

THRIFTWOOD



ATTENDANCE POLICY FOR PARENTS

September 2013

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Reviewed September 2013
Next review: September 2014

INTRODUCTION

Regular attendance at school is essential to promote the learning, progress and safeguarding of all pupils. Thriftwood expects all pupils to attend regularly, reflected in the home-school agreement; a target of 95% attendance is set for all pupils.

The school has, and will continue to take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy, working in collaboration with parents, carers and the Education Welfare Service.

AIMS

- To maximise attendance of all pupils, ensuring maximum learning opportunities.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated at the school.
- To monitor, communicate and support children whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve any difficulty.
- To analyse attendance data to inform future policy and practice.
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The following people have key responsibilities in the pursuit of high levels of attendance and punctuality:

Governors

- To monitor progress towards annual targets for attendance.
- To evaluate the effectiveness of the Attendance Policy.
- To communicate the importance of regular attendance to parents and pupils.

Principal

- To ensure that the school's aims for attendance are shared regularly with parents and carers, with an emphasis on learning and achievement.
- To provide Governors with information on attendance, including low attendees and action taken to address this.

Head of School, Head of College and Home School Liaison Manager

- To monitor individual pupil, group and whole school attendance and punctuality.
- To work in partnership with key agencies if attendance and/or punctuality it is an issue.
- To write to parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance.
- To arrange meetings with parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties.

Class Teacher

- To provide an accurate record of the attendance of each child in their class.
- To record the reasons for absence given to them.
- To organise work to be sent home for children in their class who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness.

Office Staff

- To prepare, manage and co-ordinate the use of the SIMS Attendance Manager System.
- To monitor and track attendance patterns for all children and prepare relevant attendance reports when necessary.
- To contact any parent who has not informed the school as to why their child is absent on the first day of absence.
- To ensure that a satisfactory reason for every absence has been established for each child at the end of each week.
- To make a judgement in conjunction with the Head of School/College/Home School Liaison Manager whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Education Welfare Officer

- To enforce the law regarding school attendance.
- To support the whole school response to attendance through regular meetings with the Assistant Head Teacher, monitoring and following up individual cases where there is a cause for concern.

ADMINISTRATION

The school uses SIMS information management system to record and monitor attendance, ensuring compliance with legal responsibilities. Staff are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register at the beginning of both the morning and afternoon sessions. Registers are returned to the School Office after the closure of the registration period.

Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of a pupil's attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to complaint from parents or carers and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

ABSENCE

- The School will phone parents/carers on a daily basis when the reason for absence is unknown.
- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence by 9.00am to provide the reason for the absence, including likely duration. Parents/carers should also provide a written explanation of absence on their child's return to school.
- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the Head of School/College/Home School Liaison Manager should be informed.

Medical or dental appointments

Absence from school due to a medical or dental appointment will be considered as an authorised absence.

Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments. Whenever possible, parents/carers are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Leave of absence during Term Time

Leave of absence during term time will only be granted under exceptional circumstances or for approved educational experiences. Any requests should be put in writing to the Principal on the school's Leave of Absence request form, available from the school office, or on the school's website. Due to a change in legislation, there is no longer any entitlement to leave for holidays and this will only be granted due to exceptional circumstances. The Principal's decision is final. If a leave of absence is requested, unauthorised and still taken, this will be recorded as unauthorised and reported to the Education Welfare Officer, which could result in the issue of a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The School may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to any parent/carer who fails to ensure the regular attendance of their child at school. This currently stands at £60 (for those who settle within 21 days) and £120 (for those who pay within 28 days).

Other absences

Other absences from school will be considered on an individual basis and a decision will be made by the Principal to authorise the absence.

REPORTING TO PARENTS AND CARERS

All absences, both authorised and unauthorised, and lateness will be reported to the parent/carer at the end of the academic year within their child's report. During the year, parents will receive a letter if there are concerns about their child's attendance.

REWARDS

- Children who achieve 100% attendance will be presented with certificates.
- Children who achieve 100% attendance for the school year will receive a special award at the whole school awards assembly.
- The highest attending class for each year will be rewarded in the whole-school awards assembly.

MONITORING AND EVALUATION

Attendance data will be analysed on a half-termly basis to establish patterns of irregular attendance. This will include pupils with: incomplete weeks; Monday and Friday absences; lateness; periods of extended absence. If concerns are raised by the analysis, parent discussions will occur, either through telephone calls to the parents/carers and/or formal letters stating the attendance and regular lateness of the child and that there is an issue. The School reserves the right to issue fixed term notices to parents.

The Principal will monitor the impact of the attendance policy and will report attendance rates to the Governing Body on a termly basis.