



ATTENDANCE POLICY

'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate'.

Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence, February 2022, DFE

INTRODUCTION

Attendance and punctuality is vital to the well-being and future prospects of all our children. At Thomas's Academy we recognise that statistically pupils whose attendance falls below 95% achieve significantly less well than their peers. Children are expected to attend for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

190 days= 100% attendance

Therefore:

95% attendance/ 5% absence= 9.5 days absence

90% attendance/ 10% absence= 19 days absence

There are two types of absence:

Authorised - where the Academy approves pupil absence e.g. absence due to sickness of child.

Unauthorised - where the Academy will not approve absence e.g. holidays during term, all day absences for appointments that were only in the morning, persistent absences for illness where no medical proof has been provided.

This policy applies to all pupils across the Thomas's Academy including children of non-statutory school age.

REWARDS AND INITIATIVES

Thomas's Academy takes significant steps to ensure that all pupils are encouraged and that good attendance and punctuality is recognised and celebrated. The Head Teacher encourages high attendance and excellent levels of punctuality through class assemblies and encourages a competitive spirit between classes. Informal praise and formal awards should both be used and supported by all School Staff. Attendance and punctuality awards include:

- Weekly class attendance celebrated on Seesaw, which is shared with the school community.
- Weekly Class Attendance Cup awarded to the class with the highest attendance
- Weekly 'Best Class Attendance' display in the foyer of the school
- Class attendance is celebrated on classroom doors

- Over the year, the class with the best attendance attends an afternoon at the park in the summer.
- Letters to congratulate families, whose attendance has improved

