

Thornton Primary School

Attendance Policy

Aims

- Being at school every day is important to a child's education. They benefit from well-planned sequences of lessons designed to ensure that they make the best possible progress. If they are frequently absent this learning is disrupted and makes it difficult to keep up.
- Everyone that comes to Thornton is expected to aim for 97% attendance. We understand that everyone gets sick from time to time but minor coughs, colds or aches and pains should not stop a child from coming to school.
- To achieve this aim, we will work with parents and children, offering support in school and through support services where necessary. Where attendance is a concern for individual children/parents, they will also be set individual targets.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

- Every member of staff in school is responsible for ensuring good attendance punctuality of all children.
- The Attendance Officer and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) specifically work to improve children's attendance, including the Pastoral Manager and the School Nurse.
- Parents/carers have a legal duty to send their children to school each day that school is open, and school has a legal duty to monitor and report the attendance of all children. In accordance with LA policy, leave of absence in term time is only granted in exceptional circumstances. Each case is reviewed by the Headteacher on its merits, and records of leave are kept for individual children. It is school policy that no holiday or extended holiday absence is authorised under any circumstances.
- School believes a partnership approach to attendance is vital: SLT, governors and the attendance team will work with parents/carers and pupils, and support services where necessary, to achieve the best possible outcomes for pupils.

Procedures

(*See Interim Attendance Arrangements for Covid-19 Addendum at the end of this policy)

- The bell goes for the start of the school day * at 8.45 a.m. The last bell goes at 8.55 a.m. Class teachers register children in class at 9 a.m. If a child arrives after 9.05 a.m. they are marked as late. Children who arrive late or after the register has closed, report to the main reception, where they sign in using Inventory, our electronic system. Children who are late after 9:30 a.m. receive a 'U' mark, meaning they are considered absent for that session.
- Where children are absent for registration, and school has not been notified of an absence, parents/carers are telephoned by the Attendance Officer. All reasons for absence are recorded onto our SIMs system.
- Text messages are sent immediately to parents/carers that are unreachable when contacted by telephone in the first instance.
- Whole school pupil attendance data is reviewed, analysed and acted upon on a weekly basis.
- When a child has attendance below 90% they have 'Persistent Absence' which is a sign of parental neglect. Children with such low attendance are at risk of academic underachievement.

- The school has clear procedures and triggers for action based upon data analysis and contextual information for attendance:
 - Initially, the School Nurse, Pastoral Manager or Heads of Year will intervene to establish how the child can be supported in improving their attendance.
 - Next, a general attendance letter expressing concern is sent when a pupil's attendance falls below 90%. Where relevant, written medical evidence is requested to be shared with school for any further periods of illness.
 - If attendance fails to improve to above 90%, a second letter is sent inviting parents/carers to a meeting with SLT. They discuss the reasons for absence and offer support and guidance in order to improve the child's attendance.
 - All pupils with attendance below 90% are placed immediately on a Persistent Absence Action Plan. The Persistent Absence Action Plan is reviewed in a weekly meeting by SLT and the Inclusion Team.
 - If a pupil's attendance does not improve a range of options may be triggered e.g.
 - Further meeting requested by Heads of Year linking pupil progress and attendance.
 - Home visit made by SLT and/or Inclusion Team
 - Early Help put in place with the family to support
 - Pupils/parents placed on the Attendance Fast Track programme resulting in legal actions
 - Referral made to Children's Services.
- The LA policy is followed which supports allowing authorised absence for Religious observance. The Guideline states "A school must treat absences as authorised when it is due to Religious Observance." Any other days taken for travelling or continuing celebrations will not be authorised by the school.

Strategies for Improving Attendance

- In order to maintain the high importance of attendance, throughout the year there are:
 - Weekly reflections on attendance during assemblies.
 - Attendance figures published in the school newsletter.
 - Visits by SLT to classes with high attendance to praise and reward them.
- School follows a positive approach to attendance and employs a range of strategies to improve and maintain attendance.

CLASS ATTENDANCE AWARDS

- **Class Attendance Award (Weekly):** 100% or 97% and above attendance award - Weekly class certificate rewarded by SLT and promoted in the school newsletter
- **Best Class Attendance Award (Half Termly):** The class who has the highest attendance in the school for each half term will be rewarded with a £50 voucher. In line with the school's promotion of British Values, they will vote to decide how to spend it (e.g. on new class resources, a picnic or a VIP cinema experience)! This has a positive impact on raising whole school attendance.
- **Magic 20 Raising Class Attendance Award (Termly):** This initiative targets classes with the poorest attendance across the school. Identified classes are invited to participate in the initiative that challenges them to attend school for 20 consecutive days and are awarded with a certificate and a small prize upon successful completion. This has a positive impact on raising whole school attendance.
- **Most Improved Class Attendance Award (Termly):** The class with the most improved class attendance, once successfully completing the magic 20 class initiative, is also awarded a £50 voucher. Again, in line with the school's promotion of British Values, they will vote to decide how to spend it (e.g. on new class resources, a picnic or a VIP cinema experience)! This has a positive impact on raising whole school attendance.

