



**Thornton-in-Craven
Community Primary School**
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Attendance Policy

This policy covers:

- Rationale
- Rights, Roles And Responsibilities Of: Pupils, Parents And Carers, School Staff And Governors
- Registration Procedures
- Authorised And Unauthorised Absence
- Leave Of Absence In Term Time
- Use Of Penalty Notices
- Signing Out Medical Appointments
- School attendance, safeguarding and children missing
- Monitoring, Analysis and Action Planning
- School System for dealing with concerns about Lateness and Absence
- School System for reintegrating pupils who have had long term absence
- Communication of Attendance Policy and Procedure

Rationale

This document sets out the rights, roles and responsibilities for Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors; and the systems and procedures in place to identify how the school will deliver its aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. It will be reviewed annually.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

Thornton in Craven Community Primary School believes that it is important that Parents and Carers, Pupils, School Staff and Governors all work in partnership to encourage good attendance for all pupils. The following is a summary of the rights, roles and responsibilities for individual groups of stakeholders.

Parents and Carers

- Ensure the child(ren) in their care attend school regularly and punctually.
- If the child(ren) is/are absent to inform the school office or class teacher on the first day of absence and provide a reason for the absence.
- If the child(ren) is/are absent for more than 1 day, to inform the school office of the continued absence and update as to the reason for the absence regularly.
- To avoid leave of absence in term time wherever possible. Where this is not thought possible, to write to the school as soon as possible prior to the first requested day of absence to request authorisation.
- To advise the school, by contacting the school office, immediately if they become aware of problems with attendance.

Pupils

- Attend school regularly and punctually.

School Staff

The Headteacher (Suzie Brown) has overall responsibility for ensuring that there are appropriate and efficient systems in place to promote and support the school attendance policy, that these are adhered to and training is given where appropriate. The Inclusion Manager (Suzie Brown) is responsible for liaison with individual families and the Local Authority Attendance Service to ensure appropriate support is given where attendance concerns are identified and for liaison with the Local Authority and DFE to ensure that the school conforms to all statutory requirements in respect of attendance.

However, Thornton in Craven Community Primary School believes that all staff have responsibilities and a role to play in promoting good attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming atmosphere for children.
- Providing a safe learning environment.
- Ensuring an appropriate and responsive curriculum.
- Providing a sympathetic response to any pupil's concerns.
- Being aware of factors that can contribute to non-attendance.
- Being aware of the role all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all pupils.
- Adherence to the systems and procedures in place within school to promote good attendance and highlighting any concerns to the Headteacher.
- Participation in training regarding school systems and procedures.
- Willingness to communicate with children and parents about attendance.

Some staff will have specific individual responsibilities to support the attendance policy and these are outlined in the Procedures section of this framework.

Governors

- Adopt an Attendance Policy and review it annually.
- Agree statutory targets for attendance at Thornton in Craven Community Primary School.
- Ensure that they receive reports from the Headteacher regarding school attendance.
- Where the school is not meeting its attendance target, or when the Governors believe there is cause for concern, to require a review of the systems and procedures in place to promote good attendance.
- To promote the strong link between attendance and educational attainment to parents and pupils where appropriate and ensure that the school attendance policy and procedures are communicated effectively.

Registration Procedures

Morning Registration is between 08.45am and 9.00am

Afternoon Registration is at 1.00pm

Each class teacher or HLTA in charge (PPA time) is responsible for marking children present in the register at morning and afternoon registration. The registers must be completed by 9.00am and 1.05pm (KS1) 1.35pm (KS2) to avoid discrepancies between classes. The class teacher must ensure that the marked register, plus any notes received regarding absence are logged on the Scholar Pack system and sent

electronically to the office before 9.15am.

Late Registration

Pupils requiring admittance to the school after registration has closed must inform the school administrator in the school office.

If the school office does not hear from parents, reporting a child's absence by 9:30am then the school will contact them to establish the reason for the absence.

The school office is responsible for maintaining a **signing in/out book**. This contains details of: name of child, class, time signed in/out and reason for leaving the site.

A late mark in the register is recorded after the registration period has closed at 9:00am. This code is classed as a present mark but displays that the pupil arrived late for school. Any pupil who arrives after 9:30 but before the end of the morning session will be given a "late after registers closed" mark (U) in the register. This code is classed as an unauthorised absence but displays that the pupil was physically present in school for part of the session. The fact that the U code is classed as an unauthorised absence means that when it is used pupils are likely to be missing significant amounts of schooling; putting their educational progress at risk. For this reason, the use of this code will be considered as serious as any other unauthorised absence and will attract the interest of external agencies, including consideration of the use of legal sanctions, in just the same way.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

In every instance it is the Headteacher who determines whether an absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised. This decision is made based on information provided by parents/carers. However, because the register is a legal document, the Headteacher has responsibility to ensure that it is completed accurately and in accordance with current guidance. For this reason it is not sufficient for an absence to be recorded as authorised based entirely on information provided by parents/carers.

