



Area:	Thornbeck College		
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1. Policy Statement

Thornbeck College is committed to providing a full, effective and efficient education to all learners that we support and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will provide an environment where all learners feel valued and welcome.

To achieve this, we must:

- Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality in all timetabled sessions.
- Accurately record attendance and punctuality.
- Work in partnership with learners, their parents/carers and any involved external professionals where appropriate to ensure good attendance and punctuality
- Monitor attendance and punctuality and take action to improve this where necessary.

The College will comply with the conditions and requirements contained within its current Department for Education funding and accountability agreements. The College will take all reasonable steps to support learners to participate in and successfully complete their agreed programme of study, while recognising the individual needs, circumstances and SEND

2. Areas of Responsibility

Learners

- Thornbeck College expects all learners to maintain high levels of attendance and punctuality.
- Where possible, learners should let the college know if they are going to be late or not able to attend (see 'reporting absences').

Parents/carers

- Understand the college's procedures in relation to absences through reading this policy, including reporting absences.
- Support and enable their young person to attend, including being punctual if parents/carers transport (as much as possible, on the understanding that sometimes lateness is unavoidable) and work with college staff around interventions should they be needed.
- Ensure absences are reported.

Admin staff

- Record any learner absences via Arbor using the appropriate code
- Inform the session lead and the leadership team of any learner absences and the reason for the absence promptly

Tutors/support staff

- If a learner is more than 15 minutes late, contact home to determine if the learner is running late, or will be absent.
- Learner absences must be reported to admin staff and the leadership team promptly to ensure absences can be recorded appropriately
- Update the learner telephone log after completing phone calls as required.
- Monitor attendance for key learners and report any absence concerns including patterns and trends to the leadership team

Leadership Team

- Monitor learner attendance on a weekly basis as part of safeguarding, attendance, behaviour and welfare meetings
- Where there are attendance concerns, work collaboratively with learners, parents/carers and

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relevant external agencies where appropriate to improve learner attendance

- Conduct weekly home visits during an extended period of absence
- Coordinate home learning opportunities where appropriate
- Recognise that some learners are not 'available for learning' and work with the LA and other agencies to allocate appropriate provision which may not be within our college
- Communicate any attendance concerns to the Director of Education in writing on a weekly basis. If a learner is absent for longer than 2 weeks an out-of-placement notification must be submitted which will alert NEAS Senior Leadership Team of the concern

3. Reporting Absences

Parents and carers are expected to support regular attendance and punctuality and to notify Thornbeck College as soon as possible when a learner is unable to attend, preferably before the learner's scheduled start time. The reason for the absence should be provided so that the College can record the absence accurately and determine the appropriate attendance code.

Where an absence is likely to continue beyond the initial period reported, parents and carers should keep the College informed and provide updates regarding the learner's expected return.

Parents and carers should notify the College in advance of any planned absence, including medical or other essential appointments and holidays or extended visits during term time. The College may request appropriate information or evidence where necessary to understand the reason for an absence. Where the College has not received an explanation for an absence, it will make appropriate contact with the learner and/or parent/carer to establish the reason and ensure the learner's welfare and safeguarding needs are appropriately considered.

The College recognises that learners aged 16 and over may increasingly take responsibility for their own attendance and communication. Expectations regarding reporting absence will therefore be agreed and communicated according to the learner's age, capacity, individual circumstances and level of independence, with appropriate support from parents and carers where required.

4. Recording Absences

All learner attendance and absences will be recorded accurately and consistently on the College's Management Information System, Arbor. The College uses the attendance and absence codes available within Arbor, which are based on the Department for Education's national attendance coding framework. The appropriate code will be selected according to the reason for the learner's absence and the circumstances known to the College. Although these codes originate from the school attendance framework, Thornbeck College uses them as a consistent system for recording attendance within its specialist post-16 provision and this does not imply that school compulsory attendance legislation applies to all College learners. Where an absence is unexplained, the College will take appropriate steps to establish the reason and will follow up concerns promptly. The College will take account of each learner's individual circumstances, SEND, disability, health needs, Education, Health and Care Plan, agreed programme and any reasonable adjustments when recording and reviewing attendance and absence.

5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

Thornbeck College recognises that learners may be unable to attend for a range of reasons. The College is responsible for determining how an absence is recorded and will consider the individual circumstances of the learner and the reason for the absence when applying the appropriate Arbor attendance code.

An absence may be recorded as authorised where the College has been provided with a reasonable explanation and the circumstances are consistent with the learner's individual programme, needs and

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circumstances. This may include, but is not limited to, illness, medical or dental appointments, approved educational activities, work experience, significant family circumstances, or other circumstances agreed by the College.

Where an absence is unexplained, the College will make appropriate enquiries with the learner and, where appropriate, their parent/carer or other relevant person. An absence may remain recorded as unexplained until sufficient information has been obtained to establish the reason for the absence.

Holidays and extended visits during term time are discouraged as they can have an impact on a learner's attendance, progress, achievement and ability to participate fully in their programme. Where a holiday or extended visit during term time is unavoidable, the learner and/or parent/carer should notify the College in advance wherever possible. The College will consider the individual circumstances and potential impact on the learner's programme when determining how the absence should be recorded. Such absence will not automatically be authorised. It is important to note that College placements are predicated on a certain level of directed learning, and that prolonged or high levels of absence may lead to a learners' placement being reviewed.

6. Safeguarding

Thornbeck College has a duty to effectively safeguard all learners'. Supporting regular attendance is part of this safeguarding duty. Poor attendance and unexplained absence can indicate a possible safeguarding concern including (but not limited to) physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation (FGM), radicalisation, substance misuse or peer on peer abuse. Thornbeck College staff will always seek to work with learners' and families to minimise absence and ensure clear communication regarding any absence that might occur. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, these will be managed in accordance with Thornbeck College Child Protection, Adult Safeguarding Policy and Procedure.

7. Attendance Concerns

The College will consider each absence on an individual basis and will take account of the learner's special educational needs and disabilities, Education, Health and Care Plan, health and wellbeing, reasonable adjustments, transport arrangements and other relevant circumstances. The College will not automatically treat an absence as unauthorised where the learner has experienced a barrier to attendance arising from their disability, SEND or other significant individual circumstances.

Where attendance is persistently or significantly affected by absence, the College will arrange an attendance meeting to seek to understand the underlying reasons, work with the learner and, where appropriate, their parent/carer and relevant professionals, and consider appropriate support or reasonable adjustments before taking further action in accordance with this policy.

8. Attendance Target

Thornbeck College is committed to promoting high levels of attendance and meaningful participation in education. The College's overall attendance target is **90% or above**.

The College recognises that learners attending specialist post-16 provision may have individual needs and circumstances that can affect attendance, including special educational needs and disabilities, health needs, medical appointments, transport difficulties and other significant barriers to participation.

Attendance expectations will therefore be considered on an individual basis and in accordance with each learner's agreed programme, Education, Health and Care Plan and any reasonable adjustments in place.

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An attendance level below 90% will not, in itself, result in a sanction or indicate that a learner is failing to engage. It will provide an opportunity for the College to review the learner's attendance, understand any barriers to participation and determine whether additional support or intervention is required.

The College will monitor attendance regularly and will work with learners and, where appropriate, parents/carers and relevant professionals to promote improved attendance and participation. The College's focus will be on removing barriers to attendance and supporting learners to participate fully in their agreed programme and achieve their intended outcomes.

9. Related Policies

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Safeguarding Adults Policy
- STEP
- Missing from Education Policy
- Mental Health Policy
- SEND and Inclusion Policy