



# **THAMESVIEW SCHOOL**

**Thong Lane, Gravesend, Kent  
DA12 4LF**

## **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

## Principles

Thamesview School believes that 100% attendance at school is the key to educational success. Much of the content covered whilst students are absent is never repeated and it requires a real effort on the part of the student to make up the missed work. Areas of particular concern are holidays taken during term time, days off for minor ailments and extended convalescence following an illness. It is the responsibility of all parents and guardians to ensure that their child miss as little school time as possible.

## The Role of the School Staff

At Thamesview there is a whole school approach for encouraging excellent attendance to school, with specific staff taking individual responsibility.

- All subject staff are required to keep an accurate attendance register and mark students present, absent or late (marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement (The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006).
- The Welfare team ensure each student is issued with a School Planner which is the first line of communication between school and home
- The Attendance Officer, reporting to the designated Senior Leader, works with all the Year Heads and other colleagues within each of the year groups to help provide a comprehensive picture and consistent response
- The Attendance Officer conducts register checks to ensure that any students who may attempt to miss individual lessons are detected
- Regular telephone calls are made and text messages are sent by the Attendance Officer, Year Heads and the Welfare team
- The Attendance Officer and the Welfare team meet with parents of students to discuss possible solutions to poor attendance which may include external agencies

Nonetheless, the responsibility for ensuring attendance remains that of the parents/guardians.

## Parental Responsibility & the Law

Since September 2013, the Pupil Registration Regulations have been amended by the Department for Education, removing the Headteacher's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure regular attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent with the school's permission, due to sickness or unavoidable cause related to the child (not the parent) or for religious observance.

As of February 2004, Government legislation authorised the issue of **Penalty Notices**, where Penalty Notices are imposed, the regulations state that the penalty will be **£120 to be paid within 28 days, reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days**. Penalty Notices are **issued to each parent of each child**. Failure to pay the penalty in full by the end of the 28 day period may

result in prosecution by the Local Authority. The maximum penalty on conviction is a fine of £2,500 and/or 3 months imprisonment.

Penalty Notices will be issued in the following circumstances:

- Parentally-condoned absences
- Persistent lateness
- Being present in a public place without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of any fixed term or permanent exclusion.

Students who are found out of school without permission, or without a signed pupil pass slip, are brought back into school by the police and handed over to a senior member of staff. It is therefore imperative that your child signs out at Reception should they need to leave school for an appointment.

Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the student and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts students at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that your child is safe. Students in years 7, 9 and 10 are expected to arrive by 8.15am, Students in years 8, 11, 12 and 13 are expected to arrive by 8.35am.

If there are problems surrounding attendance parents/carers are expected to contact the School at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the School may refer the child to external agencies including Early Help. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed, these agencies can use court proceedings to prosecute parents/cares or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the child. When a referral to such services are made, the child's Attendance Certificate, copies of all letters sent to parents and minutes of any meetings will be attached to the completed referral form with any other relevant information.

## **Definitions**

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the School, (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of each absence is always required, preferably in writing.

**Authorised absences** are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason such as illness or another unavoidable cause. This will be determined by the School not the parent/carer.

**Unauthorised absences** are those which the School does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given and these include:

- Persistent non specific illness e.g. poorly/unwell
- Absence of siblings if one child is ill
- Oversleeping and arriving at school late to obtain a mark
- Confusion over school dates
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons
- Child's/family birthday
- Shopping trip
- Family Holidays

Requests for holidays in term time **will not** be authorised. is issued to each parent for each child taken out of school.

If the holiday is taken anyway, the School will request from the Local Authority that a Penalty Notice is issued.

#### **School Action System for Managing Poor Attendance**

- Students at risk of falling below 96% are identified and parents/carers are notified if appropriate
- Students with attendance between 90%-95% will receive school intervention including letters, potential targeted attendance support groups and meeting with parents along with considering Penalty Notice or Early Help Notification.
- Students below 90% where absence level has not been improved will result in the school making a referral to the KCC inclusion and attendance service using the digital front door.

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in an AS1 referral to the Local Authority School Liaison Officer for consideration of prosecution. The school will follow procedures prior to referral and parents will be notified in writing.

#### **Local Authority Action may include:**

- Attendance Improvement Meeting
- Home visits
- Liaison with other agencies
- Prosecution

Penalty Notices Proceedings for Poor Attendance are issued in accordance with Kent County Council's Education Penalty Notices Code of Conduct effective from January 2016.

- A Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of persistent unauthorised absence or where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours.
- Absence for 10 or more half day sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive.
- The PRU, Inclusion and Attendance Service issue a warning letter setting out 15 school days during which no unauthorised absence is to be recorded.
- If unauthorised absence is recorded during the 15 day period a Penalty Notice will be issued (one per parent per child).

**Exceptional circumstances could include:**

- Service personnel 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 of a family member.
- To attend a funeral.
- Any examples provided are illustrative rather than exhaustive.

**Punctuality**

At Thamesview the register for the morning session opens at 8.35am and the afternoon session opens at 1.55pm, registers are also taken at the start of every lesson. Arriving after the start of the lesson or when the register has closed will result in the student being registered as late (Code ‘L’) and he/she will receive a sanction.

**Children Missing Education**

No child will be removed from the school roll without consultation between the Deputy Headteacher and Attendance Officer and any other appropriate bodies. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed and the CME documentation completed for the following reasons;

- If the whereabouts of the child is unknown and the school have failed to locate him/he.
- The family has notified the school that they are leaving the area but no Common Transfer Form (pupil file) has been requested by another school.

This Policy was agreed and adopted at a Governors' meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2020

Signed *S. Milson* (Chair of Governors)

Signed *G. Rorke* (Headteacher)

This policy will be formally reviewed in September 2023