



**Thorpe Acre Junior School**



**Thorpe Acre Infant School**

# **Pupil Attendance Policy**

**Attendance Is Everyone's Responsibility**

Approved by : Governing Body  
Date : July 2024 – with effect from August 2024  
Next review due by : July 2026

Learning, Working and Succeeding Together  
Reaching High, Learning and Growing Together

## **Safeguarding Statement**

At Thorpe Acre Junior School (TAJ) and Thorpe Acre Infant School (TAI), we respect and value all children and are committed to providing a caring, friendly and safe environment for all our pupils so they can learn, in a relaxed and secure atmosphere. We believe every pupil should be able to participate in all school activities in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. This is the responsibility of every adult employed by, or invited to deliver services at Thorpe Acre Infant and Junior Schools. We recognise our responsibility to safeguard all who access school and promote the welfare of all our pupils by protecting them from physical, sexual and emotional abuse, neglect and bullying.

## **GDPR Statement**

The school has arrangements in place to ensure that all personal data records held by the school are obtained, processed, used and retained in accordance with the eight rules of data protection (based on the Data Protection Acts).

## **Equality Impact Statement**

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

Where the term “parent” is used, this includes carers and anyone with legal responsibility for the child.

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**REMEMBER: If you and your child are experiencing difficulties with school attendance then talk to us as a first step so we can help!**

## **1. Introduction**

Our Pupil Attendance Policy has been amended to reflect the new attendance national framework, to be brought in by the government from August 19<sup>th</sup> 2024.

At TAJ and TAI, we strongly believe and agree, that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. This includes pupils, parents, school, doctors, dentists, social care etc. We expect all pupils on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so.

We believe an important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, all staff work to ensure a high level of enjoyment and commitment to learning as a means of ensuring regular attendance. Pupils who attend school on a regular basis can take advantage of the full array of educational opportunities available to them.

Research shows the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment. Research also shows that those pupils who have irregular attendance are at risk of not achieving their full potential and in extreme cases, may be drawn into anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Where a pupil's attendance is irregular or unsatisfactory we will endeavour to work with the pupil and family to resolve this and put the right support in place. However should improvements not be made further action will be taken.

## **2. The Law and School Attendance**

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to a full time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have.

### **Parents**

- It is a parents' duty to ensure their child attends school regularly (unless they have chosen for their child to receive an education other than at a school).
- It is the parents' responsibility to ensure their child attends every day that school is open, except in a small number of circumstances (e.g. being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school).
- It is a legal requirement that parents/carers ensure that the school has at least two current contact details and it is the parents/carers responsibility to keep school informed should these details change.

## School

- School will have appropriate procedures in place to monitor attendance.
- It is a statutory duty for class teachers to call and maintain accurate registers. Class teachers are legally responsible for marking their class attendance register twice per day at the start of each session. Teachers may delegate this task to another member of staff. Registers are legal documents, and may be called for as evidence by the court.

## Governors

- Under the Education (Pupil Registration, England) Regulations 2006 it is the governing body's responsibility for making sure that admissions and attendance registers are kept. Unless stipulated each regulation applies to all schools in England.
- School governors are bound by the statutory requirement under Section 538 of the Education Act 2006 which requires governing bodies to provide information requested by the Secretary of State. This includes absence data that is collected termly through the School Census.

## Registration

Registration is as follows:

### Thorpe Acre Infant School

	<b>YR</b>	<b>Y1</b>	<b>Y2</b>
Morning registration	8:45am	8:45am	8:45am
Afternoon Registration	1:00pm	1:00pm	1:00pm

### Thorpe Acre Junior School

	<b>Y3</b>	<b>Y4</b>	<b>Y5</b>	<b>Y6</b>	<b>Resource Base</b>
Morning registration	8:40am	8:40am	8:50am	8:50am	9:00am
Afternoon Registration	1:00pm	1:00pm	1:45pm	1:45pm	1:00pm

Registers close 30 minutes after registration. Those who do not register within these times will be marked as 'late - unauthorised' – coded 'U'.

### **3. Definitions**

Each half-day absence has to be classified by the school as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. Subsequently, the reason for each absence is always required. Only the Headteacher can confirm and authorise instances of 'leave'.

#### **Authorised Absences**

An absence is classified as authorised when a pupil has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent/carer. In some circumstances, parents/carers will be asked for evidence to be provided in order for the Headteacher to authorise an absence.

If a pupil has an increasing number of authorised absences, this may be classed as 'persistent absence' and a referral to our Education Welfare Officer (EWO), Naina Zavery, may be made.

The school may also make a referral to our EWO if there is a concern about a pupil's welfare or safety.

Parents will be contacted to ascertain if support from school is required.

#### **Unauthorised Absences – coded as 'O' or 'G'**

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a pupil is away from school without the permission of the Headteacher.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given.

All absences are coded as unauthorised if a pupil is away from school without good reason even with the support of a parent.

Examples of this are:

- Absences which have not been properly explained
- Parents keeping pupils off school because they themselves are ill
- Parents keeping pupils off school because it is their birthday
- Family holidays or leave of absence that has not been agreed
- Failure to provide medical evidence when requested to do so.

Again, parents will be contacted to ascertain if support from school is required.

### **4. Repeated absences**

The school will contact the parents of any pupil who has a repeated absence. If a pupil has a repeated number of absences, the parents/carers will be invited to a meeting at the school to discuss the absences and the best way in which school can support the family.

