



Thurton Church of England Primary School

Attendance Policy 2015

Thurton Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome.

For children to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to various Education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the DCSF.

Each year the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Norfolk attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

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.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45 am. The registers will remain open for 15 minutes. When the class teacher calls the register at the very beginning of the morning and afternoon session a child who is present and answers their name will be marked as 'Present (/)'. This means that any child who arrives after the register has been taken in class but before 9.00 am will be marked in as 'Late (L)'. After 9.00 am any child who arrives without a relevant reason will be marked as 'Unauthorised (U)' as they are late after the register has closed. The same principle is applied to the afternoon registration. Please see the times below.

The afternoon registration will be at : 1.00 pm
 The registers will close at: 1.15pm

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be treated for statistical purposes, as present but will be coded as late before registers close.

If your child is persistently late, the Parent Support Advisor and/or the Attendance Team could become involved.

Minutes late per day during the school year	Equals day's worth of teaching lost in a year
5 minutes	3.4 days
10 minutes	3.9 days
15 minutes	10.3 days
20 minutes	13.8 days
30 minutes	20.7 days

First Day Absence

If a child is absent or even late, then the school must receive a letter or at least a telephone call to explain the reason for absence. We would expect to receive this notification as close as possible to the beginning of the school day, preferably by 9 am. The School Office would welcome messages left on our absence reporting line and will ensure the necessary arrangements are made to recognise the reason of absence in the register.

Once all the registers have been completed online, the School Office a member of the administrative staff will monitor pupil attendance. For any pupil who is absent without communication from home, the member of staff will telephone the contact telephone number for the child's parent (which is held on the school's database and has been provided by the parent) to ascertain the reason for absence. If no direct contact is made and the parent has an answer phone, a message is left for them to contact the school urgently the same day. In exceptional circumstances a member of staff will make a visit to the pupil's home to ascertain the reason for absence.

If the school cannot contact parents, the office may contact the police for a welfare call to the child's registered address.

When an explanation for the child's absence is obtained this information is transferred to the register. Ideally this takes place within the same school day but failing that, as soon as possible after this.

Third Day Absence

On a child's third day of absence if the school has been unable to make contact by telephone the School Office will send a letter to establish the reason for absence. The letter will advise the parents that if we do not hear from them within 5 days of the date of the letter, the school will make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Services, Attendance Improvement Officer.

Frequent Absence

It is the responsibility of the School Office in collaboration with the class teacher to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s. If this is unsuccessful the school will refer to the School Health Adviser if the problem appears to be a medical one. In other cases the school will seek advice from the school's Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO).

Absence notes

Notes received from parents will be kept in the pupil's personal file.

Promoting attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers, that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education.

The Home/School agreement can be used in this way.

We also send out an 'Attendance Matters' leaflet (appendix 1) (agreed by the Loddon Cluster of Schools to ensure consistency across the Cluster) at the beginning of an academic year. It is also available on the school website.

Posters in school provide a visual aid to make parents aware.

Absence in term time - including holidays

The Local Authority has introduced a system for legal intervention which could be in the form of a Fixed Penalty notice. The school has no option but to follow this system - the level where we need to automatically report to county is where:

- pupil who has attendance of 85% or less with at least 15% unauthorised absence over a 6 week period or
- where children have 10 consecutive sessions of unauthorised absence (5 days)

On every school report the percentage of total attendance is written and this can be obtained through the office as well. Any pupil in Thurton Church of England Primary school who meets either criteria, will be referred to the Local Authority for action to be considered. This means anyone taking holidays in term time.

It is really important to note that if a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued, it is a fine of **£60 per parent per child**, which must be paid in one payment within 21 days, if unpaid a further invoice of £60 per parent per child is issued, both individual invoices would then have to be paid. The per parent per child, also relates to parents who are divorced, so if there are four adults with **parental responsibility** then whoever takes the child/ren on holiday **all adults** have to pay the fine no matter who the children are on holiday with. That is a significant difference to the fine!

Failure to pay the total amount within the timescale can result in legal action being taken and a fine of up to £2,500 or 3 years in jail.

Informing Parents of Low Attendance

Your child's school report will include their termly attendance.

Attendance remains a key target for the school and the Government. Our target is 97.5% attendance, and as a guide we are coding 95% and above as green, 90-95% as amber, and below 90% as red. The government has raised the threshold for persistent absence to 85%, and this is the level where the Attendance Team could become involved and/or legal proceedings begin.

