



THOMSON HOUSE SCHOOL

Thomson House School

Absence From School policy

Agreed by: Governors' Education Committee

Date: April 2017

Review Cycle: Three years

Review Date: April 2020

All the Thomson House School policies should be read in conjunction with the Equality Policy.

If you require a copy of this document in large print, Braille or audio format, please contact the School Business Manager



Thomson House School - Absence From School Policy

Introduction

Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure that a child over the age of 5 attends a school regularly and punctually. Thomson House School places great importance on attendance and punctuality. High levels of attendance have a positive correlation with high achievement – children who have the highest attendance levels, have the highest attainment levels. At Thomson House we want every child to fulfil their potential.

Aims and Objectives of this policy

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the process of notifying school with regards to absence – whether due to sickness; medical appointments; other appointments; special leave; or holidays.

This policy also provides guidance on the submission of evidence to support a request for absence under exceptional circumstances; and guidance on what might be defined as exceptional circumstances.

Finally, this policy clarifies the consequences of taking absence in term time – for the child, the school and the parents – and also with regards to the Local Authority and the issuing of Fixed Penalty Fines.

Notifying School of Absence due to Sickness

If a child is ill then parents are required to notify school by email (admin@thomsonhouseschool.org) or by phone (0203 608 2080) **each morning** of the absence, before 9.00am.

After 9.30am, the school will, if a child has not been marked present in the attendance register, phone parents to follow up on a child's whereabouts, assuming there has been no communication from parents with an explanation of the absence.

Notifying School of Absence due to Medical Appointments

Ideally we ask that parents make medical appointments outside of school hours. However, we are aware that this is not always possible and therefore we ask that prior to the event parents notify school of any medical appointments within school hours – via an email to the office (admin@thomsonhouseschool.org) or phone (0203 608 2080). When a parent collects a child

from school early or delivers a child into school late the parent needs to go via the office so that attendance registers can be updated accurately.

Notifying School of Absence for Any Other Reason

Any other request for absence in term time needs to be put in writing to the Head Teacher at least a week **before** the absence has occurred. The Head Teacher will give each request due consideration based on the criteria which allow for special leave and inform parents as to whether the absence will be authorised or unauthorised.

Requests for Special Leave due to Exceptional Circumstances

Any request to take a child out of school, must be put in writing to the Head Teacher. Children should NOT be taken out of school for holidays during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. There is no entitlement to any leave of absence for a holiday during term time. Thomson House School is in session for 36 weeks per year, so there are ample opportunities to take children on holiday during the remaining 16 weeks.

If the request is for special leave due to exceptional circumstances, then evidence in support of the request must be supplied at this point. Evidence may include, for example, medical reports, wedding/funeral invitations or reports from other professionals. The evidence will be taken into consideration by the Head Teacher when assessing the request against the criteria to decide whether the leave will be authorised or not.

Exceptional Circumstances

Exceptional circumstances MUST be stated clearly in the request to the Headteacher. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Weddings or funerals of close family members.
- Consideration will be given to religious festivals – up to 3 days in any one academic year.
- Where a holiday is recommended by qualified professionals as part of the rehabilitation of a parent's or a child's medical issue.

The Consequences of Absence from School

The consequences of absence from school in term time must be considered carefully. The main consequences are:

- The negative impact on the child's learning through missed lessons.
- The missed learning/performing/sports opportunities by the child which are shared by the whole cohort.
- The negative impact on the child's attendance data record, which stays with them throughout their school life – and becomes particularly important when applying to other schools, including secondary schools.
- The poor message it is giving children with regards to the importance of school and education.
- The adverse effect on the child's attainment levels – direct correlation.
- The negative impact on the school's attendance data which is monitored by Ofsted.

- Parents may be required to attend meetings with the Education Welfare Officer who will closely monitor the child's attendance data through a series of meetings between the EWO, the parents and the school.
- The Local Authority may issue a fixed penalty fine to parents of up to £2,500.
- Parents can be taken to court by the Local Authority.

Monitoring and review

This policy is monitored by the Education Committee of the governing body, and will be reviewed every three years.

Date of Policy: April 2017

Date to be reviewed: April 2020