



# Partnership Learning

THAMES  
VIEW JUNIOR  
SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**ACADEMY:** THAMES VIEW JUNIOR SCHOOL

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This policy has been written in line with the latest Department for Education guidance  
*School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*

Nov 2016

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Objectives**

- To ensure that every child is safeguarded and their right to education is protected.
- To ensure the school attendance target is achieved, through rewards and incentives for good attendance and punctuality.
- To raise standards and ensure every child reaches their full educational potential, through a high level of school attendance and punctuality.
- To ensure all the stakeholders, governors, parents, children and staff receive regular communication, about the importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- To keep accurate, up-to-date records and have a robust and rigorous system for analysing attendance.
- To identify causes of low attendance/punctuality with individuals, classes and groups of children and address them.
- To work with external agencies, in order to address barriers to attendance and overcome them.

### **Commitment to Attendance**

The staff at Thames View Junior School is committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Trust, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Research clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment. We are committed to encouraging and supporting parents in ensuring their children achieve maximum possible attendance and that any problems that prevent this are identified and acted on promptly.

## **Parent Responsibility and The Law**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable-

[a] To his age, ability and aptitude and

[b] To any special needs he may have (either by regular attendance at school or otherwise).

For educational purposes the term parent is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day to day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act. Part V1 Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school

Under the provision of the Education Act 1996 (s434) and the Student Registration Regulations 1995 the school must keep an attendance register.

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of school]. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

## **Categorisation of Absence**

Any child who is on roll but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

### **1. Unauthorised absence**

This is for those children where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason. This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Looking after other children or birthdays
- Excessive illness without medical evidence.

Authorised absence is for those children who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid under the Education Act 1996.

### **Approved Educational Activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off site but with the approval of the school.

**Note:** Children recorded in this category are deemed to be present for attendance returns purposes.

This would include:

- Educational trips and visits
- Sporting activities
- Approved education off site
- Most types of dual registration

### **Registration & Lateness**

- The school day begins at 8.50am
- Registration / Start of lessons
- School gate closes at 9.00

Parents of children arriving after the gate closes should sign their child in via the main office giving an explanation for their child's lateness; children will then be escorted to their class by a member of staff. Any child who arrives within this period will be marked in the register as late.

### **Escalation Process**

If a child is absent for any reason, it is the responsibility of the parent to notify the school. We have an absence procedure which can be found in Appendix 1.

### **Ten Days Absence**

Any child who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days will be referred to schools Welfare/Inclusion Team.

### **Children missing out on Education**

Schools also have safeguarding duties under section 175 of the Education Act 2002 in respect of

their children, and as part of this should investigate any unexplained absences.

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area. A child going missing from education is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect.

At Thames View Junior School we follow the school's procedures for dealing with children that go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions, to help identify the risk of abuse and neglect, including sexual exploitation, and to help prevent the risks of their going missing in future.

We put in place appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. It is essential that all staff are alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.

The law requires all schools to have an admission register and an attendance register. All children are placed on both registers.

We inform their local authority of any child who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age;
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or, have been permanently excluded.

The local authority is notified when we delete a child from its register under the above circumstances. This is done as soon as the grounds for deletion are met, but no later than deleting

the child's name from the register. It is essential that we comply with this duty, so that local authorities can, as part of their duty to identify children of compulsory school age who are missing education, follow up with any child who might be in danger of not receiving an education and who might be at risk of abuse or neglect.

We inform the local authority of any child who fails to attend school regularly, or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 school days or more, at such intervals as are agreed between the school and the local authority.

### **Frequent Absence**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are discussed between the school, the parents and the child.

The school Education Welfare Officer meets with school staff regularly to discuss attendance concerns.

In cases where a child begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s by:

1. Phone call to parent and issues discussed with student within school.
2. Letter sent to parents stating concerns.
3. Meeting at school
4. Signposting & support for the parents/carers

If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to Welfare/Inclusion Team.

