



THORNTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Love • Respect • Ambition

Rationale

At Thornton Primary School we recognise that attending school regularly has a positive impact on learning, progress and therefore the best life chances for children. We will encourage good attendance for all pupils by offering an environment in which pupils feel valued, included and part of the school community.

The Department for Education's statutory guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* makes clear that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. Thornton Primary School is committed to building strong relationships with pupils and families, promoting a sense of belonging and identifying barriers to attendance at the earliest opportunity. We recognise that attendance difficulties can be complex and will work collaboratively with families and external agencies to provide support before considering formal interventions.

Aims

We will:

- Promote a culture across the school which identifies the importance of regular and punctual attendance.
- Make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school, including pupils, parents/carers, staff and governors.
- Further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school.
- Set targets to improve individual and whole-school attendance levels.
- Identify attendance concerns at the earliest opportunity and provide effective support.
- Ensure that every pupil feels safe, welcomed and supported to attend school.

Inclusive Attendance

Thornton Primary School recognises that some pupils face additional barriers to attending school regularly, including pupils with SEND, mental or physical health needs, young carers, pupils with a social worker and those experiencing challenging family circumstances.



We will take an inclusive, strengths-based approach to attendance by listening to pupils and parents/carers, understanding individual circumstances and making reasonable adjustments where appropriate. We aim to ensure that every child feels safe, welcomed and supported to attend school.

Leave of Absence

Schools cannot authorise any leave of absence during term time except in exceptional circumstances. In Thornton Primary School, the Headteacher is authorised by the Governing Body to make these decisions.

Leave of absence shall not be granted unless:

- A request for leave has been made in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally resides; and
- The Headteacher considers that leave should be granted due to exceptional circumstances relating to the request.

If leave is being requested for a holiday, approval should be obtained before any bookings are made.

Please refer to the Attendance Policy Appendix for full details of what will and won't be authorised.

Additional Factors for Consideration

When considering an application for leave, the following may be taken into account:

- The educational impact of the absence.
- Whether national assessments or examinations will be missed.
- The pupil's attendance record.
- Whether the absence occurs during a transition period.
- Whether leave has already been granted during the current or previous academic year.
- Any history of unauthorised absence.

Where work commitments are cited as exceptional circumstances, the school may request additional evidence from an employer.

Parents/carers requesting leave should complete a Leave of Absence Request Form and submit it as soon as possible before the intended absence.

Religious Absence

The school will authorise absence for recognised religious observance in accordance with legislation and local authority guidance. Requests should be made in advance wherever possible.



Any additional absence around a religious observance will only be authorised where exceptional circumstances apply.

Use of Penalty Notices

In accordance with national regulations and Lancashire County Council procedures, the school may request that the Local Authority issue a penalty notice in relation to unauthorised absence.

This may include:

- Leave of absence taken without prior approval.
- Leave taken after a request has been declined.
- Days taken beyond an agreed period of authorised leave.
- Other unauthorised absences which meet the statutory threshold.

Current national arrangements introduced from August 2024 include:

- £160 per parent, per child, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.
- A second notice within a three-year period charged at £160 with no reduction available.
- Consideration of a penalty notice where there are 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence within a rolling ten-school-week period.

Partnership Working

Thornton Primary School will work closely with parents/carers, the Local Authority, health professionals and other agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance.

Consistent with DfE guidance, we will prioritise support, early intervention and effective communication with families. Attendance concerns will be addressed through a graduated response, ensuring barriers are understood and appropriate support is offered at the earliest stage.

Monitoring, Analysis and Action Planning

Thornton Primary School will use electronic systems to monitor attendance at both individual pupil and whole-school level.

Attendance data will be analysed regularly to identify:

- Patterns of absence.
- Trends within pupil groups.
- Pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence.



- Areas where targeted support may be required.

Governors will receive regular attendance reports and monitor attendance outcomes as part of their strategic role.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil becomes a persistent absentee when attendance falls below 90%.

Thornton Primary School expects attendance of at least 96% wherever possible and will work proactively with families where attendance begins to decline.

Pupils will be identified for support before they reach persistent absence levels where attendance patterns indicate risk. Early intervention may include conversations with families, attendance support plans, Early Help involvement and referrals to specialist services where appropriate. The school will monitor the impact of support and review actions regularly with families.

