

# Thornton Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### Aims

- Being at school every day is important to a child's education. They benefit from well-planned sequences of lessons designed to ensure that they make the best possible progress. If they are frequently absent this learning is disrupted and makes it difficult to keep up.
- Everyone that comes to Thornton is expected to aim for 97% attendance. We understand that everyone gets sick from time to time but minor coughs, colds or aches and pains should not stop a child from coming to school.
- To achieve this aim, we will work with parents and children, offering support in school and through support services where necessary. Where attendance is a concern for individual children/parents, they will also be set individual targets.

### Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

- Every member of staff in school is responsible for ensuring good attendance and punctuality of all children.
- The Inclusion Team specifically work to improve children's attendance; this includes the Assistant Head responsible for Inclusion, the Pastoral Manager, the Learning Mentor and the School Nurse.
- Parents have a legal duty to send their children to school each day that school is open, and school has a legal duty to monitor and report the attendance of all children. In accordance with LA policy, leave of absence in term time is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Each case is reviewed by the Headteacher on its merits, and records of leave are kept for individual children. It is school policy that no holiday or extended holiday absence is authorised under any circumstances.
- We believe that a partnership approach to attendance is vital: senior management, governors and the attendance team will work with parents and pupils, and support services where necessary, to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

### Procedures

- The bell goes for the start of the school day at 8.45 a.m. The last bell goes at 8.55 a.m. Class teachers register children in class at 9 a.m. If a child arrives after 9.05 a.m. they are marked as late. Children who arrive late or after the register has closed, report to the main reception, where sign in using our electronic system. Children who are late after 9:30 a.m. will receive a 'U' mark, meaning they are considered absent for that session.
- Where children are absent for registration, and we have not been notified of an absence, parents are telephoned by a designated member of our office staff. All reasons for absence are recorded onto our SIMs system.
- Whole school pupil attendance data is reviewed, analysed and acted upon on a weekly basis.
- When a child has attendance below 90% they have 'Persistent Absence' which is a sign of parental neglect. Children with such low attendance are at risk of academic underachievement.
- Our school has clear procedures and triggers for action based upon data analysis and contextual information for attendance. In the first instance a general attendance letter expressing concern is sent when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. We request that written medical evidence be provided for any further periods of illness. When attendance fails to improve to above 90%, a second letter is sent inviting parents to a

meeting with the Pastoral Manager. They will discuss the reasons for absence and offer support and guidance in order to improve their child's attendance. All pupils with attendance below 90% will be placed immediately on a Persistent Absence Action Plan. The Persistent Absence Action Plan is reviewed in a weekly meeting by Michelle Mcall-Hughes (Assistant Headteacher) and Shanti Devi (Pastoral Manager).

- If a pupil's attendance does not improve a range of options may be triggered e.g.
  - Further meeting requested by Phase Leader linking pupil progress and attendance
  - Home visit made by Pastoral Manager/Senior Leadership Team (SLT)
  - Pupils/parents placed on Spotlight programme resulting in legal action
  - Referral to Family Support or initiation of an Early Help procedure
  - Referral made to Children's Services.
- We follow the LA policy of allowing authorised absence for Religious observance. The Guideline states "A school must treat absences as authorised when it is due to Religious Observance." Any other days taken for travelling or continuing celebrations will not be authorised by the school.

### Strategies for Improving Attendance

- In order to maintain the high importance of attendance, throughout the year there are:
  - Weekly reflections on attendance during assemblies led by SLT
  - Attendance figures published in the school newsletter, on the school website and displayed in the main reception area
  - Visits from Senior Leaders to classes with high attendance to praise them
- At Thornton we follow a positive behaviour approach and therefore employ a range of strategies to improve and maintain attendance:
  - **'Persistent Absence' personalised rewards:** Children identified as having persistent absence are supported through an individual programme to set personal attendance targets and receive rewards when successful.
  - **Magic 20:** Children with attendance previously below 90% will be rewarded with a prize and certificate if they attend school for 20 consecutive days.
  - **Attendance Golden Ticket:** Children with 100% attendance for a half term are rewarded with a Golden Ticket granting them access to a cinema experience afternoon in school plus a certificate.
  - **Termly 100% Attendance Award:** Children with 100% termly attendance will be rewarded with a prize and certificate in a special award assembly.
  - **'The Top 20':** the top 20% of children with the best attendance over the academic year will have a special trip or visit to say well done plus a special certificate.
  - **Whole Class 100% Half Termly Award:** Classes whose attendance is 100% for a half term will be rewarded with a treat such as a visit from an entertainer, ice cream treat or an afternoon with a bouncy castle.
- Attendance figures for individual children are discussed with parents during termly parents' evenings and are published on the end of year reports.

### Safeguarding

When a child is not at school there can be safeguarding risk. The Safeguarding of pupils is one of Thornton Primary school's highest priorities. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for general safeguarding issues and procedures.

The attendance of all children considered vulnerable or potentially vulnerable will be checked on a daily basis by a nominated member of staff (Pastoral Manager/Office Administrator) to safeguard the children and to maintain an

up to date analysis. If no contact can be made by the school, the DSL will assess if further action is required, this may include making a home visit or contacting external agencies.

When attendance falls below 90%, or there is a pattern of continual absence on certain days, the case will be logged on the CPOMS safeguarding system.

All applications for holiday/extended leave will be assessed in terms of safeguarding risks. This particularly includes the risk of FGM (female genital mutilation) or being exposed to radicalisation or extremism (see The Prevent Strategy). Any applications considered high risk would be referred to the DSL.

In certain circumstances there may be a need to contact other agencies without first contacting parents. This decision will be made in partnership between Education Services and Social Care Services and is a legal obligation, not a personal decision.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

- Absence is monitored daily via phone calls for all absences where the school has not been notified.
- Reports are in place to track weekly figures for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence these are stored in a folder located in the main school office.
- Weekly overviews are monitored for each class, and individuals within those classes.
- Termly analysis is made of data for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence. This includes analysing for different groups including gender, SEN and free school meals. This analysis will influence future action taken.
- This policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier if considered necessary.