



THOMSON HOUSE SCHOOL

Thomson House School

Attendance Policy

Agreed by: **Governors' Education Committee**

Date: **April 2020**

Review Cycle: **Three years**

Review Date: **April 2023**

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 - Attendance Policy

Introduction

Parents have a **legal duty** to ensure that a child over the age of 5 attends 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.

The school monitors attendance and punctuality closely as evidence shows that poor attendance and punctuality data could be an indicator of safeguarding issues. At Thomson House School the safety of the children is paramount.

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. There is also an absence form on the THS app which can be completed and submitted for each day of the absence. Parents must give a clear reason for the absence, each day of the absence period.

After 9.30am, the school will, if a child has been marked absent in the attendance register (and one of the above means of contact with the school has not been made), phone parents to follow up on a child's whereabouts. In the case of Year 6 children who have been granted permission to walk to school, the school will call parents by 8.45am latest.

The school has a strict 48-hour policy if a child's absence is due to sickness and/or diarrhea. Please see the parent handbook for further guidance on this.

Notifying the 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.

Request for leave to celebrate religious observances

Requests for absence in term time to celebrate religious festivals need to be put in writing to the Head Teacher at least a week before the event. Families can take up to three days of absence in term time, in any school year, for religious observances. This absence will be authorised by the Head Teacher.

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.
- Achieving for Children may charge a fixed penalty fine to parents of up to £2,500.
- Parents can be taken to court by Achieving for Children.

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 2020

Date to be reviewed: April 2023