### **Persistent Absentees**

Children who are persistently absent (e.g. Attendance of 90% or lower) are referred and written proof of absence will be required by the school, for example an appointment card, prescription or doctors certificate.

### **Failure to ensure regular school attendance**

The school in consultation with the Governors/Trust may issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their Child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school. Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice.

### **Exceptional Leave of Absence**

There is no automatic entitlement in law to time off in school time to go on holiday. The school does **not** authorise any holiday time during the school term.

This policy reflects the DfE regulations which came into force in Sept 2013 (updated 2016) which stated: '**Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.**'

Where a parent wishes to request a leave of absence, a formal request must be made on the appropriate form, in writing, to the Head Teacher who will consider the application on behalf of the Governors. Parents are not entitled to leave of absence for their child/ren as a right and this will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, e.g. for compassionate reasons, and once the **Head Teacher has considered:**

- the child's record of attendance (not below **96%**); this is the school's attendance target.
- *if leave of Absence is granted it shall not exceed five school days* in any one year, as agreed by the school's governing body.
- the time of the leave, ensuring that it would not prevent the child from missing any important examinations/assessments/school events.

Leave of absence, for exceptional circumstances, **will not be granted if additional leave is taken as holiday either side of this time. Proof of flights or other documentation supporting the request must be produced if asked for.**

Any savings that you think you may make by taking a holiday in school time are offset by the cost to your child's education. The school will only authorise leave of absence in term time in exceptional circumstances.

If a holiday is taken without prior authorisation by the school, it will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and Education Welfare will be notified. Parents should not consider a request for absences during SATS week.

### **Penalty Notices**

The school/Trust in consultation with the Governors and the LA may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The penalty is £60 per child per parent if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 per child per parent if paid after 21 days but within 28 days of receipt of the notice. If the penalty

is not paid in full by the end of the 28-day period the Local Authority must prosecute the recipient for failing to ensure regular school attendance under section 444 Education Act 1996.

**Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued:**

A Penalty Notice may be issued to parents/carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are failing to engage with supportive measures to improve attendance proposed by the school.

**Promoting attendance**

Thames View Junior School encourages regular attendance in the following ways:

- By marking registers accurately and punctually during morning and afternoon registration. If children arrive at the school office after the morning bell, a late 'mark' will be recorded. If a child arrives late (after 9.20am) it will be recorded as late 'absence' and counted as an unauthorised absence, without a verbal or written explanation from the parent/ carer.
- Celebrating good attendance in newsletters.
- Weekly and termly rewards
- By monitoring children's, informing parents/carers, in writing, of irregular attendance, arranging meetings with them if necessary, and referring the family to Welfare Team if the irregular attendance continues.
- All students must be given a registration mark each day. There are two sessions that require a registration mark.

The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

<b>CODE</b>	<b>DESCRIPTION</b>	<b>MEANING</b>
/	Present (AM)	Present
\	Present (PM)	Present
<b>B</b>	Educated off site (NOT Dual registration)	Approved Education Activity
<b>C</b>	Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate)	Authorised absence
<b>D</b>	Dual registration (i.e. child attending other establishment)	Approved Education Activity
<b>E</b>	Excluded (no alternative provision made)	Authorised absence
<b>G</b>	Family holiday (NOT agreed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>I</b>	Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments)	Authorised absence
<b>J</b>	Interview	Approved Education Activity
<b>L</b>	Late (before registers closed)	Present
<b>M</b>	Medical/Dental appointments	Authorised absence
<b>N</b>	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description)	Unauthorised absence
<b>P</b>	Approved sporting activity	Approved Education Activity
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Authorised absence
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Authorised absence
<b>T</b>	Traveller absence	Authorised absence
<b>U</b>	Late (after registers closed)	Unauthorised absence
<b>V</b>	Educational visit or trip	Approved Education Activity
<b>W</b>	Work experience	Approved Education Activity
<b>X</b>	Untimetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age child	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Y</b>	Enforced closure	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>Z</b>	Child not yet on roll	Not counted in possible attendances
<b>#</b>	School closed to child	Not counted in possible attendances