rights Respecting Schools

Thameside Primary School is a Rights Respecting School. School policies will respect the UN Convention on the rights of the child. The attendance policy links to:

Article 3: All organisations concerned with children should work towards what is best for each child

Article 28: Children have a right to a primary education.

Introduction

- The school has a strong commitment to working in partnership with parents to provide the best possible education for the children.
- The staff appreciate the support and co-operation of the majority of the parents in relation to attendance and punctuality – however, there are a number of pupils who have poor attendance records. Whilst we understand children will have some instances of authorised absence a significant few have persistent unauthorised absence.

As a school we take attendance and punctuality very seriously. Pupils need to attend regularly and on time if they are to take advantage of the opportunities for learning offered by the school curriculum.

Teachers cannot teach children who are not in school – and lost days mean lost learning. Governors, staff, parents and pupils should work together to ensure that the children make the best possible progress during their time in school. There is a clear and strong link between regular attendance and standards of attainment.

Days off school add up to lost learning

There are 175 non-school days every year.

That is 175 days to spend on family time, visits, holidays, shopping, appointments & household jobs

190 Days for your child's education each year	10 days absence = 10 days missed education 180 days of education	19 days absence = 19 days missed education 171 days of education	29 days absence = 29 days missed education 161 days of education	38 days absence = 38 days missed education 152 days of education	47 days absence = 47 days missed education 143 days of education
100%	95%	90%	85%	80%	75%
Excellent Best chance of success. Gets your child off to a flying start.	Initial concern. Missed learning opportunities.	Worrying Less chance of success. Makes it harder to reach their potential	Not fair on your child Less chance of success Makes it harder to make progress Possible friendship issues Educational outcomes and life chances are affected		



1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our 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 parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

3. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis – this is reported to the governing body in the headteacher report. 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 Emotional Wellbeing, Behaviour & Welfare Officer

The EWBW officer:

- Supports the headteacher in monitoring attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers and other external professionals to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Supports families to ensure that children have good attendance at school, which is essential if they are to make good progress in their learning and maintain positive friendships with their peers.
- Is based in the The Family Hub, located in the room at the back of the school library.

For any enquiries about The Family Hub and to find out more about the support on offer, parents/carers can email: familyhub@thameside.reading.sch.uk

3.4 Educational Welfare Service (EWS)

The EWBW officer and the Attendance Support Worker (ASW) meet termly with the office lead to look at the registers and will agree action. This may be

1. A letter from the ASW (Attendance Support Worker).
2. A home visit from the EWBW and/or ASW.
3. An invitation to an Attendance Panel.

In some cases, the Education Welfare Service may agree that the school should start legal proceedings for non-attendance.

3.5 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.

3.6 School admin staff

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



4. Recording attendance

4.1 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 1 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.

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am (8.50am for EYFS) on each school day.

The register will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.25am and any child arriving after this time will be recorded as having unauthorised absence.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.15am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

Parents/carers should contact the school office on 01189 375551 or admin@thameside.reading.sch.uk to report their child(ren)'s absence.

We will mark absence due to illness as 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 the pupil's parent/carer 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 parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

For information on preventing the spread of diseases and for recommended periods for children to be kept away from school please see:

[“Guidance on infection control in schools and other childcare settings”](#)

The school will continue to follow the most up-to-date guidance on Covid [isolation periods](#).

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.

Parents/carers should contact the school office on 01189 375551 or admin@thameside.reading.sch.uk to let us know about medical appointments and a green absence request form may be allocated, depending on the length of the appointment.

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:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

If a pupil arrives late it is very disruptive for the other children, the teacher and can be distressing for the child him or herself. Children should be ready to enter school at 8.45am (8.50am in EYFS) and be ready for the register by 8.55am.

If a child arrives at school late, the parent/carer must sign their child into school on arrival and give a reason for the lateness. If a child arrives late for school and they are a Year 5 or 6 child who travels to school alone, they will be asked for the reason for their lateness and parents/carers informed. Having a documented reason for lateness means that the school can help to address any barriers to coming to school on time and put in support for families to ensure children are receiving their full education entitlement.

In the first instance, class teachers will speak to parents/carers about punctuality issues and, if there is no improvement, the EWBW will contact the family with oversight from the head teacher. This may then lead to the school requesting Education Welfare Service support if, despite support, no progress is seen.



4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by a phone call home by the admin staff
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance is reported annually to parents/carers in the written end-of-year report.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- A major family event such as the wedding or funeral of a close relative
- Serious or terminal illness of a close relative
- Significant family trauma has occurred and it is believed that a break is in the child's best interests.

We may also consider:

- The leave would be of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child e.g. music exams, visits to prospective schools

In making a decision, the headteacher will weigh the above criteria against the child's record and educational progress to minimise the risk of any negative impact. The headteacher will take into account:

- Previous attendance
- Attainment and progress
- Ability to catch up on any work missed
- Any impending tests, assessments or significant school events
- The frequency of any other requests for leave.

These circumstances are not viewed to be 'exceptional':

- Holidays being cheaper during term-time
- Birthdays
- Shopping trips



- When a child is ill either side of a school holiday without a letter from a doctor
- Parental illness (unless the parent is hospitalised suddenly, for example)

The school will always consider 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** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- Religious observance – where one 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.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

If persistent absence is identified as a concern, the EWBW officer will:

1. Send an Attendance Matters letter home
2. Invite the family in for a meeting, which may include the headteacher too
3. Arrange a home visit
4. Send a letter from the school and the ASW with an invitation to an Attendance Panel meeting
5. Legal proceedings/sanctions are initiated by the school, in conjunction with the Education Welfare Service, for non-attendance.