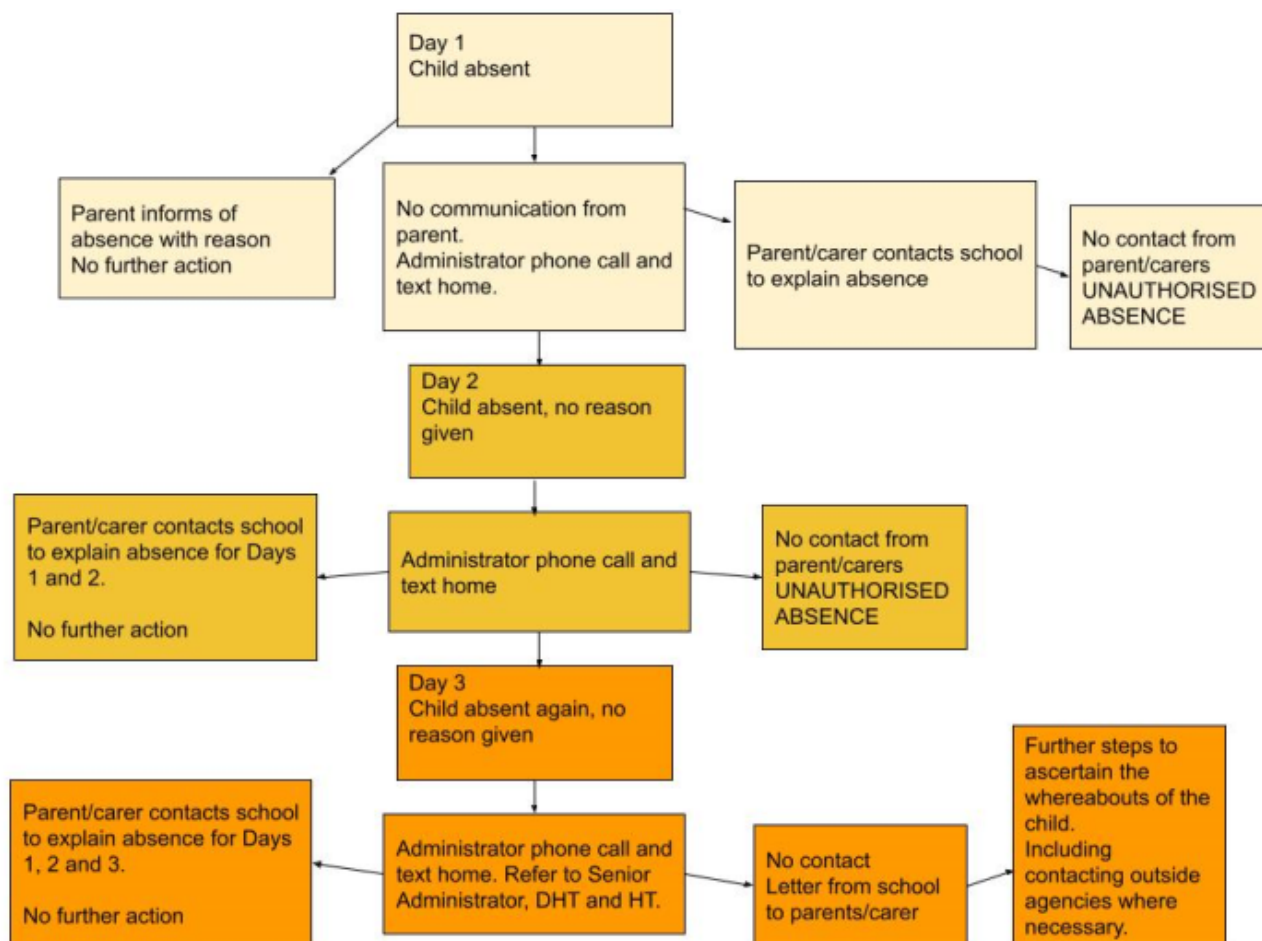
ABSENCE PROCEDURES

First Days of Absence

If a child is absent, parents/carers must call the school office by 9am on the first day of the absence stating a reason or email the absent email: absent@academy.thomas-s.co.uk. The Office Administrator will then decide whether to authorise the absence, and the reason for absence will be recorded electronically. It is expected that a degree of detail is recorded, not just “child sick or feels unwell”.

If contact explaining the child’s absence fails to be made by parents or carers, then the Administrator will contact the home by telephone on the first day by 10am. Please see the below flowchart for more information.

Thomas’s Academy Attendance Procedure



The Academy’s Protocol

- Pupil absence rates are reviewed monthly by the Office Administrator and the Deputy Headteacher. When attendance rates fall below 95% for the year to date, or if there are regular periods of unexplained absence, the Administrator, will send a ‘Below 95% Attendance Alert’ to

parents (see Appendix 3), informing them of our concern and asking them to present any additional medical evidence if applicable.

- If attendance continues to fall below 95%, after initial correspondence, the Deputy Head teacher will meet with the parents/carers to discuss reasons for the absence and an Attendance Contract will likely be drawn up and agreed by all parties (see Appendix 1).
- Those pupils with attendance below 90% are classed as 'Persistent Absentees' and as such receive particular attention. If attendance falls below 90%, the School Attendance Support Officer (SASO) and Deputy Head teacher will invite parents in to discuss the reasons for the absences and consider possible solutions. An attendance contract will be drawn up and agreed by all parties. All absences will then be carefully monitored and parents/carers will need to provide proof from a medical profession where possible.
 - If a child has 10% unauthorised absences during a six week period, there will be a meeting to review the situation and consider either:
 - a referral to ACE team for consideration of a Penalty Notice, in line with Code of Conduct,
 - a referral to Family Support for support with underlying issues impacting on attendance
 - If unauthorised absences fail to improve after with of the above measures, legal action will follow.
- If a child's home residence is out of borough, then that borough's Education Welfare team must be contacted, instead of Hammersmith and Fulham.

Absence for Medical Reasons

Parents must make every effort to arrange medical appointments outside school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment. There is an expectation that proof of appointment (hospital letter, text, photo) is provided to the school.

