



# Thorpe Hesley Primary School – Attendance Policy



## 1. Introduction

1.1 Thorpe Hesley Primary School is committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our Pupils and recognises this can only be achieved by supporting and promoting excellent school attendance for all. This is based on the belief that only by attending school regularly and punctually will children be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. High standards of attainment and achievement depends on good attendance.

1.2 The whole school community – Pupils, parents and carers, teaching and support staff and school governors – have a responsibility for ensuring good school attendance and have important roles to play. The purpose of the policy is to clarify everyone's part in this.

## 2. School's roles and responsibilities

2.1 All staff (teaching and support) at Thorpe Hesley Primary School have a key role to play in supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and will work to provide an environment in which all our Pupils are eager to learn, feel valued members of the school community and look forward to coming to school every day. Staff also have a responsibility to set a good example in matters relating to their own attendance and punctuality.

### 2.2 Attendance Leader/Officer

Our Schools attendance team will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the Attendance Policy is consistently applied throughout the school. These staff members, known as the Attendance Leaders, will also ensure that upto-date attendance data and issues are shared with the Senior Leadership Team, are made regularly available to all staff, Pupils and parents (who will regularly be reminded about the importance of good school attendance) and that a report is prepared for the governing body. They will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

### 2.3 Registration

i) The school is required to mark the attendance register twice each day; once at the start of the day and once during the afternoon session. Classroom teachers/designated person are responsible for completing the attendance registers using the prescribed codes (shown overleaf).

ii) The register will be called promptly at the following times by each class teacher and a mark will be made during the registration period in respect of each child. Nursery Morning 8:45am

- Nursery Afternoon 12.10pm
- Reception and KS1 – 8:55am
- KS2 – 8:45am

iii) The registers will close at 8:50am in Nursery & KS2 and 9:00am in Reception and KS1.

Any Pupil who arrives after these times will be counted as late. The codes (L) and (U) will be used as appropriate where Pupils arrive after the normal start time of the school day. Children arriving after the above times, must be escorted to the main reception by their adult who must sign the Late Register.

#### 2.4 Categorising absence

i) A mark will be made in respect of each Pupil during registration. Any Pupil who is not present at this time will be marked as unauthorised absence (N) unless leave has been granted by the school in advance or the reason for absence is already known and accepted by the school as legitimate. Where a reason for absence is given and accepted by the school at a later stage, the register will be amended in such a way that the original entry and the amendment/correction are distinguishable.

ii) Thorpe Hesley Primary School recognises the clear links between attendance and attainment, and attendance and safeguarding children. It recognises that inappropriate authorisation of absence can be as damaging to a child's education as authorised absence, and will potentially send a message to parents that any reason for non-school attendance is acceptable. If absence is frequent or continuous and, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff at Thorpe Hesley Primary School will therefore challenge parents about the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a Pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the school.

iii) If no explanation about an absence is received by the school within one week, the absence will remain unauthorised; iv) Absence will be authorised in the following circumstances:

(a) where leave has been granted by the school in advance, for example:

- a Pupil is to participate in an approved performance for which a licence has been granted by the Local Authority,
- a Pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion – in authorising such an absence the individual circumstances of the particular case and the Pupil's overall pattern of attendance will be considered.

(b) where the school is satisfied that the child is too ill to attend;

(c) where the Pupil has a medical appointment (although parents should be encouraged to make these out of school hours wherever possible, and to return their child to school immediately afterwards – or send him/her to school beforehand)

(d) where there is an unavoidable cause for the absence which is beyond the family's control, eg extreme weather conditions;

(e) the absence occurs on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the Pupil's parents belong

(f) in other exceptional circumstances (e.g. a family bereavement) and for a very limited period.

Except in the circumstances described above, absences will be unauthorised. Some examples of reasons for not authorising absence would be:

- no explanation has been given by the parent;
- the school is not satisfied with the explanation;

- the Pupil is staying at home to mind the house;
- the Pupil is shopping during school hours;
- the Pupil is absent for unexceptional reasons, eg a birthday;
- the Pupil is absent from school on a family holiday without prior permission.

