



## Thurlstone Primary School

### Attendance Policy

#### Introduction to the policy

The staff and Governors at Thurlstone Primary School are committed to promoting a culture of high expectation, achievement and excellence. Good attendance is crucial if students are to take advantage of the learning opportunities available to them and complete a successful journey through their time at our school and as they move on into higher education or the world of work.

**The overall aim for all children should be for 100% attendance, therefore any absence should only be for unavoidable and genuine reasons.**

#### Registration

Morning registration is at 9am each morning. Afternoon registration is at 1pm.

#### 'First Day of Absence' procedure

This procedure is crucial in our efforts to raise the attendance profile of our school. The 'First Day of Absence' system is operated to communicate quickly and effectively with parents and carers regarding the reasons for a child's absence at the beginning of the first day away from school. When a child is absent and no reason has been given, parents will be contacted by school by telephone.

Where leaders are concerned about a child's reason for absence or the welfare of a pupil /family the Headteacher, other designated leader(s) and/or Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) may visit the family home to complete a safe and well check. This visit will be logged on the school's welfare records in CPOMS (our current online system to monitor safeguarding concerns).

#### Procedures to be followed by staff

School staff monitor attendance and punctuality daily. When a child's attendance begins to present concern, without good medical reason/evidence, parents will be informed as outlined below:

**Step 1: Below 96% attendance after at least a full half term: contact from the school office will be made. This may be a message or a phone call.**

This is to inform parents of potential concerns and to ask for co-operation in trying to improve their child's attendance.

**Step 2: Below 90% after at least a full term: first letter home or below 95% and/or no improvement the first contact from school in step 1.**

At this point parents will be invited into school to discuss issues relating to their child's attendance. At this meeting:

- the headteacher and, where appropriate external support agencies, will offer any relevant support or guidance to the family and they may make referrals as required for further intervention
- A clear target will be set for improvement (and monitor in the following period).
- A copy of the school policy will be shared either electronically or in hard copy
- Parents may be reminded to provide medical evidence for any future absence from school.

## **Arriving late for school**

Letters may also be sent out for incidents of lateness. Our doors open from 8.50am and pupils are deemed to be late when arriving after 9am and their late mark is recorded at the main reception. Children arriving after 9am should be accompanied by a parent/carer to the main school reception so that a reason for absence/lateness can be given.

Please note that arrival after 9.30am without reason will be marked as an unauthorised absence for the whole of the morning session.

## **Holiday/absence requests- see Appendix A**

All requests for leave must be documented on a school request form (see Appendix A). Parents should share details about the request (including the specific dates) and give any special circumstances that explain the need to take your child out of school during term time. The Headteacher may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances' and on a case-by-case basis. School will respond to the request in writing and it is possible that a penalty notice may be issued.

## **Legal Action (Penalty Notices)**

The school and Governing Body do not wish to take legal action against parents/carers for unauthorised absences or incidents of persistent lateness. However, we may consider legal action as we aim to ensure that every child is in school every day so that they can meet their full potential. Recurring unauthorised absence may lead to a referral to the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO) and this can lead to legal interventions and a formal assessment. The unauthorised absence may also result in a Penalty Notice being issued through the local authority. This penalty will be £60 (per child, per full school week) if paid within 21 days; payment after this time, but within 28 days, is £120.

## **Approved Absence**

School leaders may authorise absence that will not affect attendance for visits to a potential new school settings, attending sporting/performance activities (like elite coaching or competition, or musical instrument examinations) or attend school visits or sporting competitions. This absence will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and it will only be approved if a child's attendance is otherwise exemplary. This absence cannot be taken at key times of the year like during formal assessments periods such as SATS, and nor can it be taken during key learning dates like school visits, for example. Absence that will affect a child's ability to achieve their potential in end of Key Stage assessments will not be granted.

## **The role of Governor Monitoring**

Attendance data and the overall effectiveness of school attendance procedures are provided to the Governing Body at their termly meetings to support the monitoring of this across school.

The governing body will;

- Elect a Safeguarding Governor who will work alongside office staff and Senior Leaders to ensure that attendance systems are effective.
- Ensure that the legal requirements for registration are complied with.
- Review the school Attendance Policy on a regular basis.
- Have input into school attendance targets.
- Receive reports and statistics regularly
- Support the need for good attendance.

## **Education Welfare Officers (EWO)**

The EWO is a Local Authority employee who monitors attendance remotely and is responsible for the general well-being of all school aged children across the borough. Where necessary and appropriate, the EWO will work alongside school staff to address pupil related issues that may be affecting their attendance at school. When a child is referred to Education Welfare, the officers will work within Local Authority guidelines to address the issues.