The school office is responsible for maintaining records of reason and length of absence.

- Parents/Carers are requested to contact the school office before 9.00am on the first day of absence advising of the reason for the absence and expected return date; if known.
- Where a written note is received this should also be kept in the school office as evidence.
- Where the absence is for several days, the Parent/Carer is responsible for informing the school office of the continued absence and updating them as to the reason for the absence on a regular basis.

If a child is absent and no contact has been made by the family, the school office will contact the family on the first day of absence. If contact cannot be made the Headteacher should be informed and, in the case of prolonged or repeated absence without justification being given, the Headteacher will determine whether the Local Authority Attendance Team should be advised. The Headteacher is responsible for determining what is classed as authorised and what is classed as unauthorised absence.

The following are examples of the criteria for leave of absence, which may be considered as 'exceptional'.

- Service personnel returning from active deployment
- Where inflexibility of the parents' leave or working arrangement is part of the organisational or company policy. This would need to be evidenced by the production or confirmation from the

organisation/company

- Where leave is recommended as part of a parents' or child's rehabilitation from medical or emotional problems. Evidence must be provided.
- When a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis
- This is not an exhaustive list and the Headteacher will consider the individual circumstances of each case when making a decision on this matter. Leave is only acceptable against exceptional circumstances and should not be granted on the basis of attendance record, academic performance or the 'experience' offered by being out of school. Where the HeadTeacher feels that there may be exceptional circumstances which does not fit the criteria, they may refer to

the local authority for advice. The decision of the Headteacher is, however, final.

Please note that the ability to access a reduced cost of a holiday does not constitute an exceptional circumstance

Parent/carers will be notified in writing of the decision for a holiday in term time within 10 school days of the date of the application.

Thornton in Craven Community Primary School will not authorise a request for a holiday in term time.

The school office is responsible for inputting the appropriate absence code on the electronic register. Where they are not certain whether an absence is authorised or not they should seek advice from the Headteacher.

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents and the child. If your child is reluctant to attend school it is better to speak to the Headteacher or class teacher to resolve the issue, rather than trying to cover up their absence, or give in to pressure to let them stay at home.

Holidays in Term Time

Beneath is advice to parents regarding holidays in term time. Please note that "Exceptional special circumstances" will be: **rare, significant, unavoidable and short.**

Regulations and Guidance

*The law says that parents/carers do not have the right to take their child out of school for a holiday during term time. On application made by the parent/carer with whom the pupil normally resides, schools have a **discretionary power** to grant up to 10 days absence in a school year for a family holiday if they believe that the circumstances warrant it. No parent/carer can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right.*

Schools may agree up to 10 days "holiday leave" in special circumstances such as:

- a. for service personnel and other employees who are prevented from taking holidays outside term-time if the holiday will have a minimal disruption to the pupil's education.***
- b. when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis.***
- c. a one-off never to be repeated occasion that can only take place at the time requested.***

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons should not be authorised:

- *availability of cheap holidays;*
- *availability of the desired accommodation.*

- *poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and*
- *overlap with beginning or end of term.*

*The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006 clearly make the point that the Headteacher has the final decision as to whether to authorise a holiday or not. Any request for leave should be made at least **six weeks** in advance. Holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a school does not agree an absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised.*

Use of Penalty Notices

The school takes unauthorised absence seriously and, particularly in the case of repeated unauthorised absences, will undertake further liaison with the family, pupil and the Education Social Welfare Officer as appropriate. Furthermore, Thornton in Craven Community Primary School may request that the Local Authority issue Penalty Notices in respect of unauthorised absence. This includes leave of absence (holidays) which are taken without a prior request being made; and those taken after a prior request has been made and parents have been informed that the period of absence would be classed as unauthorised but the holiday has been taken regardless of this advice. Thornton in Craven Community Primary School may also request that the Local Authority issue a Penalty Notice for days taken in excess of the agreed period of leave without good reason.