2.5 Approved educational activity Where a Pupil is engaged in off-site approved educational activities, the school will check his/her attendance on a daily basis before entering the appropriate code in the register.

2.6 Transition Pupils from Thorpe Hesley Primary School participate in an early transition to some secondary schools in July. For this time, pupils will still be registered at the primary school and therefore attendance will be recorded officially with the primary schools. The Secondary schools will phone each primary school each morning to inform of any pupil absences so that the school can follow the normal protocol for recording the type of absence for their children as detailed in

4.2. For non-planned or emergency closures of primary schools, the primary school will instruct parents as to what the children on transition need to do.

2.7 Staff Training - The School Attendance Team will ensure that all staff responsible for taking registers, including any temporary or supply staff, receive sufficient training to enable them to perform the task accurately.

### **3. Collection and analysis of data**

3.1 The Attendance Team will ensure that attendance data is complete, accurate, analysed and reported to the senior leadership team, parents and the governing body (see para. above). The report should include commentary on the trajectory and the school target. The data will inform the school's future practice to improve attendance and prevent disaffection.

3.2 Attendance is monitored by year, class and by reasons for absence. It is also analysed by gender, ethnicity, Pupils with special educational needs and those who are vulnerable to poor attendance.

3.3 Accurate attendance returns are made to the DfE within the stipulated time frame.

### **4. Systems and strategies for managing and improving attendance**

4.1 Attendance has a very high profile at Thorpe Hesley Primary School and is regularly discussed at assemblies and in classes. Parents are regularly reminded in newsletters and school meetings about the importance of good attendance and its links to attainment, and weekly attendance figures are shared in school.

4.2 First-day calling - Thorpe Hesley Primary School has in place a system of first-day calling. This means that parents will receive a text message or phone call on the first day a Pupil is absent without explanation to establish a reason for the absence. This helps to identify at an early stage Pupils who do not have a good reason for absence or who may be absent without their parents' knowledge. When no response is forthcoming the school will make every effort to make contact, e.g. phone call, text, letter, home visit.

4.3 Communication with parents - Where there is an emerging pattern to a Pupil's absence, with or without explanation, the school will contact parents by telephone/letter and/or invite to a meeting to discuss the reasons for the absences. Plans should be put in place with the parents to resolve any

difficulties and improve the attendance within a specified time limit. It will be explained to parents that any future absences will be unauthorised unless there is clear evidence of a good reason for them. On occasion, home visits may be carried out for safeguarding purposes.

4.4 Referral to Local Authority Attendance Pathway - If there continues to be unauthorised absences by the end of the specific time (or sooner if the Pupil is failing to attend school at all), the matter will be referred to the Local Authority Attendance Pathway.

4.5 Lateness and punctuality - Pupils are expected to arrive at school, and be in their classroom on time every day (times stated in 2.3 above). It is very disruptive to their own education and that of others in their class, if they are late. Pupils who arrive late for school are monitored for frequency of lateness and internal sanctions applied. If the lateness is persistent, the parents will be requested to give adequate reason. If this is not sufficient to resolve the problem, the attendance team is informed.

4.6 For health and safety reasons it is important that the school knows who is in the building. Pupils arriving late should therefore report to the main school office with their adult to sign the late register. It is important that all Pupils arriving late following this procedure.

4.7 For the same reason it is important that Pupils leaving the premises legitimately (eg for a medical appointment), or returning to school later in the day leave via the main school office.

## **5. Term-time Leave**

5.1 Thorpe Hesley Primary School will consider every application individually; its policy is NOT to grant term time leave other than in the most exceptional circumstances.