If children are absent because of illness and the absence is more than 5 days then the school will require a doctor's note, proof of medication, hospital admission letter received or similar to confirm this, to ensure that the child's welfare is being taken care of.

Leave of absence during Term Time

A pupil's absence during term time can seriously disrupt their continuity of learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, they are also less prepared for the lessons building on that after their return. There is a consequent risk of underachievement, which the school and parents must seek to avoid.

School will not authorise family holidays/leave during term time. Holiday dates are published a year in advance; therefore, the Academy does not see any reason for parents to take their child(ren) out of the Academy during term time.

In exceptional circumstances the Head Teacher will consider each case on an individual basis. Leave should **not** be taken without first discussing the circumstances with the Head Teacher. Parents wishing to request leave of absence should request a copy of the Thomas's Academy Attendance Policy and complete a written request via email to head@academy.thomas-s.co.uk or complete the Request for Leave of Absence Form (Appendix 2).

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the Head Teacher will consider each case individually, taking into account a child's overall attendance and the reason for the leave. The Head Teacher may request a meeting with parents to discuss the proposed leave and may request further documentation such as travel itineraries etc. The school will not authorise a leave of absence where the requested period of absence covers a statutory assessment e.g. KS1 and KS2 SATs. Where leave of absence has been granted, the pupil must return no later than the agreed date of return.

Parents who take their child(ren) out on holiday/leave for 8 or more sessions (4+ days) within a six week period, without the School's permission may be issued with a Penalty Notice (PN). In cases where there is more than one pupil in the family, a PN will be issued for each child and each parent/carer. Penalty Notices (PN) are currently £60 for each child (£120 if not paid within 28 days).

Unexplained Absences, Changing Schools

- For children who have above 10% unauthorised absences or where the school does not know of the child's whereabouts after several failed attempts at trying to contact family in the last 6 weeks, then a referral to Family Support on 0208 753 6610
- If the child is not knowingly on roll at any school, then Kyria Parsons, Lead Advisor at ACE (020 8753 6797) must be informed if the child cannot be located and is classed as 'Missing from Education'.
- All steps will be taken by the school to ascertain the child's whereabouts and documentation should be kept on this process. The **protocols followed are outlined at the end of this policy (Protocol for schools in Hammersmith & Fulham Council to identify children absent from education) (Appendix 4)**
- If the school feels that a child is absent from education or is a school refuser, the school will complete the ACE referral form, see Appendix 5
- It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school or choose to home-school, they **must** inform Thomas's Academy staff as soon as possible. A pupil will not be removed from this school roll until the following information has been received and investigated:

The date the pupil will be leaving this school and starting the next;

The name and address of the new school; the new home address, if it is known;

This school receiving communication from the new school that the child has now been enrolled there

The Academy will send an electronic copy of the pupil's school record, including attendance reports, to the new school, to be followed by their paper file. If a parent/carer appears to have removed their child from school or the child has completely stopped attending without providing the above information, the school will ask advice from ACE and if all attempts to contact the family fail, then the family will be referred to Family Support and then likely upscaled to Social Services.

Punctuality:

Pupils who are consistently late disrupt not only their own education but also that of others.

The School day begins at 8.45 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be settled and ready for registration at 8.55 a.m. Those pupils arriving after the close of registration, 9.00 a.m, must enter through the school office and be marked in as late (L) by the Office Administrator.

If a child arrives after 9.30 am, pupils will receive an unauthorised absence (U) and recorded as absent for the (am) session. Parents/carers will then be asked to provide a reason for the absence; in exceptional circumstances, this may be authorised.

In cases of persistent lateness, the parent/carer(s) will be issued a letter to improve punctuality from Deputy Head teacher and will be invited to meet with them and SASO to seek a resolution.

A Penalty Notice may also be issued if a child arrives at school repeatedly after 9.30am.

