



Area:	THORNHILL PARK SCHOOL		
Title:	Attendance Policy		
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1. Aims

This policy aims to show our commitment to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance, including those laid out in the statutory guidance on [Working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE).

We aim to achieve this through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, which includes:

- Setting high expectations for the attendance and punctuality of all pupils
- Promoting good attendance and the benefits of good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to make sure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

Policy Statement

Thornhill Park School is committed to providing a full, effective and efficient education to all learners that we support (The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7) (Keeping children safe in education, 1st September 2026 and Children missing in education, 8th September 2025) and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We will provide an environment where all learners feel valued and welcome.

For learners to reach their full educational achievement a high level of attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children and young people. Every opportunity will be used to convey to learners and their parents or families the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

This policy contains within it the procedures that Thornhill Park School will use to meet its attendance targets.

2. Roles and Responsibilities

The Trustees

The Head Trustee, Rakesh Chopra, is responsible for:

Setting high expectations of all school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers

Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations, statutory duties and comply with the law on school attendance, including:

- Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority
- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Recognising and promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources
- Making sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data and helping school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most
- Working with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and providing support and challenge
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluating the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs
- Where the school is struggling with attendance, working with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance

Making sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues
- The school's legal requirements for keeping registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate
- Making sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data
- Holding the principal to account for the implementation of this policy

The principal is responsible for:

- The implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to trustees
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing penalty notices, where necessary, and/or authorising the vice principals to be able to do so
- Working with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers
- Communicating with the local authority when a pupil with an education, health and care (EHC) plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs
- Communicating the school's high expectations for attendance and punctuality regularly to pupils and parents/carers through all available channels
- Sharing information from the school register with the local authority, including:
- Notifying the local authority when a pupil's name is added to or deleted from the school admission register outside of standard transition times
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who fail to attend school regularly, or who have been marked with an unauthorised absence for a continuous period of 10 school days
- Providing the local authority with the details of pupils who the school believes will miss 15 days consecutively or cumulatively because of sickness

The Principal is Helen Mitchell and can be contacted via email address helen.mitchell-principal@ne-as.org.uk

Vice-Principals are responsible for attendance

Their responsibilities include:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families
- The Vice-Principals responsible for attendances are Laura Ingram, Lucy Sinclair, and Matt Hughes and can be contacted via email address
- Laura.ingram@ne-as.org.uk, Lucy.Sinclair@ne-as.org.uk, Matthew.hughes@ne-as.org.uk, Kate.Wharry@ne-as.org.uk

The Safeguarding and Family Liaison Officer

The safeguarding officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement

- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated Vice-Principal responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.

The Safeguarding and Family Liaison officer is Edward Maddison and can be contacted via email address edward.maddison@ne-as.org.uk

Class teachers

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office by 9.30am and 1.30pm daily.

School Administration staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Vice-Principals or Safeguarding officer to provide them with more detailed support on attendance.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Where this policy refers to a parent, it refers to the adult the school and/or local authority decides is most appropriate to work with, including:
- All natural parents, whether they are married or not
- All those who have parental responsibility for a child or young person
- Those who have day-to-day responsibility for the child (i.e. lives with and looks after them)
- Parents are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child and more than 2 emergency contact numbers for a child in the Early Years Foundation Stage, where possible
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

Attend school every day, on time

3. Attendance Procedures

Any learner who is absent from School at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity [attendance out of the building]. Only the Principal or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Attendance register

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

We will take our attendance register at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session. It will mark, using the appropriate national attendance and absence codes from the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending a place other than school
- Absent
- Absent – unable to attend due to unavoidable causes

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 also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity, where a pupil is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances, where a pupil is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances
- We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 6 years after the date on which the entry was made.
- The school day starts at 09:00 and ends at 15:15.
- Pupils must arrive in school by 09:00 on each school day.
- The register for the first session will be taken at 09:00 and will be kept open until 09:30. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:00 and will be kept open until 13:30.

Unplanned absence

The learner's parent/ carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school admin staff on main reception number. If parents/ carer cannot get through, then this needs to be communicated to admin staff via the school admin email address

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 learner's parent/carers to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent notifies the school in advance of the appointment via the admin office, class teachers or designated safeguarding leads.

