

Thorney Island Community Primary School

Attendance Policy

**Written in Conjunction With
Local Schools**

January 2022

Rationale

Every child has a right to education and parents are legally responsible for making sure that their child/children, once enrolled at a school, attend regularly and punctually. Regular attendance at school is the single most important factor in a child making appropriate progress and achieving success. Good regular and punctual attendance means doing well academically, developing better relationships with their peers and positive behaviour. It also sets up good habits for when young people enter into work and life. It is also in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (on which our Rights Respecting School work is based) all children have the right to an education: Article 28.

Principles

We recognise that children's learning is affected by their attendance and punctuality. As we aim to encourage everyone to aim high and try to achieve their full potential, the school provides a warm, welcoming and caring environment, within which everyone is valued and respected.

All school staff work with parents to help their children attend school punctually every day and to thereby meet the legal requirement that all children of compulsory school age attend school on a regular, full-time basis.

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school as either authorised or unauthorised; this is why information about absence is always required.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason (e.g. illness or educated off-site).

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable (e.g. absences that have not been properly explained) or children who arrive too late to receive a mark in the register.

The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Office (PEO).

The Governing Body agrees legally required targets for attendance each year.

Procedures

Attendance registers are taken electronically by the class teacher at the beginning of the morning and afternoon sessions, the school office then immediately checks them and contacts the parents/carer of any child who has an unexplained absence before the end of the morning session. All absences are treated as unauthorised unless or until the school agrees on a satisfactory explanation.

The school applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with individual absences:

- Illness and other legitimate reasons

If a child is too poorly for school, parents/carers are asked to inform the school on the first day of absence before 9.30am. In exceptional circumstances, further evidence of a child's illness may be requested, such as a doctor's note. Other reasons for absence must be discussed with the Headteacher. Absences will not be authorised for shopping, day trips, birthday treats etc. Leave may be granted in an emergency e.g. bereavement or for exceptional medical appointments which take place during school time.

- Register codes

Appropriate codes are entered by the class teacher and reviewed by the school office. The Headteacher confirms any disputed codes.

- Late arrival

Children who arrive late to school must report to the school office, and the time of arrival is recorded in the register. Arrival at the school after 9.20am (30 minutes after the official start of school) is recorded as an unauthorised absence, unless a reasonable explanation is given.

- Holiday absence

The school will **not** authorise holiday in term time for any year group in line with DfE guidance.

- Appointments

Parents have a responsibility for ensuring that non-urgent medical and dental appointments are outside of the school day whenever possible. In exceptional cases, where this is not possible, parents have a responsibility for ensuring that only part and not all of the school day is missed.

- Review of Attendance

At regular intervals throughout the year, whole school attendance is reviewed. If concerns about attendance or punctuality arise, the school will send a letter to the parents/carers to highlight the concern. If there is no improvement by the next review, parents/carers will be invited to attend a meeting and a case file may be started, comprising documented phone calls, letters, meetings, agreed actions and review dates.

The school applies the following monitoring procedures:

- Electronic records

Attendance of all pupils is recorded electronically using the West Sussex MIS (SIMS) system. This is reviewed regularly and used to identify patterns and concerns across the school.

- Pupil Entitlement Investigation (PEI)

The school works in partnership with the Pupil Entitlement Officer, and seeks their advice on issues and matters arising from pupil absence. The initial responsibility to monitor, investigate and improve individual poor attendance lies with the school, and records will be kept. A referral to the Pupil Entitlement Officer will be considered if the child's absence is unauthorised for 10 school days and attempts to contact the parents/carers has been unsuccessful or when a child has a minimum of 20 unauthorised absences within the past academic term. Referrals will be made via the Online Referral Form.

For attendance advice both parents and school should contact the Advice Line on 0330222 8200 or via email educationwelfare.duty@westsussex.gov.uk

- Fixed Penalty Notices

The school, in conjunction with the Local Authority, is able to issue Fixed Penalty Notices to parents/carers of pupils who have 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week consecutive period including unauthorised holiday in term time, late after the register closes and other unauthorised absences.

- Governing Body

The Governing Body agree targets for school attendance each year. Issues and concerns may be raised with the Curriculum Committee. The attendance policy is agreed by the Curriculum Committee and reviewed every three years or whenever significant changes occur.

- Children Missing Education (CME)

The school will liaise with CME when a parent withdraws a child to be home educated.