



Thomson House School - Attendance Policy

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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.

The Head Teacher is the senior leader responsible for overseeing attendance strategy and compliance. The Attendance Officer manages day-to-day attendance matters. All staff have a role in promoting good attendance and punctuality. The school works closely with local authority attendance teams, social care, health services, and other partners to support pupils facing barriers to attendance.

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance on the process of notifying the 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.

This policy meets the requirements of the latest [DfE statutory guidance "Working Together to Improve Attendance" \(2023\)](#), which replaces previous guidance from September 2022 and will be statutory from September 2023 onwards, in addition the policy refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- o [Part 6 of The Education Act 1996](#)
- o [Part 3 of The Education Act 2002](#)
- o [Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- o [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)

This policy is published on the school website and is shared with parents and pupils at the start of each academic year and when updated, in line with DfE guidance.

The school is committed to promoting equality and inclusion in attendance management, in compliance with the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At Thomson House School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, values, ethos, and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To support us securing regular attendance for all pupils we will:

- Provide regular attendance information to parents via newsletters.
- Celebrate excellent attendance through displays and awards.
- Report attendance figures to parents termly.
- Contact parents if attendance falls below the school target of 96%.
- Use attendance data to identify and support pupils or cohorts with lower attendance.
- Work collaboratively with local authority attendance teams, social care, health services, and community partners to remove barriers to attendance.

Attendance Recording

Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning and afternoon session, using the DfE-approved codes. Registers are legal documents and are retained for a minimum of three years. Any amendments to registers are recorded with the original entry, reason for change, date, and author of the amendment.

Managing Absence

**Sickness:**

Families must notify the school each day of absence due to illness before 9:00 am via [email](#), phone, or via the Arbor app, providing clear details. Failure to provide a clear reason may result in unauthorised absence. A 48-hour exclusion period applies after sickness or diarrhoea. The school may request medical evidence for prolonged or frequent absences. Follow-up calls are made by 9:30 am (8:45 am for Year 6 walkers) if no notification is received.

Medical Appointments:

Families are encouraged to arrange appointments outside school hours. If unavoidable, prior notification must be given, and pupils should be out of school for the minimum time necessary. Families must sign pupils in/out via the school office to ensure accurate registers.

Religious Observance:

Up to three days per academic year may be authorised for religious festivals upon written request to the Head Teacher.

Exceptional Circumstances:

Requests for leave due to exceptional circumstances (e.g., weddings, funerals, medically recommended rehabilitation holidays) must be submitted in writing with supporting evidence to the Head Teacher. Decisions are made on a case-by-case basis.

Other Absences:

Requests for absence for other reasons must be made in writing to the Head Teacher at least one week in advance. There is no entitlement to term-time holiday leave. The school operates for 37 weeks per year, providing ample holiday opportunities.

Understanding Barriers to Attendance

Whilst any child may occasionally have time off school because they are too unwell to attend, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any barriers preventing regular attendance are best resolved between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school, then we will work with that family to understand the root problem and provide any necessary support. We can use outside agencies to help with this, such as the School Nurse, Mental Health Support Team (MHST), or the relevant Local Authority team/s. Where outside agencies are supporting the family, you may be invited to attend a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to consider what is working well and what needs to improve. In addition to the above coordinated multidisciplinary intervention, THS can offer a range of levels of individualised support including home visits, organisational assistance, EWO involvement, community support, Breakfast Club offer, mentoring and mental health support where necessary. An early help plan will be agreed and subsequently reviewed in partnership with families and agencies.

Some pupils face greater barriers to attendance than their peers. These can include pupils who suffer from long-term medical conditions or who have special educational needs and disabilities, or other vulnerabilities. High expectations of attendance remain however; we will work with families and pupils to support improved attendance whilst being mindful of the additional barriers faced. We



can discuss reasonable adjustments and additional support from external partners where appropriate.

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 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.

Legal sanctions

The school and local authority may issue Fixed Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence, including unauthorised holidays. Each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. Failure to pay may result in prosecution.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

Read and approved by Local Academy Committee: March 2026

Review: March 2027



Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register closes
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil at supervised off-site activity approved by school
D	Dual registered	Pupil registered at another setting
J	Interview	Pupil has interview with employer or educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil participating in approved sporting activity
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil on approved educational visit
W	Work experience	Pupil on work experience placement
C	Authorised leave of absence	Leave granted due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil excluded without alternative provision
H	Authorised holiday	Holiday authorised due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School notified of illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil at medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil taking part in religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil on study leave during exams
T	Gypsy, Roma, Traveller absence	Traveller pupil travelling as agreed
G	Unauthorised holiday	Holiday not authorised by school
N	Reason not provided	Absence reason unknown
O	Unauthorised absence	School not satisfied with reason for absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived after register closed
X	Not required to be in school	Non-compulsory school age pupil
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site closed, emergency, custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Pupil not yet joined school
#	Planned school closure	Half-term, bank holiday, INSET day