Where possible, the pupil should:

Be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary, and attend school before/after their appointment

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible.

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

Lateness and Punctuality

A learner who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed it will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed it will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code
- The school will use the [U] code for arrivals 30 minutes after the start of the session
- The safeguarding officer will identify learners who are persistently late and contact parents/ carers to offer support and put support plans in place. We are aware that transport can be an issue because of how learners arrive and this is taken into account.

Pupils experiencing ongoing difficulties with attendance and punctuality will be supported through an individual attendance support plan. The plan will identify the barriers to regular and punctual attendance and set out the support and strategies the school will provide, which may include adjustments to timetabling, bespoke curriculum planning and other appropriate interventions. The plan will also establish clear and achievable attendance and punctuality expectations, with progress reviewed regularly in partnership with the pupil, parent and relevant professionals, where appropriate.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any learner we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts by 12pm, the school will ask the safeguarding officer and vice-principal to carry out a welfare check to the registered address. If no contact can be made then following may be notified - social services, local authority, police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer
- Where relevant, report the unexplained absence to the pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team officer
- Where appropriate, offer support to the pupil and/or their parents to improve attendance
- Identify whether the pupil needs support from wider partners, as quickly as possible, and make the necessary referrals

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via termly written reports. If attendance is a concern then contact via phone call, email and where applicable home visits will be implemented sooner than termly reporting. Parents will be informed at the earliest opportunity should there be a need for the implementation of an attendance support plan.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence

The principal will only grant a leave of absence to a learner during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the learner is authorised to be absent.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least 2 weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via school admin office or the school website.

The principal may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments.
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the learner's parents belong.
- Taking part in a regulated performance, or regulated employment abroad

- Attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution
- Study leave
- A temporary, time-limited part-time timetable
- Exceptional circumstances

A leave of absence is granted at the principal's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' a rare and unexpected circumstances which are unlikely to reoccur. Examples include: medical emergencies and family emergencies.

Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours.

As a leave of absence will only be granted in exceptional circumstances; a leave of absence will not be granted for the purposes of a family holiday.

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

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible from the admin office. The principal may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence

Other valid reasons for authorised absence include (but are not limited to):

- Illness (including mental-health 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 parent(s) belong(s). If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parent's religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart for religious observance. Pupils should attend school on the days surrounding those set apart for religious observance
- Parent(s) travelling for occupational purposes – a pupil is a mobile child if their parent is travelling in the course of their trade or business and the pupil is travelling with them. In these circumstances a pupil will be considered as a mobile child, provided they are of compulsory school age and have no fixed abode and whose parent is in a trade or business that requires them to travel from place to place
- If the pupil is currently suspended or excluded from school (and no alternative provision has been made)

Absences from the school site (which are not classified as absences)

The principal will allow pupils to be absent from the school site for certain educational activities, or to attend other schools or settings. These are not classified as absences.

Reasons include (but are not limited to):

- Attending an offsite approved educational activity, sporting activity or visit or trip arranged by the school
- Attending another school at which the pupil is also registered (dual registration)
- Attending provision arranged by the local authority
- Attending work experience
- If there is any other unavoidable cause for the pupil not to attend school, such as disruption to travel caused by an emergency, a lack of access arrangements, or because the school premises are closed

Term time absence for holidays

Any request for leave of absence due to holidays in term time will not be authorised. The DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for leisure and recreational circumstances, and therefore there is no entitlement in law to time off in term time. Young people who are absent from school fall behind in their learning. They miss out on school events. Many find it difficult to catch up. In addition, school staff have to divert their attention away from other young people to support those who have fallen behind due to a holiday-related absence. Thornhill Park School school understands that Autistic learners may find busy holiday periods more stressful and consideration will be given but will not be authorised in relation to school reporting.

Supporting pupils with poor attendance

Our school will make use of the full range of support and potential sanctions – including, but not limited to, those listed below – to tackle poor attendance. Decisions will be made on an individual, case-by-case basis.