See also: Safeguarding Children Policy

This policy will be reviewed annually		
Review: September 2019	By:	Miles Chester & The Personnel, Policies and Safeguarding Committee
Review: October 2020	By:	Clare James (DHT) and Laura Goddard (SA)
Review: June 2022	By:	Clare James (DHT) additions of protocols for cae and referral form for a CAE and removing Covid 19 edits to this policy. January '23, added Attendance Contract details and appendix
Review: March 2023	By:	Clare James (DHT), Sarah Lillis (Office Admin). Edits made to reflect current practice and involvement of SASO and introduction of PN use.
Latest Review: July 2023	By:	Clare James (DHT) to include changes to Children Missing in Education to Children Absent in Education.
Next review: July 2024	By:	

Appendix 1

Attendance Contract Template

Date/time of meeting:	
Venue:	

Pupil name:	
Date of birth:	
Address:	

Present at meeting:	
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Action agreed

Attendance target:	
Timescale for improvement:	

Date for review meeting:	
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I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

- Parent/carer
- Pupil
- School Representative

Appendix 2**APPLICATION FOR LEAVE OF ABSENCE**

Please read the following information before you complete the request.

As you aware it is the policy of the school not to allow any holiday or extended leave during term time. However, if you wish to request leave of absence you need to read the following advice and complete the form below.

This form must be completed 3 weeks prior to the requested leave of absence. Each request for absence will be considered individually and we will take into account:

- The pupil's previous attendance history;
- The time of the year regards any public or internal examinations;
- Attendance and punctuality in the current academic year;
- The nature of the request and whether any other requests have been made.

A Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child should a pupil take leave of absence without permission.

Full name of pupil:	Class:
Address:	
Telephone number:	

Reason for request for leave of absence:		
Intended dates of absence:		
Name of parent/carers:	Signature:	Date:

<u>For Office Use only:</u>	
Form to be submitted to Head teacher along with Registration Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/>
Agreement given Yes/No	
Appropriate letter to be prepared for return to parent/carer and given to Head teacher for signature.	
Signed:	Date:

Appendix 3



Below 95% Attendance Alert

Dear Parent / Carer,

You will be aware that Thomas's Academy takes pupil attendance very seriously. Attendance and punctuality is vital to the well-being and future prospects of all our children. At Thomas's Academy children are expected to attend for the full 190 days of the academic year, unless there is a good reason for absence.

The government realises that healthy children get ill, this is what the 95% average attendance refers to, allowing 5% of illness over the academic year if need be.

We track the attendance of every child each week, and this analysis has highlighted a concern with your child's attendance.

(Child's Name) has had attendance of **(% attendance)** so far this year.

Please let us know if there are any particular reasons for this low level of attendance, or if there is any additional medical evidence that you would like us to be aware of.

As outlined in our Attendance Policy, we will continue to monitor your child's attendance, and if attendance continues to fall, the Deputy head teacher will invite you to the school to discuss the reasons for the absences (authorised or unauthorised) and consider possible solutions.

A real focus on ensuring that your child comes to school every day will help turn this issue around very quickly and will have a very positive impact on your child's education.

I appreciate your support in this matter.

Yours Sincerely,

Clare James
Deputy Head teacher

Appendix 4

Protocol for schools in Hammersmith & Fulham Council to identify children absent from education

This document sets out the new requirements for identifying children absent from education (CAE) and is for the attention and action of all schools with pupils of statutory school age (5 – 16). This includes Independent schools.

Background

With effect from 1st September 2016, to improve communication and coordination between schools and LAs, all schools are required to notify the maintaining local authority of starters and leavers. This does not include those starting at the school at the first point of entry in reception or Year 7, or those leaving Year 11. The statutory guidance requires all schools, state maintained, academies and independent, to notify the maintaining Local Authority of all children are removed from the school roll under any of the grounds listed in Education (Pupil Registration) (England) 2006 Regulations s8 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education>.

