



Attendance Policy

‘Educational Inclusion’ is about equal opportunities for all pupils. It pays particular attention to the provision for, and achievement of, different groups of pupils’

Developed by **Senior Leader Team**

In consultation with **Staff**

Responsible Committee **Teaching and Learning**

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The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled; and, act early to address patterns of absence.
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age, who are registered at school, attend regularly.

All pupils should be punctual to their lessons.

1. To enable children to achieve all they are capable of, it is essential that they attend regularly and punctually.
2. All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% or above attendance. It is the responsibility of all school staff to be welcoming to children and their parents, creating an atmosphere where they both feel able to raise concerns and share any information that could affect the children's attendance.
3. Due regard will be given to the fact that a register is a legal document and, taking this into account, registers will be marked regularly and conscientiously at the beginning of both morning and afternoon sessions.
4. A child will be marked late after the register closes at 9am.
5. If a child arrives after 9.30am, it will be marked as unauthorised late.
6. It is important that all children arrive at school punctually. If a child is late, she/he should report to the school office to be given a late card and marked in. This also ensures that in case of an emergency the school has an accurate head count.
7. It is important that parents discuss any problems with either the class teacher or the Head Teacher so that appropriate help can be offered. Equally, if a child needs to leave school for a medical appointment during school hours she/he must be signed out, and in again on return at the school office.
8. Parents/carers are asked to make every possible effort to make appointments out of school hours.
9. If a child is absent for the day, the school expects parents/ carers to make contact as early as possible but no later than 9.00am, giving the reason for the absence and the expected day of return. If no word is received from the parent/ carer the school will contact the parent/ carer on the day. The school follows up absences where no reason is provided. If the reason for the absence remains unspecified they will be classed as unauthorised.

1. Introduction and Statutory framework

Thakeham Primary School aims to maximise attendance rates and secure high levels of punctuality in order to ensure all pupils are able to take the fullest advantage of the learning experiences available to them. If allowed to remain unchecked, persistent absence and lateness can significantly impact on a pupil's progress and achievement. Our partnerships with parents play a vital role in ensuring that this is achieved.

In line with the 1996 Education Act, we expect all children on roll to attend school every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will endeavour to encourage the children to attend, and to put in place appropriate procedures. All schools are expected to achieve an overall rate of 95% or above attendance.

We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to create a happy and rewarding environment for all children when the children want to come. We will make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

We recognise that children alone cannot ensure their regular and punctual attendance at school. At all times, parents are encouraged to take an active role in school life and to agree to ensure their child's regular and punctual attendance. As part of our annual written reports to parents, the children's attendance records are shared.

2. Monitoring and Reviewing Attendance

By law, schools must take a morning and afternoon register and record the attendance or absence of every pupil. Regular checks on attendance are carried out by all class teachers. The Attendance Registers are marked twice each day, at the start of the morning session and again in the afternoon. Registers are checked by the Office Manager. All absences and persistent lateness are investigated. When the register closes, the Office Manager checks the answer phone for messages. If the pupil is absent and the school has not been contacted then the office staff will call home to speak to parents to check why a pupil is not in school. Parents/carers will be called by 10am to establish the reason for absence. Two contact numbers are required per child. Attendance data is held electronically on BROMCOM Information System, accessible by the Head teacher and Office Manager who are able to conduct spot checks on individual children and provide comprehensive attendance reports. The Headteacher and Office Manager monitor attendance of pupils each week.

Where the Head deems it appropriate, parents/carers will be notified by letter when their child's attendance drops below the school's target of 95%. If attendance drops below 90% a second letter may be written asking parents/carers to come in to school to discuss ways of improving attendance. The school will refer a pupil to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) if a child's attendance drops below 85% and there is no satisfactory reason for the drop in attendance. Returns of school data are made annually to the DfE and benchmark data exists to compare our school within local and national contexts.

3. Punctuality and lateness

It is important that classes make a prompt and effective start at the start of the school day. The Head teacher monitors lateness of pupils as punctuality to school is crucial. Lateness into school causes disruption to that individual's learning and to that of the other pupil in the class. It is of extreme importance therefore that all pupils arrive at school on time. Children may arrive at school from 8.40am and go straight to class. There is no supervision on site for children before this time and the school is not legally responsible for them.

Registration is called at 8.50am and again at 1.00pm for all children. Registers will close at 9am in the morning. A pupil that arrives after this time will be marked as 'late' unless the school has previously acknowledged the reason for their late arrival at school. If a child arrives after 9.30am, it will be marked as unauthorised absence. Where there are concerns about punctuality, the school will make verbal contact with parents/carers. If the concerns persist, the Head Teacher will write to the parents/carers. If there is no improvement the school will arrange a meeting with the parent/carer. In the event of persistent lateness, the school will make a formal referral to the EWO.

4. Authorised and unauthorised attendance

Only the school, within the context of the law, can approve absence not parents, and it is a statutory requirement for the Head Teacher to decide with every absence whether it is authorised or unauthorised. Wherever reasonably possible, we expect parents to make routine appointments (e.g medical, dental) outside of school time. If this is not possible please give as much written notice as possible with a copy of the appointment slip.