Education supervision order

In cases where voluntary early help plans have been unsuccessful, we may work with the local authority to issue an education supervision order. If an education supervision order is considered, the local authority will inform the parent(s) in writing and will set up a meeting.

An education supervision order is a formal intervention but not criminal prosecution.

An education supervision order initially lasts for 1 year, but it can be extended within the last 3 months for a period of up to 3 years at a time.

In cases where parents persistently fail to meet the directions given under the education supervision order, they may be liable to a fine of up to £1,000 upon conviction.

Notice to improve

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, the school may offer a notice to improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support. A notice to improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for the local authority area in which the pupil attends school.

It will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#)
- Details of the support provided so far
- Opportunities for further support or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued, or prosecution considered, if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period

Penalty notices

The principal (or a deputy or assistant principal, authorised by the principal), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice.

If the school issues a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send the local authority a copy of any penalty notice issued.

Before issuing a penalty notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
- Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
- Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

Supporting pupils who are absent or returning to school

Pupils absent due to complex barriers to attendance

If the school becomes aware of barriers that relate to the pupil's needs, we will inform the local authority. School committed to providing a supportive, inclusive and relational approach to attendance. We recognise that barriers to attendance can be complex and individual to each pupil. Our approach focuses on understanding and addressing these barriers at the earliest opportunity, while maintaining clear and consistent expectations around regular attendance.

School will:

- Build positive, respectful and trusting relationships with pupils and their families to promote regular attendance and punctuality.
- Establish clear expectations regarding attendance and ensure that pupils and parents understand the importance of regular school attendance.
- Monitor attendance and punctuality closely and use attendance data, alongside staff knowledge and professional relationships, to identify emerging patterns, barriers and concerns at an early stage.
- Consider the individual circumstances and needs of each pupil when identifying barriers to attendance, including social, emotional, behavioural, family, health, transport, curriculum and other factors that may affect engagement with education.
- Respond promptly to emerging attendance concerns and put appropriate support in place before absence becomes entrenched.
- Work collaboratively with pupils, parents/carers and relevant professionals to develop appropriate attendance support plans where required.
- Use a graduated approach to support attendance, ensuring that interventions are proportionate to the level and nature of the concern.
- Make effective use of school-based resources and, where appropriate, work with external agencies and services to provide additional support and address identified barriers.
- Provide targeted and individualised support for pupils experiencing persistent or severe absence, with interventions informed by the pupil's circumstances, needs and barriers to attendance.
- Review the effectiveness of attendance interventions regularly and adapt support where progress is limited or circumstances change.
- Recognise and positively reinforce improvements in attendance, punctuality, engagement and the pupil's progress towards their individual attendance expectations.
- Maintain clear records of attendance concerns, interventions and outcomes to ensure that support is coordinated and that progress can be monitored.
- Where appropriate, escalate concerns in line with statutory guidance and the school's attendance procedures when support has not resulted in sufficient improvement.
- Work with relevant external agencies, including the local authority and other professionals, where this is necessary to safeguard the pupil's welfare and support their regular attendance.

Pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health

School recognises that some pupils may experience barriers to regular attendance as a result of medical conditions, therapeutic needs, special educational needs and/or disabilities. Where a pupil has a high level of absence related to identified needs, the Centre will take a personalised and supportive approach to understanding the reasons for absence and identifying appropriate provision.

The following strategies may be used:

- Monitor attendance and absence regularly, with the frequency of monitoring increased where there are significant concerns or changing circumstances.
- Consider the individual circumstances and reasons for absence when determining the appropriate attendance code, in accordance with statutory attendance guidance and the national attendance codes.
- Work closely with parents/carers, the pupil and relevant professionals to understand the impact of medical, therapeutic or special educational needs on the pupil's ability to attend and engage with education.
- Liaise with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies where appropriate to ensure that attendance is accurately recorded and that the pupil's individual circumstances are properly considered.
- Develop an individual attendance support plan where appropriate, setting out identified barriers, agreed adjustments, support strategies, attendance expectations and arrangements for reviewing progress.
- Make reasonable adjustments and consider adaptations to the school day, timetable, curriculum, environment or transition arrangements where these are appropriate and can support increased attendance and engagement.
- Work collaboratively with medical, therapy and other specialist professionals to ensure that education provision takes account of relevant professional advice and the pupil's individual needs.
- Provide home visits or other appropriate welfare checks where necessary to maintain contact, understand barriers to attendance and support the pupil and family.
- Where a pupil is temporarily unable to attend school because of their medical or other needs, work with the Local Authority and relevant professionals to identify and facilitate appropriate alternative educational provision in accordance with statutory requirements.
- Recognise that some pupils may, at particular times, be unable to access their usual school provision or may not be available for learning in the conventional school setting. In such circumstances, the school will work with the Local Authority and other relevant agencies to identify suitable education or alternative provision that meets the pupil's needs.
- Review provision and attendance support regularly, particularly where a pupil's health, needs or circumstances change.
- Ensure that decisions about attendance and provision are based on the pupil's individual circumstances and are not based solely on attendance percentages.
- Maintain appropriate records of attendance, interventions, professional advice and agreed actions to ensure continuity of support and effective multi-agency working.
- Where appropriate, consider a phased or supported return to school following a period of significant absence, with clear review arrangements and agreed steps towards increased attendance.
- Ensure that safeguarding remains central to decision-making where prolonged or unexplained absence creates additional concerns about a pupil's welfare.
- Parents should consult the NHS guidance [Is my child too ill for school?](#) when deciding whether to keep their child home due to illness. We will share this guidance with parents, and provide support in understanding it, in order to promote school attendance wherever appropriate.

5. Long-term health conditions

Identified learners with specific medical, therapy or Special Educational needs, who have a high level of absence, will be supported by the following strategies:

- Weekly monitoring of attendance and absence
- Recording absence as authorised
- Working with the Local Authority to record such absences as authorised to reflect attendance as good as can be expected for these learners.
- Provide home visits 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 school.

Pupils absent due to other barriers to attendance

School recognises that some pupils may experience additional barriers to regular attendance because of their special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND), disadvantage, social care involvement, caring responsibilities or other individual circumstances. We take a personalised, supportive and relational approach to understanding and addressing these barriers.

Where attendance concerns arise, the school will:

- Identify barriers early through regular monitoring of attendance and punctuality, analysis of attendance patterns and positive communication with pupils and their families.
- Consider individual circumstances when assessing attendance concerns, recognising that the same intervention will not be appropriate for every pupil.
- Work closely with pupils and parents to understand the reasons for absence and identify practical, emotional, social, educational or environmental barriers to attendance.
- Make reasonable adjustments where appropriate to support pupils with SEND and/or disabilities to access education, including adjustments to the timetable, curriculum, learning environment, transitions and arrangements for arrival and departure.
- Use individualised attendance support plans where appropriate, setting out identified barriers, agreed strategies, responsibilities, attendance expectations and arrangements for reviewing progress.
- Provide a graduated response, ensuring that support is proportionate to the pupil's needs and that interventions are timely, appropriate, well-chosen and targeted.
- Coordinate support with the pupil's existing provision, including the EHCP, individual support arrangements, pastoral plans and advice from relevant professionals, to avoid duplication and ensure a consistent approach.
- Work with the Local Authority where a pupil has an EHC plan and attendance concerns arise, including sharing relevant information and seeking appropriate advice and support.
- Work collaboratively with SEND professionals, health services, social care and other agencies where their involvement may help to identify or remove barriers to attendance.
- Provide additional support for disadvantaged pupils, considering barriers such as transport, family circumstances, access to resources, housing or other factors that may affect attendance.
- Provide enhanced monitoring and support for pupils known to, or previously known to, children's social care, working with the appropriate professionals and following safeguarding procedures where concerns arise.
- Recognise and support young carers and other pupils with caring responsibilities, working with families and relevant services to identify appropriate adjustments and support.
- Consider the impact of anxiety, emotional wellbeing, behaviour, sensory needs and other factors that may make attending school difficult and provide or signpost appropriate support.
- Consider adaptations to the school day or curriculum, including phased returns, personalised timetables or alternative approaches where these are appropriate and agreed as part of a wider support plan.
- Maintain regular communication with families, ensuring that parents/carers know who to contact and understand the support available to address attendance difficulties.
- Use home visits or welfare checks where appropriate to maintain contact, understand barriers and support a pupil's return to education.
- Review interventions regularly, using attendance data alongside professional knowledge and

information from the pupil and family to determine whether support is having the intended impact.

