

THORPE LEA PRIMARY AND NURSERY SCHOOL



*A dedicated community working together, nurturing a safe, happy school where all children
can achieve their potential*

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

The staff at Thorpe Lea Primary School and Nursery are committed, in partnership with the parents/carers, students, governors and the Local Authority, to building a school which serves the community and of which the community is proud.

Our school aims to meet it's obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will work in partnership with families to find supportive routes to improve attendance and support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Thorpe Lea Primary School expects that pupils will attend 100% of the time, unless absence is authorised by the Headteacher. Regular attendance is key to achieving the five outcomes of Every Child Matters: staying healthy, enjoying and achieving, keeping safe, contributing to the community, and social and economic well-being. 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; should any problems arise that prevent this, we aim to identify early and act on these promptly.

2. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE) which came into effect on 19th August 2024, and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School Procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:55 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 am and will be kept open until 09:20 am.

The register for the second session will be taken at 13:15 pm and will be kept open until 13:20 pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08:55 am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6). This notification can be made by using the Studybugs app.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

The school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or Dental Appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. A form should be completed and given via the office if unavoidable appointments need to be attended. Notifications can be made through the school office or the Studybugs app in addition to the completion of the form.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and Punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the L code. A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent up to 9.40am, using the U code.

Attendance monitoring will be carried out by the school's Standards Leaders. Please see section 6 for more information.

3.5 Following up Absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. This will be carried out by the school office via phone or using the Studybugs app on the morning of absence.

3.6 Reporting to Parents

Parents will receive a copy of the child's attendance for the academic year at the end of the Summer term. However, the school will contact parents regarding any attendance issues or concerns throughout the year.

4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Granting Approval for Term-Time Absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

4.2 Legal Sanctions

The Surrey Attendance Service, acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a Penalty Notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and require the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

Circumstances when a Penalty Notices may be issued

1. Pupils identified by police and Surrey Attendance Advice Officers engaged on Truancy Patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.
2. The Education (Pupil Registration, England, Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head teacher is required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Where a child is taken out of school for 10 sessions or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the head teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

3. The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where a pupil has incurred 10 or more unauthorised sessions during the preceding 10 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.
4. Section 103 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a duty on parents to ensure that their child is not in a public place without justifiable cause during school hours when they are excluded from school. This duty applies to the first five days of each exclusion. Failure to do so will render the parent liable to a Penalty Notice. If the Penalty Notice is not paid, the recipient will be prosecuted for the offence under Section 103. Alternative education provision will be made from the sixth day of any exclusion and failure to attend such provision without good reason will be treated as unauthorised absence.

With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time (Paragraph 2 above) parents will be sent a 'Notice To Improve' their child's attendance, warning them of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.

Amount Payable Under a Penalty Notice: The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024

1. If a parent/carer has not incurred a penalty notice relating to the relevant child/children since 19 August 2024, then the penalty notice will be charged at the rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80.00 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
2. If you have incurred a penalty notice relating to this child/children since 19 August 2024, the rolling 3 year period will be activated from the date of the first penalty notice and the second penalty notice will be charged at the flat rate of £160.00, **per parent/carer per child**, if paid within 28 days. There will be no reduction for payment within 21 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in Surrey County Council considering legal proceedings against you in the Magistrates Court.
3. If you have incurred 2 penalty notices relating to this child/children in the rolling 3 year period since the first penalty notice was issued, then you will NOT receive a third penalty notice –

Surrey County Council will have no option but to consider a prosecution, **per parent/carer per child**, in the Magistrates Court under s 444 Education Act 1996.

5. Strategies for Promoting Attendance

There are many internal incentives in place to promote attendance in our school. Each week the school celebrates positive attendance during the whole school Celebration Assembly. The class with the highest attendance receive recognition through promotion on the Thorpe Lea attendance board and receive an Attendance Trophy to display in class. Children are taught about the importance of school attendance throughout the year.

6. Attendance Monitoring

The school will monitor pupil absence on a weekly basis.

Parents are expected to notify the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

Parents should notify the school each day that the child is absent, including ongoing absence.

If a pupil's absence goes below 92% for the academic year, the Thorpe Lea will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this and, organise a support meeting. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil, will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data, is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data, is published alongside the national statistics. As a school, we compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

Attendance data is, monitored weekly within school and action taken accordingly to either communicate directly with parents or pursue support from the local authority. Decisions about attendance procedures, will be made in conjunction with the Headteacher or members of the senior leadership team.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The governing Board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Headteacher may call on the Standards Leaders or office staff for this information as required.

7.2 The Headteacher

The headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.

The headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 Attendance Team

The Attendance Team:

- Monitor attendance data at the school and individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with the North West Surrey Inclusion Team to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

7.4 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

7.5 Office Staff

Office staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. They will also follow up any absences that have not been notified in advance. This can be done via phone or using the Studybugs app. They are, also provided with a list of children who are persistently absent to ensure that communication is effective and timely.

8. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed every 2 years by the Standards Leaders. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other Policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed at 9.10 am
B	Attending any other approved educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J1	Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an Interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Attending Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
C1	Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad	For pupils to undertake employment (paid or unpaid) during school hours
C2	Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable	There may be a need for a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs

E	Suspended or permanently Excluded and no alternative provision made	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence for occupational purposes	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason for absence not yet established	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Absent in other or unknown circumstances	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration closed	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed at 9.10 am and before 9.40 am

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody

Y1	Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available	School not within walking distance and transport normally available is not available
Y2	Widespread disruption to travel	Widespread disruption caused by a local, national or international emergency.
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of school premises being closed	School premises unavoidably out of use. Pupils cannot practicably be accommodated.
Y4	Unable to attend due to whole school site being unexpectedly closed	Unexpectedly closed eg; adverse weather
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	Child may be in police detention, remanded to youth detention, awaiting trial or detained
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Guidance relating to the incidence or transmission of infection or disease
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	Any other unavoidable cause not mentioned above. Used where something in the nature of an emergency has prevented the pupil from attending the session in question
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned whole school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day, site used as polling station
K	Attending education provision arranged by the local authority	The pupil is attending a place, other than the school or any other school at which they are a registered pupil, for educational provision arranged by a local authority
Q	Unable to attend the school because of lack of access arrangements	Child unable to attend school because arrangements have not be made by local authority