5.2 Time off school for holidays is not a right. Parents must complete an application form, with appropriate evidence, in advance of booking any intended holiday. Thorpe Hesley Primary School consider every application individually; our policy is NOT to authorise any leave of absence other than in the most exceptional of circumstances. If your request for term time leave has not been authorised and you take your child out of school during term time, Thorpe Hesley Primary School reserve the right to be refer the case to the Local Authority who have the powers to issue a fixed penalty notice per parent per child, subject to meeting the Local Authority criteria.

- £60 per parent per child if paid within 21 days.
- £120 per parent per child if paid 21-28 days.

5.3 Thorpe Hesley Primary School will consider authorising term time leave (TTL) for:

- children of service personnel and other employees who are unable to take holidays during allocated school holiday periods;
- when a family needs to spend time together to support each other during or after a crisis;
- parents who are subject to a strict and un-negotiable holiday rota and evidence is provided to this effect.
- a day of religious observance.

5.4 Requests for holidays for the following reason will not be authorised:

- cheaper cost of holiday;

- availability of the desired accommodation;
- poor weather experienced in school holiday periods; and
- overlap with beginning or end of term.

5.5 Thorpe Hesley Primary School will respond to all requests for a leave of absence in writing giving the reasons for the decision.

5.6 Thorpe Hesley Primary School will NOT authorise TTL during periods of national tests, i.e. SATS

5.7 Thorpe Hesley Primary School will NOT authorise TTL during July and September.

## **6. Extended leave of absence**

6.1 In considering absence for extended trips overseas Thorpe Hesley Primary School will take account of the following:

- previous attendance record;
- previous authorised/unauthorised term time leave;
- such visits may be important in terms of children's identity and self-esteem as they grow up;
  - parents may feel that the reasons for their visit outweigh the importance of their child's uninterrupted attendance at school (although parents could be encouraged to use the school holiday periods for at least part of their trip);

Where extended leave of absence is granted there will be an expectation that the Pupil undertake some school-set work during this period.

## **7. Parents'/carers' responsibilities**

7.1 The prime responsibility for ensuring children receive an appropriate and full-time education rests with parents / carers (defined by the Education Act 1996 as those with parental responsibility and those who have the care of a child), who will be supported and encouraged by Thorpe Hesley Primary School.

7.2 Thorpe Hesley Primary School expects parents/carers will:

- ensure their children attend the school regularly;
- support their children's attendance by keeping requests for absence to a minimum;
- not expect the school to automatically agree any requests for absence, and not condone unjustified absence from school.

7.3 Parents will also be expected to:

- notify Thorpe Hesley Primary School of on the first day of their child's absence, by telephoning the school before 8:50am, or by speaking to a member of the school office staff whilst dropping off siblings.
- ensure their children arrive at school on time;
- contact the school without delay if they are concerned about any aspects of their children's school lives. Thorpe Hesley Primary School will endeavour to support parents to address their concerns.

## **8. Pupils' responsibilities**

8.1 All Pupils should be aware of the importance of regular school attendance. If they are experiencing difficulties that are impacting on their attendance they should speak to their class teacher or a member of the Family Support Team (Mr Rawlinson or Mrs Smalley).

8.2 Pupils and parents have a responsibility for following school procedures if the Pupil arrives late.

## **9. Governors' responsibilities Section 175 (2)**

9.1 The Governing Body of a maintained school shall make arrangements for ensuring that their functions relating to the conduct of the school are exercised with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are Pupils at the school.

## **10. Conclusion**

10.1 Regular school attendance is a necessary contributor to ensuring the following outcomes:

- attendance at school supports children's emotional and social health and development
- the school curriculum teaches children to be healthy
- schools and the LA have a statutory duty to promote the safety and welfare of children
- the best way to safeguard children is to ensure they attend school regularly
- good school attendance supports children in reaching their maximum potential and enjoying the fulfilment this brings
- membership of a school community builds confidence, gives children a sense of belonging and teaches them to contribute to and be responsible for the well-being of others
- good school attendance supports engagement in further education, employment or training in the future, which in turn helps to support a prosperous and fulfilling life-style

**Reviewing the policy: Thorpe Hesley Primary School will review this policy each year.**