INDIVIDUAL PUPIL ATTENDANCE AWARDS

- **Magic 20 Raising Attendance Award (Termly):** Children with attendance previously below 90% are invited to a special celebration assembly and awarded a prize, certificate and a trophy if they attend school for 20 consecutive days.
- **Magic 20 Raising Punctuality Award (Termly):** Children with poor punctuality are invited to a special celebration assembly and awarded a prize, certificate and a trophy if they attend school on time for 20 consecutive days.
- **Attendance Golden Ticket Initiative (Termly):** Children are awarded a Golden Ticket when they achieve the following Attendance targets:

Autumn Term Bronze Award – Children who achieve the school target of 97% are awarded a certificate and a treat (pantomime, magic show, VIP cinema experience or a disco).

Spring Term Silver Award – Children who achieve 98% and above attendance are awarded a certificate and a treat (pantomime, magic show, VIP cinema experience or a disco).

Summer Term Gold Award- Children who achieve 100% attendance for the whole academic year are attend a special attendance award celebration assembly, and also enjoy an attendance trip.

- Attendance figures for individual children are discussed with parents during termly parents' evenings and are published on the end of year reports. They are also used to support meetings with parents when there are individual concerns around attendance.

Safeguarding

When a child is not at school there can be a safeguarding risk. The Safeguarding of pupils is Thornton's highest priority. Please see the Safeguarding Policy for general safeguarding issues and procedures.

The attendance of all children considered vulnerable or potentially vulnerable will be checked on a daily basis by a nominated member of staff (Attendance Officer, and then SLT or Pastoral Manager) to safeguard the children and to maintain an up to date analysis. If no contact can be made by the school, the DSL will assess if further action is required, this may include making a home visit or contacting external agencies.

All attendance related concerns are logged on the school's safeguarding system CPOMS.

All applications for holiday/extended leave will be assessed in terms of safeguarding risks. This particularly includes the risk of FGM (female genital mutilation) or being exposed to radicalisation or extremism (see The Prevent Strategy). Any applications considered high risk would be referred to the DSL.

In certain circumstances, if it was felt that a child was at risk of harm, there may be a need to contact other agencies without first contacting parents, such as Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). This decision is a legal obligation, not a personal decision, to safeguard ALL children.

Children with health needs who cannot attend school

Please see the statutory guidance that the school follows for this group of pupils:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/269469/health_needs_guidance_-_revised_may_2013_final.pdf

Monitoring and Evaluation

- Absence is monitored daily via telephone calls for all absences where the school has not been notified.
- Reports are in place to track weekly figures for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence and paper copies of these are stored in a folder located in the main school office.
- Weekly overviews are monitored for each class, as well as individuals within those classes.
- Termly analysis is made of data for attendance, punctuality and persistent absence. This includes analysing for different groups including gender, DA and SEND. This analysis will influence future action taken.
- This policy will be reviewed every year, or earlier if considered necessary.



Interim Attendance Arrangements for Covid-19 Addendum

Background

This addendum has been produced in line with Department of Education (DfE) guidance Addendum: recording attendance in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) during the 2020 to 2021 academic year August 2020. It replaces temporary guidance documents on recording attendance during the COVID-19 outbreak.

This Addendum outlines:

- A. Attendance Expectations**
- B. Attendance Coding**
- C. Staggered start and end times to the school day**
- D. Circumstances for non-attendance related to COVID-19 during academic year 2020-21**
- E. Further Key Information**

The addendum should also be read in line with current DfE attendance guidance:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/907535/School_attendance_guidance_for_2020_to_2021_academic_year.pdf

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/addendum-recording-attendance-in-relation-to-coronavirus-covid-19-during-the-2020-to-2021-academic-year>

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities>

A. Attendance Expectations

From the beginning of the Academic Year 2020 pupil attendance will be mandatory and the usual rules on attendance will apply, including:

- parents' duty to ensure that their child of compulsory school age attends regularly at the school where the child is a registered pupil
- schools' responsibilities to record attendance and follow up absence
- the ability to issue sanctions, including fixed penalty notices, in line with local authorities' codes of conduct.

Penalty notices should only be considered when all other options to improve attendance have been exhausted.

B. Attendance Coding

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupils cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

A new category of non-attendance – ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ has been created and must only be used to record sessions that take place in the 2020 to 2021 academic year where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)³
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State’s expectation that no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not to attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Thornton Primary School will be using the attendance and absence codes in use before the outbreak in addition to the new category of ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ as detailed below:

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’ should be recorded using code X

C. Staggered start and end times to the school day

Thornton Primary School has introduced staggered start and end times to the school day for the Academic Year 2020-2021, this is to support social distancing and reduce mass gatherings on the school playground:

Start times	Year 3	9am	End times	Year 3	3.15pm
	Year 4	8.50am		Year 4	3.20pm
	Year 5	8.40am		Year 5	3.25pm
	Year 6	8.30am		Year 6	3.30pm

D. Circumstances for non-attendance related to COVID-19 during academic year 2020-21

Examples in which ‘not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)’.