Severe Absence (SA)

Severe absence is defined as attendance of 50% or below across the school year.

Where severe absence occurs, additional support and intervention will be implemented, including multi-agency involvement where required.

Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

Parents and Carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually.
- Inform the school on the first day of absence.
- Maintain communication with the school during extended periods of absence.
- Avoid taking holidays during term time.
- Inform the school of any attendance concerns.
- Engage with support offered by the school.
- Work collaboratively with school to develop attendance support plans where required.
- Notify school of circumstances that may affect attendance or punctuality.
- Support positive routines that encourage regular attendance.

Pupils



Pupils are expected to:

- Attend regularly and punctually.
- Follow school procedures for signing in and out.
- Develop routines that support good attendance.
- Engage positively with support offered.

School Staff

All staff have a role in promoting attendance by:

- Providing a welcoming and supportive environment.
- Building positive relationships with pupils and families.
- Recognising attendance as a safeguarding priority.
- Identifying attendance concerns early.
- Promoting the link between attendance and achievement.
- Accurately completing registers.
- Being particularly mindful of the needs of pupils with SEND, medical conditions, mental health difficulties and other vulnerabilities.
- Working collaboratively with families and external agencies to reduce barriers to attendance.

The Headteacher has overall responsibility for attendance arrangements and compliance with statutory requirements.

Governors

Governors will:

- Ensure compliance with attendance legislation.
- Review the attendance policy annually.
- Monitor attendance data.
- Support and challenge school leaders regarding attendance.
- Authorise the Headteacher to determine leave requests.

Procedures

Registration

Morning registration takes place between 8:45am and 9:00am.

Afternoon registration takes place in accordance with the school's published timetable.

Registers will be completed accurately and in line with statutory requirements.



Late Registration

Pupils arriving after registration must report to the school office.

- Pupils arriving after registration but before registers close will receive an **L code**.
- Pupils arriving after registers close will receive a **U code**, which is classed as an unauthorised absence.

The school will monitor and address patterns of lateness.

Types of Absence

Authorised Absence

Authorised absence includes:

- Illness.
- Medical or dental appointments which cannot reasonably be arranged outside school hours.
- Religious observance.
- Exceptional circumstances approved by the Headteacher.

The school may request evidence where appropriate.

Unauthorised Absence

Examples include:

- Unexplained absence.
- Holidays taken without approval.
- Shopping trips or birthdays.
- Arriving after registers close without good reason.
- Absences not considered reasonable by the Headteacher.

First Day Response

Where a pupil is absent and no explanation has been received, the school will follow established safeguarding procedures which may include:

- Telephone calls.
- Contact with emergency contacts.
- Home visits where appropriate.
- Consultation with safeguarding professionals where necessary.



Attendance Support and Intervention

Attendance improvement work will be underpinned by evidence-informed practice. The school will focus on building positive relationships, developing pupils' sense of belonging, understanding barriers to attendance and implementing targeted support matched to individual need. Support strategies will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain effective and proportionate.

Support may include:

- Meetings with parents/carers.
- Attendance support plans.
- Early Help involvement.
- Referrals to external agencies.
- Parenting contracts.
- Targeted interventions for pupils.

Pupils Experiencing Difficulties Attending School

At Thornton Primary School, we believe that every child has a right to a full-time education and that good attendance is central to educational success, wellbeing and future life opportunities.

We recognise that some pupils may experience difficulties attending school due to anxiety, emotional wellbeing needs, unmet SEND needs, medical conditions or other barriers.

In such cases, we will work closely with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to understand the reasons for absence and develop an appropriate support plan which promotes successful attendance and inclusion. The views of the child and their family will be considered throughout the process.

We may seek advice from attendance services and make referrals to appropriate support agencies to ensure effective support is secured.

Reintegration Following Long-Term Absence

Where a pupil has experienced a prolonged period of absence, the school will work with the family and relevant professionals to develop a successful reintegration plan.

Communication of the Policy

The school will:



- Publish the policy on the school website.
- Share attendance expectations with new parents/carers.
- Promote attendance through newsletters and school communications.
- Provide staff training on attendance responsibilities.
- Report attendance information to governors regularly.

Date approved: September 2026

Review date: September 2027

Signed: David Ashcroft, Headteacher

To be approved by the Standards and Effectiveness Committee on 06/10/2026