Legal Requirements

The following applies to non-standard transition points, also referred to as 'in-year'. All schools will be legally required to:

- Inform the LA when they are about to delete a pupil's name from the admission register under the permitted grounds relevant to children of statutory school age (these are shown on the 'starters and leavers' form attached);
- Record details of the pupil's residence, the name of the person with whom they reside, the date from which they will reside there, and then name of the destination school (where they can reasonably obtain this information);
- Inform the LA of the pupil's destination school (In the case of refusal to disclose the name of the destined school, please contact then admission team key contact who will advise and assist) and home address if the pupil's moving to a new school; and
- Provide information to the LA when registering new pupils within five days, including the pupil's address and previous school (where they can reasonably obtain this information).

System of notification

All schools will be required to notify the LA of all starters and leavers as set out in the legal requirements above. The majority of schools will need to return their notifications to the Admissions team using the LGfL Document Exchange. For Independent schools, returns will need to be made via the s2s website.

Notifications must not be returned by email unless it is password protected.

The Admissions Team has designated officers that will be checking and monitoring the information returned and will be the key contact for any enquires.

Notification officer — **Mei Hui**

If your school does not have the returns template, contact the notification officer.

It is the responsibility for each school to ensure that notifications are sent to the LA's Admissions Team. Reminders will not be sent but the designated officer will contact you if notifications have not been submitted for a period of 4 weeks.

Requirements at standard transition points

Systems are already in place between schools and the LA to identify children that either do not accept a school offered to their child or do not turn up to the school for which they have been accepted and been placed on roll.

The Admissions Team will monitor cases where a school place has not been secured at the standard point of entry (Reception and Year 7).

Family Support are the point of contact for schools where pupils placed on a school roll have not arrived on their given start date.

Independent schools do not currently notify the LA of children that do not arrive on their given start date.

To ensure the safeguarding responsibly is consistent with state maintained schools, it is requested that Independent schools use the 'starters and leavers' form to notify the LA of children that have not arrived as expected. The school must have carried out their own checks before passing to the LA.

Useful contacts:

School Admissions team - 020 8753 1085 Email contacts are the designated notification officers as provided above. Family Support Service: familyservices@lbhf.gov.uk

ACE — Attendance (statutory function), Child employment, Elective Home Education (EHE) and children absent from education (CAE): kyria.parsons@lbhf.gov.uk (tel. 020 8753 6797)

Appendix 5

CAE Referral form

Attendance (statutory), Child employment and children in entertainment, Elective home education and children absent from education (ACE Team)

Referral for Child Missing/Absent from Education (CAE)

Form to be completed when child is not on a school roll and the parent has not made suitable arrangements for their education, either by enrolling their child in education provision or through education at home. Form should also be completed when Elective Home Education (EHE) is being considered by Special Educational Needs (SEN) Team.

Child Surname	
Child First name	
Year Group/DOB	
Parent/Guardian name	
Home Address	
Borough of residence	
Previous School/Country	
Contact details for applicant/family (Tel/Email)	

Referral being made by:	SEN team <input type="checkbox"/> School Admissions <input type="checkbox"/> Exclusions officer <input type="checkbox"/> Others <input type="checkbox"/>
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Circumstances leading to the child being cae (if known)

Action taken to return the child to education e.g. family made aware of legal responsibilities to ensure that child is in receipt of education, family supplied with In Year Admissions Form etc... Include specific details of communications, copies of relevant correspondence & details of meetings etc.

Additional information – outside agencies – e.g. social worker/localities/medical evidence.

Signed:

Team/role:

Contact details (telephone/email address):

Date:

Section A to be completed by School Admissions Team only

Time line for interactions with family – minimum three letters and final housing/CT check
Letter 1 –
Letter 2 –
Letter 3 –
Final audit/housing/CT check as available –
NB : If child can be traced and is out of school the ACE team will not accept referral without copy of letter confirming offer of named provision.

Form to be emailed to Kyria.parsons@lbhf.gov.uk