The amount payable for a fixed penalty notice is £120 per parent per child reducing to £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days. If the penalty notice is not paid in full by 28 days then the authority will commence legal proceedings for the original offence of 'failing to ensure your child attends school regularly' under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Addressing Attendance Concerns

Our school expects higher than national attendance and sets a whole school target of 98%. It is important for children to establish good attendance habits early on in their primary school career. It is the responsibility of the Headteacher and the Governors to support good attendance and to identify and address attendance concerns promptly. In primary school we rely upon parents to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually and therefore where there are concerns regarding attendance parents are always informed of our concerns.

Initially concerns about attendance are raised with parents via letters which are sent home. There will be opportunities for the parent/carer to discuss reasons for absence and support to be given by the school with the aim to improve attendance. Where a child's attendance record does not improve over a period of time then the school has a responsibility to make a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer.

The Education Welfare Officers (EWO's) will issue penalty notices to parents where there has been a referral from the school as part of the school's processes to address poor attendance patterns.

In addition, education-related parenting orders are available by direct application by a school or LA to the Magistrates' Court as an ancillary order following a successful prosecution by the LA for irregular attendance or breach of a school attendance order.

The Education Welfare Officer visits to check and monitor attendance. They carry out regular register checks to identify children with low attendance (usually below 90%). They work with the school to improve attendance and may issue fixed penalty fines if attendance support meetings held by the school do not improve attendance.

School attendance, Safeguarding and Children Missing Education

A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect. School staff should follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future. The school will liaise with the Local Authority about any children who are absent from school for more than 10 days without reason. The Local Authority provides further information and guidance on children missing from education, emphasising the link between poor school attendance and safeguarding concerns. The attendance lead and the Designated Safeguarding Lead will work closely to manage risks, ensure appropriate multi-agency engagement where necessary, so that children and young people receive the appropriate level of early help or statutory intervention to ensure they attend school regularly.

Monitoring, Analysis and Action Planning

The Governors have determined that the Headteacher has overall responsibility for the monitoring, analysis and action planning of school attendance. The Headteacher is also responsible for ensuring that data is returned promptly to the Local Authority and DFE within deadlines. However, it is expected that the day to day implementation of this will largely rest with the class teachers who take the register and highlight causes for concern and the school office who are responsible for maintaining the school records on attendance and for highlighting causes for concern.

The Headteacher is required to review this Attendance Policy annually and to report on attendance matters to the Governors at Full Governing Body meetings. The Governors will also review the Attendance Policy at least annually to ensure that it continues to meet the school circumstances.

Referral to the Education Social Welfare Officer

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring consistent referral of regular or unjustified absence. The criteria for referral are outlined in the systems below.

In addition to the above, the headteacher is required to discuss general attendance matters with the Education Social Welfare Officer at least twice a year. The purpose of these discussions is to:

- Monitor progress towards targets, highlighting any concerns and identifying any action required.
- To receive guidance on latest best practice.
- To receive information about local and national trends and benchmarking.
- To discuss whether current attendance policy and procedures are effective.

School System for dealing with concerns about Lateness and Absence

The school office is responsible for advising the headteacher of pupils who are persistently late or absent as issues arise at half-termly meetings.

The class teacher is also responsible for raising concerns about lateness or absence of class members to the headteacher as issues arise.

In addition to this the Administrator (as advised by the head) will use electronic systems (SIMS) to monitor the attendance of individual pupils at least once every half term.

Once concerns have been raised:

- The Headteacher will discuss the matter informally with the family (including the pupil).
- If lateness/absence persists, and school procedures fail to provoke the required level of improvement, the headteacher will contact the Education Social Welfare Officer who will arrange meetings with the family and Headteacher as appropriate and determine whether any interventions are required. These interventions will include consideration of the use of legal sanctions.

School System for reintegrating pupils who have had long term absence

When a pupil has been absent from school for an extended period, Headteacher, SENCO (if appropriate), class teacher and other support services will liaise with the family to ensure that a smooth reintegration is achieved.

Communication of Attendance Policy and Procedure

It is important that the School's Policy on Attendance is communicated to all stakeholders and that parents, pupils and staff know the procedures and systems that are in place to implement it.

The Governors have determined that:

- Reference to the School Attendance Policy re Holidays during term time and absence is to be made clear when the school calendar of dates is sent out each year and the policy can be easily accessible via the school's website.
- Staff responsibilities will be contained in the Staff Handbook
- The Headteacher will ensure that staff receive training regarding their responsibilities re the Attendance Policy and Procedures.
- The Headteacher will provide a summary of attendance and causes for concern as an agenda item on each Headteacher's report to the Full Governing Body.