Approval/Review of Policy

Updated:	September 2015
Reviewed by Staff:	September 2015
Approved by Governors:	October 2015
Review Date:	October 2018

Signed

Dated

Chair of Governors

Appendix 1

Attendance Matters Leaflet

Appendix 2



Name of School: THURTON CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

**APPLICATION FOR PUPIL LEAVE OF ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL FOR
FAMILY HOLIDAY DURING TERM TIME**

Please note: taking your child out of school during term time could be detrimental to your child's educational progress

Full name of child(ren)

Address

Leave requested from _____ to _____

Total number of school days _____

Reason for application:

I/we have read the information on the reverse of this application and would like to formally request the leave of absence as shown.

Signature of parent(s)/carer(s)

Date: _____

The Headteacher will consider your request for leave of absence following government guidelines and the following points

1. The child's previous attendance history
2. The child's stage of education.
3. The time of year (SATS or exams).
4. Whether the parents are restricted in terms of leave from their employer.

Your request for leave of absence from school for a family holiday during term time has been considered and has been agreed/not agreed.

Signature of Headteacher _____

Please note: Retain the original signed and completed forms in school records and ensure a copy is returned to the parent/carer of the student to confirm authorisation.

Family Holidays & Extended Trips Abroad during Term Time

You are required under the Education Act (1996) to ensure your child attends school regularly. There is however, a discretionary power to allow leave of absence for up to 10 days in any academic year*, for the purpose of *annual family holidays* in exceptional circumstances during term time. This is not an entitlement and purely at the discretion of the schools head teacher. Schools should not authorise absences if they believe it is to the detriment of a student's education or if the absences are during school exam periods and SAT's.

Before completing this application we would advise that you consider very seriously how the absences will affect your child's education. National statistics show 10 days absence in any academic year does have a negative effect on attainment. Schools are not obliged to provide work for students taking leave of absence, however some schools may chose to do this.

The government advises that any excessive family holiday or any refusal of leave of absence must be recorded as unauthorised by the school on the student's records. As you may be aware an accumulation of unauthorised absences may result in legal proceedings against you either through a Fixed Penalty Notice or the Magistrates' Court.

Discuss with the school any request for holiday prior to making a booking. Your child's school may have a designated person for this. It is the parent/carers responsibility to ensure you receive confirmation from the school before the trip is taken. Do not assume permission is granted if you have not received written confirmation.

If the head teacher does not approve an application for a leave of absence an appeal can be made through the Governing Body. This cannot be made retrospectively.

Fixed Penalty Notices

With the implementation of the Anti Social Behaviour Act (2003) the Local Authority has statutory powers to use Penalty Notices to help tackle irregular school attendance and unauthorised absences. An unauthorised absence is any absence that the school has not given permission for or the parent/carer has been unable to provide a reason for the absence, which is acceptable to the school.

The school will discuss with the Local Authority any cases of unauthorised absence and whether the issuing of a Penalty Notice would be appropriate. A Penalty Notice is an alternative to a prosecution to the offence and can be issued when it is felt that parents/carers are failing in their legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly.

The penalty is in the form of a £50 fine per parent/carer per child payable within 28 days, this increases to £100 payable between 29-42 days. Failure to pay usually results in prosecution in the Magistrates' Court.

*(Academic year =school year from September to July)

Appendix 3

Date

Dear [Parents],

It is my duty as a headteacher to inform the government of our attendance figures. Part of this process involves me writing to parents when the attendance of their children is below 90%.

So far this academic year, *** has an attendance figure of [85%] which is well below the target set by the government. To put this into perspective, [85%] attendance is equivalent to missing [1 year 6 months] of education before your child reaches the age of 16.

Next part depending on pattern and percentage of absence:

[I understand that *** has had a very difficult term in which he/she has suffered prolonged illness. Thank you for keeping us informed about his/her progress.] ***'s attendance has been [exemplary] in past terms; I look forward to seeing an improvement in his/her attendance this term as he/she [returns to full health].

If you wish to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact me and I will do all I can to help.

OR...

I understand that children do become ill, however **** has a number of absences spread across the last term (please see attached printout). Should **** have a significant health problem then I am happy to arrange a referral to School Health to help **** overcome this. Furthermore, should there be any other support which the school can offer, please contact me and I will do all I can to help.

The school will continue to monitor the situation and I look forward to seeing an improvement in ****'s attendance in the coming weeks.

Yours sincerely

Headteacher
Cassandra Williams