Thornton Primary School will follow the procedures detailed below **when pupils who are required to self-isolate as they have symptoms or confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19):**

- Pupils who have symptoms should self-isolate and get a test.
- If a pupil tests negative and if they feel well and no longer have symptoms similar to coronavirus (COVID-19), they can stop self-isolating and return to school.
- If the pupil remains unwell following the test (such as with a different illness), then they should be recorded as code I – illness, as would usually be the case.
- Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result. Schools should not retrospectively change the attendance register due to a negative test result.
- If a pupil tests positive, they should continue to self-isolate for at least 10 days from the onset of their symptoms.

- They should only return to school if they do not have symptoms other than a cough or loss of sense of smell or taste (anosmia). This is because a cough or anosmia can last for several weeks once the infection has gone.
- Code X should be used for the period of self-isolation until the test. After the pupil tests positive they should be recorded as code I (illness) until they are able to return to school.

Thornton Primary School will follow the procedures detailed below **when someone in the pupil's household has symptoms:**

- The household should self-isolate and the member of their household should get a test.
- If the member of the household tests negative, the pupil can stop self-isolating and can return to school as long as they feel well enough to do so. Code X should only be used up until the time of the negative test result when the pupil can return to school.
- If the household member tests positive, the pupil should continue self-isolating for the full 14 days from when the member of their household first had symptoms. Code X should be used during this period.
- In all cases of self-isolation, Thornton Primary School will ask parents to inform them immediately about the outcome of a test. However, evidence of negative test results or other medical evidence will not be requested before admitting children or welcoming them back after a period of self-isolation.

To support decision making, reference should be made to all available, current, relevant government guidance.

Thornton Primary School will follow the procedures detailed below **when pupils may not have symptoms themselves but may be required to self-isolate if they are a close contact of someone with coronavirus (COVID-19):**

- The NHS test and trace guidance states that a person should self-isolate for 14 days if they have had recent close contact with a person who has tested positive for coronavirus (COVID-19).
- In the event of a confirmed coronavirus (COVID-19) case in the school community, the local health protection team will provide advice on who this applies to, advising them to self-isolate for 14 days since they were last in close contact with the person that has tested positive when they were infectious.
- Code X should be used for these pupils during this period.

To support decision making, reference should be made to all available, current, relevant government guidance.

Thornton Primary School will follow the procedures detailed below **when pupils who are required by legislation to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine:**

- Parents should plan their holidays within school breaks and avoid seeking permission to take their children out of school during term time.
- Families should also consider that their child may need to self-isolate following trips overseas that require a period of quarantine in-line with government guidance.
- If a pupil is required to be in quarantine on arrival in, or return to, the UK, code X should be used in the register.

To support decision making, reference should be made to all available, current, relevant government guidance.

Thornton Primary School will follow the procedures detailed below **for pupils who are clinically extremely vulnerable in a future local lockdown scenario only**

- Shielding advice for all adults and children paused on 1 August 2020. This means that even the small number of pupils who will remain on the shielded patient list can return to school, as can those who have family members who are shielding.
- If in future, rates of the disease rise in local areas, children still on the shielding list (or family members still on the shielding list) from that area, and that area only, may be contacted by the government and advised to stay at home and shield during the period where rates remain high.
- Families will receive a letter if they are required to shield again that parents will be able to share with Thornton Primary School.
- Non-attendance in accordance with guidance from PHE or the DHSC should be recorded as code X.
- Thornton Primary School will contact parents of pupils who are shielding when measures in the local area are lifted and shielding is paused again, to set out the expectation that they can return to school.
- Code X will not be used for sessions after the pupil has been advised to return to Thornton Primary School.

To support decision making, reference should be made to all available, current, relevant government guidance.

E. Further Key Information

Local lockdown

- If rates of the disease rise locally, Thornton Primary School may need to prevent some pupils from attending.
- Thornton Primary School will follow PHE or DHSC guidance on what measures are necessary in the event of local lockdown.
- Where attendance is to be limited to certain groups, 'not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)' - code X – will be used for pupils who are asked not to attend.

Remote Education

- If a pupil is not attending Thornton Primary School due to circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19), Thornton Primary School will offer them access to remote education (this may be online or via other means). Thornton Primary School will keep a record of, and monitor engagement with this activity, however this will not need to be tracked in the attendance register.

Data Collection

Collection of school attendance data as part of the school census will resume in January 2021, collecting data for the autumn term 2020. Subject to the necessary legislation being made, from January 2021, the census will collect attendance codes in addition to absence codes.

Further information will follow on what, if any, additional attendance data will be required during the 2020 to 2021 academic year to monitor the impact of coronavirus (COVID-19) and support the government's planning.