



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

Attendance Policy

September 2024 to September 2028

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
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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 at 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 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.

If children need to leave school early, the school office is responsible for keeping 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. An 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 headteacher (or someone authorised by them), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, it will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Notices to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged

with

- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

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 school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics.

The school will benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement and share this with the governing board.

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils, groups or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

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.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
 - Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 5.2, above)

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.
- 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.

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
Attending a place other than the school		
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	Pupil is attending a place other than a school at which they are registered, for educational provision arranged by the local authority
V	Attending an educational visit or trip	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised or approved by the school
P	Participating in a sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
W	Attending work experience	Pupil is on an approved work experience placement
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is attending a place for an approved educational activity that is not a sporting activity or work experience
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
Absent – leave of absence		
C1	Participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	Pupil is undertaking employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours, approved by the school
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
J1	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
S	Study leave	Pupil has been granted leave of absence to study for a public examination
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

C2	Part-time timetable	Pupil is not in school due to having a part-time timetable
C	Exceptional circumstances	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
Absent – other authorised reasons		
T	Parent travelling for occupational purposes	Pupil is a 'mobile child' who is travelling with their parent(s) who are travelling for occupational purposes
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointment)	Pupil is unable to attend due to illness (either related to physical or mental health)
E	Suspended or excluded	Pupil has been suspended or excluded from school and no alternative provision has been made
Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause		
Q	Lack of access arrangements	Pupil is unable to attend school because the local authority has failed to make access arrangements to enable attendance at school
Y1	Transport not available	Pupil is unable to attend because school is not within walking distance of their home and the transport normally provided is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Pupil is unable to attend because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Part of school premises closed	Pupil is unable to attend because they cannot practicably be accommodated in the part of the premises that remains open
Y4	Whole school site unexpectedly closed	Every pupil absent as the school is closed unexpectedly (e.g. due to adverse weather)
Y5	Criminal justice detention	<p>Pupil is unable to attend as they are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In police detention • Remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing, or • Detained under a sentence of detention

Y6	Public health guidance or law	Pupil's travel to or attendance at the school would be prohibited under public health guidance or law
Y7	Any other unavoidable cause	To be used where an unavoidable cause is not covered by the other codes
Absent – unauthorised absence		
G	Holiday not granted by the school	Pupil is absent for the purpose of a holiday, not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Reason for absence has not been established before the register closes
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	No reason for absence has been established, or the school isn't satisfied that the reason given would be recorded using one of the codes for authorised absence
U	Arrived in school after registration closed	Pupil has arrived late, after the register has closed but before the end of session
Administrative codes		
Z	Prospective pupil not on admission register	Pupil has not joined school yet but has been registered
#	Planned whole-school closure	Whole-school closures that are known and planned in advance, including school holidays