



Thurlaston CE (Aided) Primary School
Teaching and Living the Christian Way of Life
Building Our Lives on Jesus

Attendance Policy

Approved

Date January 2025

Review January 2028

Attendance Policy

Regular attendance at school is crucial in ensuring that pupils fulfil their potential and as such school strongly encourages regular attendance and good punctuality. School presents children with 100% certificates each term and each year.

Attendance

Legislation does not permit for absences from school to be granted except in exceptional circumstances; for illness and medical appointments and for attendance at other educational establishments. To assist parents in booking holidays the school publishes its holiday pattern each summer for the coming year. Term dates are regularly printed in the weekly newsletters.

Children should usually be in school unless they are ill. If a child has diarrhoea or vomiting they should be absent from school until they have had a full 24 hours clear of any instance. Other illness may require different lengths of time off school. School holds details in the office giving the expected times off school for each illness. (This can be found online at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/infectious-diseases-schools-and-other-childcare-settings/how-long-should-you-keep-your-child-off-school-checklist-poster-text-version>) Please ring the school before start of school on the first day of absence and then every other day until return to school.

If a child has a medical appointment, please inform the school in writing in advance of the appointment. If it is an urgent appointment then the school may be informed by telephone.

If it is known a child is going to be absent, an Absence Request Form should be completed with as much detail as possible so that a decision about whether the circumstance is exceptional can be made. If it is agreed the circumstance is exceptional a letter will be sent granting authorised absence. If it is refused a standard letter will be sent declining the absence and informing parents of the consequences including the potential for a fixed penalty fine.

Children with a number of unauthorised absences (consecutive or spread throughout the year) may be referred to the LA who may consider issuing a fixed penalty fine.

Punctuality

Children who arrive late at school disrupt not only their own learning but also the learning of others.

Children are expected to arrive at school on time and ready to learn. The school day starts at 8:45am with registers being taken at 8:55am. Children should be in their class and ready to work at registration time. Children who arrive after 8:55am need to enter school by the school office. A record of the time of arrival is kept at the office and is monitored.

Children who arrive late are marked in the registers as late. A child who arrives after the registers have closed is classed as arriving Late after Registers Close which is counted as an unauthorised absence for that session.

End of day

The school day ends at 3:25pm and parents should arrive on time to collect their child. If a child is not collected by 3:35pm the child will be taken to the office and the parent will be telephoned to ask them to collect their child immediately. If a parent is going to arrive late for an unforeseen

circumstance the office should be contacted by phone so the child can be adequately supervised until their collection can happen.

School Closures and Extreme Weather

It is extremely rare for the school to be closed during term time and the decision is not taken lightly. **School will only be closed for the safety and well-being of both pupils and staff.** Should the school need to be closed for extreme weather or in emergency circumstances the school will inform parents through contacting Classdojo and on the School Website. Please check both for announcements should the weather seem extreme. Please ensure you refresh the webpage regularly.

If school is open to pupils but your child is unable to attend because you believe it is unsafe for you to travel please email the school to inform the office of the child's absence and it will be recorded appropriately.

Notification of absences

Please ensure the school is informed of absences before start of school on the day of absence. All absences should be confirmed in writing on return to school if not requested in advance in writing.

If a child is absent for more than one day please contact the school every other day to update the school. Longer term absences should be discussed with the school.

School is not obliged to send work home for the child during absences. However, we would encourage children to read and practise times tables and spellings if off.

Non-notification of Absence

If school does not receive notification of a child absence before 9:30am the school office will ring parents in the order on the contact sheet to ascertain why the child is absent. This will be recorded in the Late Book (and highlighted in orange). If no contact can be made the Designated Safeguarding Lead will be informed or in their absence one of the deputies to decide if this is a potential safeguarding issue and take appropriate action from all the information available.

Sanctions

Our school will make use of the full range of potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Penalty notices

The headteacher, 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

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).

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.

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

Strategies for promoting attendance

At Thurlaston CE (aided) Primary School children's attendance by issuing Certificates for 100% attendance- termly and yearly and may celebrate when there has been a marked improvement from one term to the next which will result in a letter home to families celebrating this.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

Where a pupil is absent due to complex barriers to attendance, the school will hold a meeting with the pupil at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents to understand what barriers to being in school there are and agreeing actions and/or interventions to address these. These may include but are not limited to, providing a 'meet and greet' at the school gates, pairing the pupil with a buddy in class, ensuring pupils know they can speak to any member of staff with whom they have confidence in (and that the staff member will consult a trained mental health team member should they need further assistance). This may also include referrals being made to outside services and organisations that can provide support.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or SEND

Where a pupil has an education health and care (EHC) plan and their attendance falls, or the school becomes aware of barriers to attendance that related to the pupil's needs, the school will work together with the pupil and their parents to find effective interventions to support the child attending school. These could include but are not limited to a 'meet and greet' at the school gates, attending drawing and talking sessions, having a play focussed session, having group social skills lessons, offering 1:1 and/or group 'catch-up' sessions on core content missed (reading, writing, maths, science) as it is recognised a barrier to returning may be that the pupil feels overwhelmed by the content they have missed. Where no improvement is made the school can inform the local authority.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

Where a pupil is returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence, the school will meet with the pupil and their parents to agree on actions and intervention to put in place to support the pupil return to school. These actions/interventions could include but are not limited to, a planned phased return, a 'meet and greet' at the school gates, a buddy in the classroom, time with the well-being ambassadors, ensuring pupils know they can speak to any member of staff with whom they have confidence in (and that the staff member will consult a trained mental health team member should they need further assistance) and offering pupils 1:1 and/or group sessions with the ELSA team which provide an escape from the pressures of school life for the pupil and help them with any feelings of anxiousness they may be feeling.

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.

Analysing attendance

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 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

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils it has identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families
- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the local governing committee and school leaders (including special educational needs co-ordinators, designated safeguarding leads and pupil premium leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate