



Thythorn Field
Primary School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Adopted By School:
Review Date:
Governor Signature:

March 2024
March 2025

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'T. J. Ryan'.

THYTHORN FIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE AND PUNCTUALITY POLICY

1. Statement of Intent

At Thythorn Field Primary School, we are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all its pupils and recognise this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High attainment and good progress depends on good attendance.

The whole school community (pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school Governors) have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of this policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

2. School's roles and responsibilities

All staff (teaching and support) at Thythorn Field Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and work to provide an environment in which all pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. The staff also has a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

The **Head teacher** will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. As the attendance leader, the Head teacher will ensure that up-to date attendance data and issues are shared with staff, raise the profile of high attendance to parents through newsletters and work with external partnerships to monitor patterns of poor attendance levels causing concern. The Head Teacher will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and support is put in place to deal with any difficulties. The Head Teacher will help keep the Governing body fully aware of attendance data and targets, and how attendance levels are tracked throughout the year.

- **Registration**

The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers are responsible for completing the attendance registers. The admin staff complete the registers using the prescribed codes. The register will be called promptly at 8:45 am and 1pm by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child.

- **Categorising absence**

A mark will be made in respect of each child following the close of the registers. Any child who is not present will be marked unauthorised absence unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable. The decision about whether the absence should be authorised or unauthorised rests with the Head Teacher.

Thythorn Field Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-attendance is acceptable and can render children extremely vulnerable to harm. If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Thythorn Field Primary School will challenge parents and try to encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence **will always rest with the school**.

If no explanation about an absence is received by the school **within 2 weeks**, the absence will remain unauthorised;

Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

- a) Where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example-
 - Where the child is engaged in off-site approved educational activities.
 - A pupil is taking part in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority.
 - A pupil is involved in a special occasion-in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.
- b) Where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend.
- c) Where the child has a medical appointment, although parents are encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards, or send him/her to school beforehand;
- d) Where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence, which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;
- e) The absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong;
- f) In other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a limited period.

Absences will be unauthorised except in the circumstances as described above. Some examples of reasons for **not** authorising absence would be:

- a) No explanation has been given by the parent;
- b) The school is not satisfied with the explanation;
- c) The pupil and parents have been shopping during school hours;
- d) The pupil is absent for **Unexceptional** reasons, eg a birthday;
- e) The pupil is absent from school on a family holiday;

- f) The pupil /parent has been stopped during a truancy sweep and is unable to give a satisfactory reason for their absence.

- **Term Time Holidays**

Following updated Government guidelines in September 2013, parents have no entitlement to take their child on a holiday during term time. All requests for leave during term time must be made in advance and will be considered on an individual basis and will only be authorised if the Headteacher considers there are exceptional circumstances. Additional evidence may be requested by the school to support these requests.

Requests should be made in writing to the Attendance Officer in a letter or e-mail.

Any leave taken without prior agreement of the school or in excess of that agreed will be coded as unauthorised and the school will notify Leicestershire County Council who may issue a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices are issued **per parent per child** at £160 each (**discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days**) if no payment is received, the Local Authority will refer the case directly to the Magistrates Court for the purposes of a criminal prosecution.

Extended leave of absence

In considering absence for extended trips overseas Thythorn Field School will consider the following;

- a) A visit to family overseas has a very different significance from a normal “holiday”
- b) Such visits can play an important part in terms of a child’s identity and self esteem as they grow up.
- c) The reasons for wishing to make a visit is more difficult, where huge distances and costs are involved.
- d) Parents are using the school holiday period for at least part of their trip.
- e) Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the pupil undertakes some school-set work during this period.

3. Parents and Carers responsibilities

The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents/carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of the child), who will be supported and encouraged by Thythorn Field Primary School.

Thythorn Field Primary School expects parents & carers will:

- Ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- Support their children’s attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- Not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

Parents will also be expected to:

- Notify Thythorn Field Primary School on the first day of absence using the schools' absence telephone line (0116 2889040 option 1), text the school using the texting service or report to the school office.
- Ensure their children arrive at school on time, properly dressed and with the right equipment for the right day;
- Contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Thythorn Field Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

4. Pupils responsibilities

All pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are having difficulties that may prevent them from attending school regularly, they should speak to their class teacher or Head Teacher.

Pupils should attend all their lessons on time, ready to learn. If they have been absent from school, they should give any letters from home to their class teacher.

5. Systems & strategies for managing and improving attendance

- **First Day calling and texting.** Thythorn Field Primary School has in place a system of first day calling and texting. This means that parents will receive a text, and then telephoned on the first day of absence if no explanation has been given to establish a reason for the absence. This helps identify at an early stage, pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parent's knowledge. Subsequent follow up calls will be made if initial contact is unsuccessful. If school staff cannot contact the family by 10.30am on the day of absence, a home visit will be carried out by the Head Teacher (or Deputy Head in their absence).
- **Monitoring Attendance and punctuality.** Every two weeks, print outs are produced showing all pupils' attendance levels. These are compared with previous attendance levels to monitor individual attendance. Those children with attendance levels of 90% or less automatically have print outs of their attendance for analysis by the Head Teacher and Attendance Officer to establish patterns of absence and to identify serious absenteeism.
- **Meetings with parents/carers.** Where there is an emerging pattern to a pupil's absence with or without explanation, the school will firstly talk with the parent/carer and then invite parents to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences if the attendance has not improved. If needed, plans should be put in place with the parents and pupil to resolve any difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit- usually no more than 6 weeks. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason.
- **Letters being sent to parents/carers:** If unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time or sooner if the pupil is failing to attend school at all, the matter will be followed up with letters and visits to the child's home address in cases of concern.
- **Lateness and punctuality:** Pupils are expected to arrive at school on time everyday. It is very disruptive to their own education, and that of others in their classes, if they are late. Whilst the school appreciates the odd genuine reason for lateness, a pupil who is persistently late will be issued with a

punctuality letter. If this does not improve lateness, parents/carers will be asked to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher.

6. Monitoring & Review

The Head Teacher will lead on the implication of this policy and act as the link person with the Local Authority.

Information will be reported to the Governing Body at each full governing meeting via the Head Teacher report, including greater detail about:

- Numbers of children with attendance less than 96%
- Overall attendance figures for the whole school
- Attendance targets and whether we are on track to meet them
- Ongoing initiatives to improve attendance and punctuality at Thythorn School

This school will review the policy in three years time and assess its implementation and effectiveness or sooner should it be deemed necessary.