5.3 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.

The local authority has instructed all Reading schools to issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) for unauthorised leave of absence during term time of 15 sessions or more (this equates to 7.5 days).

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.

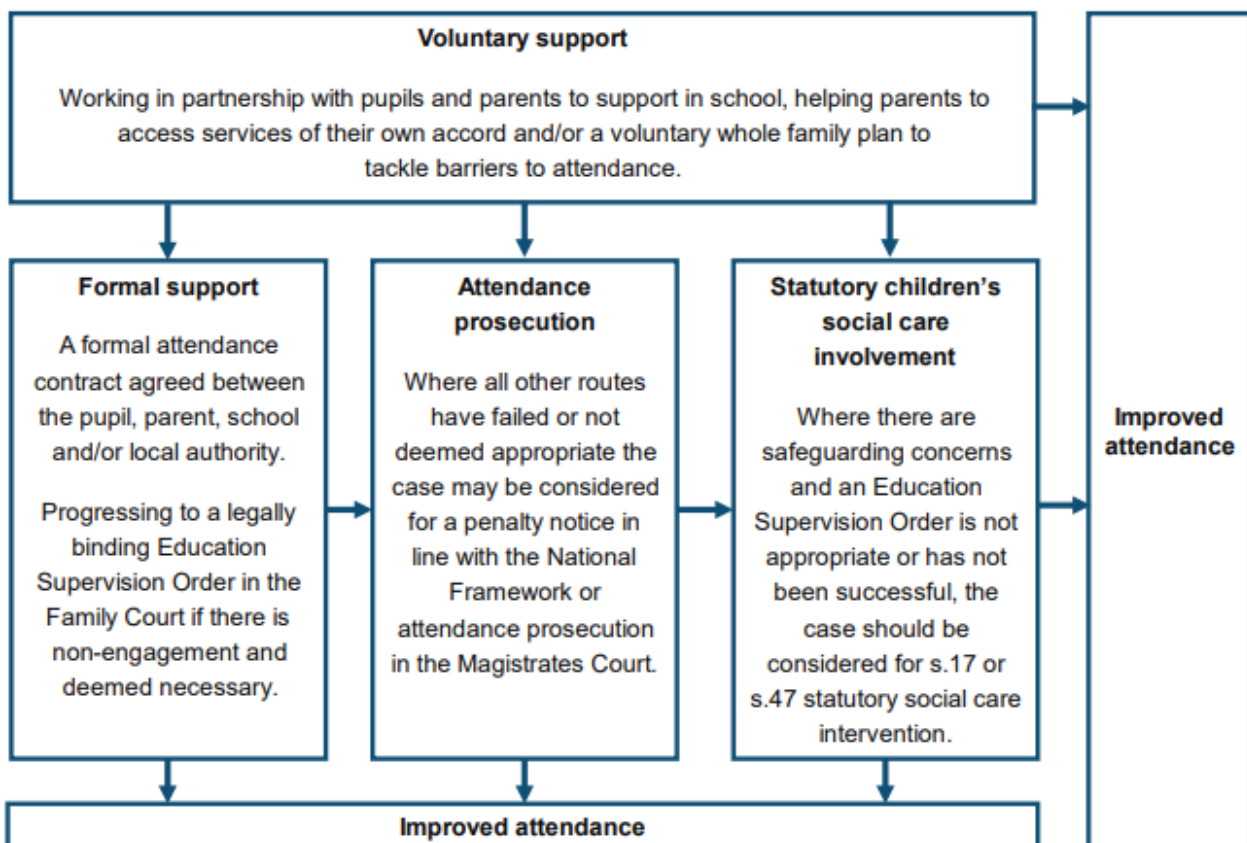
The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:



- 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.

Providing support first before attendance legal intervention



6. Strategies for promoting attendance

To promote good attendance, Thameside Primary School:

- Works with families to break down barriers which may be leading to poor punctuality or attendance.
- Delivers clear messages about expectations, routines and consequences to new pupils and families through including this policy in our school welcome pack and through our admission/transition events
- Uses physical presence to reinforce routines and expectations on arrival and departure with our Senior Leadership Team positioned on all of our gates
- Regularly communicates expectations for attendance and punctuality with staff, pupils and parents
- Highlights great attendance in end of year reports
- Engages with the external professionals supporting our families to promote attendance and report non-attendance



- Monitors whole school data regularly to identify the attendance of particular groups and the impact of interventions made by the EWBW
- Develops good support for children with medical conditions (including the use of individual healthcare plans), mental health problems and special educational needs (SEND)
- Ensures that parents fully understand the demands and responsibilities of elective home education
- Hosts termly Attendance Celebration Days where the whole school is rewarded if termly targets are met
- Establishes, implements and monitor robust arrangements to identify, report and support children missing in education (CME).

Children missing in education

The school will be mindful of the welfare and safeguarding of children at all times and will liaise with other agencies, including social care, if there are any concerns that arise in line with the following documents:

[Children Missing Education Statutory Guidance September 2016](#)

[Keeping Children Safe In Education \(most recent publication\)](#)

Parents are asked to support both their children and their school by ensuring the children attend regularly and on time in order that we have zero unauthorised absence and a high attendance rate.

The Governors and staff appreciate the support and co-operation of all parents in this matter.

7. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 2 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer and will follow their advice.

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.

Thameside Primary School collects and stores attendance data for internal purposes to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support



8. Monitoring arrangements

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

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- > Child protection and safeguarding policy
- > Behaviour policy

S Greenaway, July 2023



Appendix 1: 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