- Escalate support where attendance does not improve, including consideration of additional Local Authority or multi-agency intervention where appropriate.
- Maintain appropriate records of attendance concerns, identified barriers, adjustments, interventions, professional involvement and outcomes.
- Prioritise safeguarding throughout, ensuring that unexplained, prolonged or concerning absence is followed up promptly and in accordance with the Centre's safeguarding and attendance procedures.
- Recognise that some pupils may temporarily be unable to access their usual school placement. Where this occurs, the Centre will work with the Local Authority and relevant agencies to identify appropriate educational provision and support continuity of learning.
- For pupils with an EHC plan, where attendance falls or there are emerging concerns about their ability to access their provision, school will liaise with the Local Authority and relevant professionals as appropriate. The Centre will consider whether the pupil's needs or provision have changed and whether additional assessment, support or adjustments are required.

Pupils returning to school after a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence

School recognises that returning to school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence can be challenging for pupils. A planned, individualised and supportive approach will be used to help pupils re-establish routines, rebuild confidence and reintegrate successfully into school.

The school will:

- Work with the pupil, parents and relevant professionals to understand the reasons for the absence and identify any barriers that may affect a successful return.
- Agree an appropriate return-to-school plan where this is required, setting out the support, adjustments and expectations for the pupil's return.
- Consider whether a phased or gradual return is appropriate, particularly where the pupil has experienced significant health, emotional, social or educational difficulties.
- Ensure that any return plan is proportionate, achievable and regularly reviewed, with the aim of supporting the pupil towards their appropriate level of attendance.
- Welcome pupils back positively and avoid placing undue emphasis on the period of absence.
- Provide a named member of staff or trusted adult to support the pupil during the transition back into school.
- Re-establish routines and expectations gradually, including arrival, registration, lessons, breaks, lunch and transitions between activities.
- Consider appropriate adjustments to the timetable, curriculum, learning environment or workload to support a successful reintegration.
- Provide opportunities for the pupil to discuss any concerns or anxieties about returning and ensure that their views are taken into account.
- Provide appropriate pastoral, emotional or wellbeing support where required.
- Consider the pupil's SEND, medical, therapeutic or other individual needs and implement relevant reasonable adjustments and existing support arrangements.
- Liaise with health professionals, therapists, the Local Authority, social care or other agencies where their involvement is necessary to support a successful return.
- Provide appropriate support to help the pupil catch up with missed learning without creating unrealistic expectations or placing additional pressure on them.
- Monitor attendance, punctuality, engagement and wellbeing closely following the pupil's return.
- Maintain regular communication with parents/carers to share progress, identify emerging concerns and agree any further support required.
- Review and adapt the return-to-school plan where the pupil is struggling to sustain attendance or where their circumstances change.
- Recognise and positively reinforce progress, including improvements in attendance, punctuality, engagement and confidence.
- Where a pupil is unable to return to their usual timetable or provision, work with the Local Authority and relevant professionals to consider whether alternative or additional educational provision is

required.

- Ensure that safeguarding remains a priority, particularly where a lengthy absence has resulted in reduced contact with the pupil or there are concerns about their welfare.
- Ensure that the pupil's attendance is recorded accurately in accordance with statutory attendance requirements, including the use of the appropriate attendance codes for the period of absence and subsequent return.

The overall aim is to ensure that pupils feel welcomed, safe, understood and supported, while establishing a sustainable pathway back to regular attendance and full engagement with education.

Prolonged absence for children in the EYFS

In cases of prolonged absence, or when a child is absent without notification, as well as the above, we will attempt to contact the child's parents and alternative emergency contacts.

When deciding whether a child's absence should be considered prolonged, we will consider the:

Patterns and trends in the child's absences and their personal circumstances

Vulnerability of the child and their parents, as well as the circumstances of their home life

We will also implement our safeguarding procedures (see our child protection and safeguarding policy at [Policies and Publications - North East Autism Society](#)) and refer any concerns to local children's social care and/or request a police welfare check.

