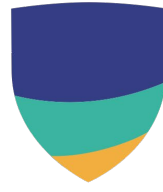




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Thames
Valley
School

Attendance Policy

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1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our 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 also 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.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and [2010](#), [2011](#), [2013](#), [2016](#) amendments)
- [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. Roles and responsibilities

3.1 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 Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Senior Leadership Team

The Senior Leadership Team:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Principal through safeguarding meetings
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

3.4 Form Tutors

Form Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis (AM and PM), using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

3.5 School Admin staff

School Admin staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system, and CPOMS.

4. Recording attendance

4.1 Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all pupils onto this register.

We will take our attendance register 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.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9:00am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 9:00am and will be kept open until 9:10am. The register for the second session will be taken at 1:00pm and will be kept open until 1:20pm.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7).

In the event of an unplanned absence, please contact the school directly:

T: 0118 9424 750

E: office@thamesvalley.reading.sch.uk

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the parents/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

4.3 Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

T: 0118 9424 750

E: office@thamesvalley.reading.sch.uk

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

4.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Careful monitoring of attendance by the Senior Leadership Team is in place to identify where there are ongoing punctuality issues. In these cases, support will be provided to parents/carers to address the problem. Such support will be tailored to the needs of individual families but may include:

- Initial discussions with the class teacher
- Further support from a variety of professionals, including education, and therapy teams
- Additional support from our Safeguarding, Behaviour and Wellbeing Lead
- Additional support from the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by contacting parents/carers by telephone from 9:30am
- Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, such as:

- Call every contact number that we hold for that pupil
- If there is no response from any of these numbers, we will carry out a home visit
- If there is nobody at home, we will inform the police that there is a missing child
- If the child is absent without explanation for more than 10 days, a report will be made to the Local Authority as 'missing from education'
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use

In order to keep children safe in education, we require parents/carers to:

Provide a minimum of three contact numbers for their child, at least one of which should be for a different household.

4.6 Reporting to parents

Pupils' attendance is reported to parents/carers four times per academic year; three times in each academic report that is sent home per seasonal term, and once during the annual review. Attendance will be reported as both number of sessions attended and a percentage.

5. Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1 Approval for term-time absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion. This request must be made at least a week in advance and cannot be authorised retrospectively. If the leave is taken despite refusal it will be 'unauthorised' and might trigger sanctions, including referral to the Local Authority for a penalty notice to be issued.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Principal is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when the Principal is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance.
- In difficult family situations the Principal may use their discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, taking into account the overall welfare of the child.

Evidence would be required in each case.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Where there are exceptional

and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Principal agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)
- 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
- Study leave for Year 11 pupils
- New starters who are transitioning to Thames Valley School, or pupils who are on a phased return as agreed by a medical professional.

Please note that a family holiday is not normally considered to be an exceptional circumstance.

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

Where a pupil is persistently absent, or is receiving unauthorised absences, parents would be contacted initially by letter and / or telephone to raise concerns. This would then be followed by requesting a meeting with members of the Senior Leadership Team and other professionals to put in place a clear attendance improvement plan, and increased monitoring. The school would involve the Local Authority, SEN Case Officers and Educational Welfare Officer as required.

For pupils at risk of persistent absence we would:

- provide regular attendance reports to tutors to facilitate weekly reviews with leaders (including special educational needs coordinators, designated safeguarding leads) for monitoring and evaluation purposes
- work with families and the community to identify which methods of communication work best
- consideration if further interventions are required in line with the statutory guidance on parental responsibility measures
- provide regular reports/caseloads to local authority attendance team or independent attendance organisations to raise awareness of emerging at-risk pupils

For pupils who are persistently absent, we would:

- develop and implement persistent absence action plans with pupils and families which address barriers and help establish positive attendance routines
- identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, for example:
 - mentoring
 - careers advice and guidance input
 - college placement
 - out of hours learning
 - alternative provision where appropriate
- lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support
- make regular contact with families to discuss progress
- coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- work in partnership with local authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures

5.3 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded pupil is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

The School works with pupils and parents/carers to support regular attendance, for example, communicating early about issues, acknowledging positive improvements, and providing good home/school communication systems.

For many of our pupils, transition points in the course of the day can be challenging and there are bespoke programmes in place to support with a smooth transition to school. Professionals can also provide support to parents/carers where necessary to devise strategies for a smooth home to school transition and to decrease pupil's anxieties at these times.

Pupils receive a postcard home for 100% attendance each week, and can gain TVS Shields which contribute to their personalised rewards for good attendance.

Form tutors and class teachers will:

- rehearse and reinforce attendance and punctuality expectations continually
- emphasise the importance of attendance and its impact on attainment
- promote the next lesson and the sequence of the lesson to motivate pupils to be in the classroom
- promote rewards and celebrate progress but continue to outline consequences
- apply rewards and consequences consistently
- follow up on absence and lateness with pupils to identify barriers and reasons for absence
- contact parents and carers regarding absence and punctuality
- review form or tutor group attendance weekly to share data, identify issues, intervene early and help set targets
- periodically review practice and consistency both across and between departments
- proactively promote attendance practice as part of staff induction
- consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of pupils

7. Attendance monitoring

The school office monitor attendance on a daily basis, and the Senior Leadership Team at our school monitors pupil absence on a weekly basis through safeguarding meetings.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to

discuss the reasons for this.

If a pupil's absence continue to rise after contacting their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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.

Alternative Provision

As a result of specific medical needs or as a strategy to improve a pupil's behaviour, engagement, or meet their interests and needs, it may be necessary to direct a pupil to Alternative Provision. During this time, attendance is monitored in exactly the same way as if the pupils was accessing their education at Thames Valley School. Failure to attend Alternative Provision would lead to the same attendance procedures such as Fixed Penalty Notices and possible court action.

Absence Data

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Data will be stored and used in line with NASAT policy, and be used to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as being in need of intervention and support

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum one a year by the Deputy Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour 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
B	Off-site 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
J	Interview	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	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
E	Excluded	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	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 not provided	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	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	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
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half- term/bank holiday/INSET day

Request for leave during term time

To: The Principal of Thames Valley School

Date: _____

I request consideration of a grant of leave of absence from school during term time for:

my child (full name) _____

for the period from (date) _____ to (date) _____

The **exceptional** circumstances and reason for this request are: -

I have (an) other child(ren) in (an) other school(s) as follows Child(ren)

(full name(s) _____

School(s) attended _____

(Signature of 1st parent/carer(s) _____ Print Name _____

(Signature of 2nd parent/carer(s) _____ Print Name _____

Please return completed form to the school office. The school will write to you and inform you of the decision on whether the request is authorised or not.

For Office Use Only

Current Attendance.....% Last Year's Attendance.....%

Number of school sessions taken as leave during term time(this academic year)

Agreed/Not Agreed

Request for leave is agreed/is not agreed for the above student to take leave during term time between the above dates.

Rationale to decline request:

SignedPrincipal. Date

Notification of decision:

Date letter sent to parent/carer.....