If the pupil continues to accrue absences, the school may make a referral to the EWO who will make contact with the parents/carers to arrange a meeting and seek to ensure that the parents understand the seriousness of the situation and to offer support.

Where parents fail to engage, or improvements are not made rapidly enough and where required, legal action will be sought and the EWO will submit the case before the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice and/or prosecution.

The Education Act 1996 (Section 444) states:

*“If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence.”*

The school reserves the right to consider taking legal action against any parents/carers who repeatedly fail in their responsibility to send their children to school on a regular basis.

## **5. Welfare check**

Parents/carers should inform the school on the morning of the first day of absence by telephone or via Weduc, clearly stating the reason for the absence and the expected duration of illness. When a pupil is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher will record the absence on the register, which will inform the school office. If the office has not already been informed of the reason for a pupil's absence, they will endeavour to contact the parent/carer.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a pupil has a medical appointment. Parents will be asked to provide evidence of the appointment e.g. the appointment card/letter/sight of the text confirmation.

Where the school has concerns about a pupil's safety, home visits may be carried out by our EWO.

## **6. Requests for leave of absence**

We believe that pupils need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are exceptional circumstances under which a parent/carer may legitimately request leave of absence for a child, e.g. a family crisis.

We expect parents/carers to contact the school and request the leave of absence on the official school form beforehand. The Headteacher will respond to the request as soon as possible.

## **7. Holidays in term time**

Government guidelines prevent Headteachers from granting any leave of absence during term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. A family holiday during

term-time does not fall under the category of 'exceptional circumstances' and the school is therefore unable to grant leave of absence for any family holiday.

In order to request a leave for 'exceptional circumstances' parents/carers must complete a 'leave of absence' form beforehand, outlining the reason and the specific dates when leave is required. The Headteacher will consider the request and inform the parents of their decision in writing.

Holidays taken without permission will be recorded as 'unauthorised absence' – family holiday not agreed ('G' Code). A referral will be made to the EWO, to issue parents with a penalty notice.

### **8. Issuing a penalty notice**

The parent(s) of any pupil who has absences recorded as a result of persistence absence or an unauthorised family holiday, may each receive a penalty notice of £80 which must be paid within a 21-day period.

Failure to pay the penalty notice within this timescale, will result in the penalty notice being doubled to £160, which will need to be paid within 28 days of the original notice being issued.

If the penalty notice remains unpaid after the full period of 28 days has expired, parents may face legal action for non-attendance under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

If found guilty of an offence under this Act, parents will receive a criminal record and could be fined up to £3000 and/or a community order or imprisonment up to 3 months.

Parents can seek further clarification from EWSM on 07947 994289 or email [naina.zavery@ews-m.com](mailto:naina.zavery@ews-m.com)

### **9. Long-term absence**

Where it is deemed that a pupil is unable to return to school due to chronic medical or other medical reasons, the school will make a referral to Naina Zavery in order to put a support plan in place. Parents will have to provide medical evidence that clearly states a pupil is unable to return to school.

### **10. Lateness and punctuality**

Pupils are expected to arrive punctually, ready to line up on the playground at 5 minutes before registration.

Any pupil that arrives at school after registration will need to sign in using the school's system, stating the reason for lateness. This will then be recorded as

appropriate, for example 'I' for illness, 'L' for lateness or 'U' for lateness following the end of registration.

A referral to the EWO, may be made to those parents/carers of pupils who are persistently late and who are not engaging with school and any agreed support plan.

Legal action may be taken when a child has 'U' codes, as this is deemed to be an unauthorised mark.

Where possible, parents must ensure that they try and book all medical appointments either before school starts or after school finishes. Parents may be asked to provide the school with the appointment card/letter/sight of any text confirmation for any medical appointment. All medical appointments will be coded as an M which equates to an authorised absence.

If you are unexpectedly delayed and are unable to collect, or will be late collecting your child from school at the end of the day, please contact the school office immediately. If you arrange for another adult to collect your child, you must let the school know the details of that person.

If contact has not been made within an hour of school ending, a telephone call will be made to social services, informing them of the situation and providing them with the necessary details including:

- Child's name
- Date of birth
- Gender
- Address
- Parents' name and address
- Telephone contact details
- Any previous incidents of not being collected from school
- Any current or previous child protection concerns
- Any SEND/SEMH or medical needs.

In the event that the child is in immediate need of protection, the school will follow its Safeguarding and Child Protection policy.

## **11. Attendance targets**

The school sets its own attendance targets each year. These are set by the governors at a termly full governors' meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.



## **12. Monitoring and review**

We expect high standards of attendance from all pupils and we will work with other agencies to improve attendance across the school.

We will monitor attendance data on a weekly basis to identify any pupils who are persistently absent or who continually arrive late, and will take action where this falls below a satisfactory level or where we identify patterns of poor attendance, as we recognise that when children are absent from school, they are missing out on their learning.

In instances where attendance and punctuality are of concern, or where a pattern is spotted, parents will be informed by way of a letter. We will discuss this with parents and seek to understand any barriers which are preventing good attendance and/or punctuality, and offer support.

Parents are expected to co-operate with the school and attend any meeting when requested to do so by the school.

Where absence persists and support is not working, or parents fail to engage with the support, formal action will be taken.

The school will keep accurate attendance records electronically, for six years from the date the data was entered.

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request a termly report from the Headteacher.

The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out.

The governors will therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that attendance figures are appropriate.

This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.