If a child is absent from school for whatever reason the parent must inform the school in person, in writing or by telephone as soon as possible. The 'Withdrawal from Learning' form will need to be completed.

Unauthorised absences are those absences for which the school receives no reason/explanation or if the school has good reason to doubt the explanation given.

5. Leave of Absence

- It is the parents legal responsibility to ensure that their child's good school attendance and punctuality. If attendance or punctuality is persistently unsatisfactory, initially the school will liaise with the parent verbally and/or by letter. If the situation does not improve i.e. the child's unauthorised absences build up to more than 10 half day sessions over a 10 school week period, the school will consider a referral to the Pupil Entitlement: Investigation (PEI). Should a child's attendance/punctuality still not improve, the parent/carer could be prosecuted under the 1996 Education Act. Alternatively an Education Supervision Order could be sought in the family proceedings court under the 1989 Children Act.
- Amendments to the 2006 regulations remove references to family holiday and extended leave as well as the statutory threshold of ten school days. The amendments make clear that the Head Teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. If the leave is granted, they should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school. Examples of this would be:
 - Funeral of an immediate relative – 2 days
 - Religious observation on days officially set apart by the religious body to which the parents belong – 1 day
 - Close family wedding – 1 day
 - Medical appointments which cannot be arranged outside the school day.
 - A form obtained from the school office must be completed when withdrawal from learning is being requested.
- Parents/carers should be aware that Thakeham Primary School will follow the WSCC PE:I guidelines regarding unauthorised absence. Any unauthorised holiday of 5 consecutive days or more will be forwarded to WSCC PE:I for consideration for a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN). However, the FPN team reserves the right to consider the suitability of a FPN being used. Where periods of absences are extensive and exceed the threshold for referral of 10 sessions, WSCC PE:1 may take further legal action and the matter could be brought before the court.
- In exceptional circumstances a pupil may be granted authorised leave. However, regardless of whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised, if after 10 days the pupil fails to return and no contact can be made with the parents/carers, the school will make a referral to the PE:I, which will make reasonable enquiries and consult with the Child Missing in Education Team (CME). If the school can make contact with the parent/carers, it will warn them, if possible in writing, that it

will consider taking the pupil off roll if she/he does not return by an agreed date. If the pupil does not return within 20 days and no reasonable explanation is given, the school will consult with CME and, in line with DfE guidance, consider taking the pupil off roll. If a child is taken off roll, parents/carers would need to reapply for a place through West Sussex County Council Admissions South on their return. A place cannot be guaranteed at the current school.

- Genuine illness will be authorised, although the school reserves the right to ask for medical clarification if a child's medical absences are above the amount expected for a usually healthy child. If it has been necessary for a child to have extended absence due to illness, the school will work with the child, parents/carers and any other involved agencies to instigate a reintegration programme for that child.
- Thakeham Primary School provides a broad, balanced curriculum, but for children to access the many opportunities that are provided, it is necessary for them to attend school regularly and punctually.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

Why attendance matters:

Less than 5 days absence = 98% + attendance

14 days absence (approx.) = 93.5% attendance

20 days absence (approx.) = 90% attendance

30 days absence (approx.) = 88% attendance

If a child achieves 80% attendance this means that they have missed approximately 40 days of education over the academic year, averaging 1 day per week.

At Thakeham Primary School the staff and Governors endeavour to support parents in the responsibility of attendance by:-

- An environment in which pupils feel welcomed and valued. The school's ethos must demonstrate that pupils feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and that follow up action will be taken
- Making every effort to match learning tasks to pupils' needs
- Collating attendance data termly and analysing it in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievement, and support and inform policy/ practice.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via newsletters, the school website, parents evenings) of the importance of good attendance
- The Head teacher will make a termly report to governors on attendance.
- The Head teacher and SENDCO may liaise with other agencies when this may serve to support and assist pupils who are experiencing difficulties.
- Some secondary schools make links with the school and the year 6 pupils to help with a smooth transfer to their school. Discussions will identify those pupils who may require extra support during the process.

7. Role of the Governing Body

The governors will act alongside the Head Teacher to monitor the attendance of all children and vulnerable groups (Pupil Premium, FSM, SEN etc) and ensure that this policy is being followed.

8. Role of EWO

On those occasions when a pattern of poor attendance or lateness is developing the Head Teacher will work directly with the family to seek solutions. Should the problem drop below 85% then a referral to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will follow. The function of the EWO at this stage is the Compliance/ Enforcement part of the service which delivers the Local Authorities statutory response where attendance has fallen below 85%.

9. Data Analysis

The school collects and stores attendance data using the management information systems (BROMCOM). The school provides attendance data to the DfE, using BROMCOM to send data about the school census. The figures returned are then published by the DfE as part of the annual publication of school statistics.

The school uses the attendance data to identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern and to track the attendance of individual pupils. Where attendance is a concern, the school will use data to analyse attendance by year group, classes, groups of pupils for example ethnicity or gender. The school uses attendance data to identify the main causes of absences within the school and to take action to address and improve those areas. The school will use data to monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support.