6. Attendance monitoring

Thornhill Park School has robust monitoring procedures which can be tailored for individual needs.

Monitoring attendance

The school will monitor attendance and absence data (including punctuality) weekly, half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil, year group and cohort level.

Specific pupil information will be shared with the DfE on request.

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 benchmark its attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level against local, regional, and national levels to identify areas of focus for improvement, and share this with the governing board.

Thornhill Park School school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual learner level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.
- Learner-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority levels 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 Trustees.

Analysing attendance

Thornhill Park School will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify learners or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these learners and their families.
- Identify pupils whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence
- Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full-year data to identify patterns and trends
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

Thornhill Park School will:

The school will:

- Develop targeted actions to address patterns of absence (of all severities) of individual pupils, groups or cohorts that it has identified via data analysis
- Provide targeted support to the pupils we have identified whose absences may be a cause for concern, especially those who demonstrate patterns of persistent or severe absence, and their families (see section 9.4 below)
- Provide regular attendance reports to teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, and to the governing board and school leaders (including designated safeguarding leads)
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners where a pupil's absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe, including keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate.

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a learner misses 50% or more of school.

Thornhill Park School will:

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance
 - Explain the help that is available
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence
- Review any existing actions or interventions
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence
- Implement sanctions, where necessary (see section 7, above)
- The Senior Leadership Team and the Safeguarding and Family Liaison Officer will meet weekly to review and monitor pupil attendance. These meetings will provide an opportunity to identify emerging concerns, evaluate existing attendance plans, and agree appropriate, targeted strategies to support pupils and their families in improving attendance. Where necessary, the school will work collaboratively with parents, carers and relevant external agencies, including the Local Authority, and make referrals or share information in accordance with statutory guidance and school procedures.

7. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by Helen Mitchell Principal. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full Executive board.

8. Support

Thornhill Park School will:

- Build relationships with learners and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School-based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

9. A Welcome Back – returning learners

It is important that on the return from an absence that all learners are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the learner is helped to adjust to the daily routine; catch up on missed work and be brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other learners.

Links with other policies

- This policy links to the following policies:
- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

10. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of [Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#) 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](#)

[The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2024](#)

[Children missing education: statutory guidance for local authorities and schools - GOV.UK](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

[Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)

[Support for pupils where mental health issues are affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2026 \(comes into force from 1 September 2026\)](#)

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following registration is effective from the 19th of August 2024 - '[Working together to improve school attendance: July 2026](#)'

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	The pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	The pupil is present at the afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	The pupil arrives late before the register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school.
K	Off-site educational activity	The pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the local authority.
D	Dual registered	The pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered.
P	Sporting activity	The pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school.
V	Educational trip or visit	The pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school.
W	Work experience	The pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	The pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances.
C1	Leave of absence	The pupil should be participating in a regulated performance or regulated employment abroad.
C2	Leave of absence – Part-time timetable	For compulsory school-age pupils who are on an agreed part-time timetable
E	Suspended or permanently excluded	The pupil has been suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision has been made.
I	Illness	The school has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
J1	Leave of absence	The pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/ admission to another educational institution.
M	Medical/dental appointment	The 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	Parents travelling for occupational purposes.	The pupil is a mobile child due to the parent travelling from place to place for

		business/trade.
Q	Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements	The pupil is unable to attend due to a lack of access arrangements made by the local authority
Y1	Unable to attend due to lack of transport	Where the school or local authority normally provides transport which is not available; and the school is beyond reasonable walking distance.
Y2	Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel	The pupil is unable to attend school because of widespread disruption to travel caused by a local, national or international emergency
Y3	Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed	Part of the school premises is unavoidably out of use
Y4	Unable to attend due to the whole school being unexpectedly closed	Where the whole school was planned to be open but remained closed unexpectedly
Y5	Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention	If the pupil is in police detention or on remand to youth detention, awaiting trial or sentencing
Y6	Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law	Pupil travel to or attendance at the school would be contrary to restrictions set by the secretary of state for health
Y7	Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause	The unavoidable cause must be something that affects the pupil, not the parent
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	The 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	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	The pupil arrived late and after 30 minutes from the start of the session

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
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