

Thorplands Primary School



Thorplands Primary Attendance Policy

Scope of Policy: This policy applies to all students of compulsory school age at Thorplands Primary and will be used to inform attendance practice in relation to reception students.

Key Requirements/ Legal Duties

By law, all children of compulsory school age (5 to 16) must receive a suitable full-time education. Parents have a legal responsibility to make sure this happens – either by registering their child at a school or by making other arrangements to give them a suitable, full-time education. As a last resort, schools and local authorities have legal powers to deal with poor attendance.

Thorplands School seeks to operate in ways which maximise student potential while supporting parents in meeting their legal requirements. The School fulfils its responsibilities in respect of taking a morning and afternoon session registration, of being open for the required 190 student school days unless prevented by extreme weather or other unforeseen exceptional circumstance, and by using the nationally recognised attendance codes.

Key principles

- Students at the School have the right to the best possible education.
- In order for students to access the best possible education, a high level of attendance is essential.
- Students' ability to stay and feel safe, enjoy and achieve and to make a positive contribution may be jeopardised by poor attendance.

Context

Thorplands Primary School endeavours to provide a safe learning environment in which students can feel and be safe, enjoy and achieve. The School acknowledges the proven correlation between high level attendance and student outcomes. The School's attendance policy emphasises positive strategies and a range of interventions to ensure the highest levels of attendance. However, when normal School procedures do not result in good attendance, a range of further measures, including legal action, have to be considered.

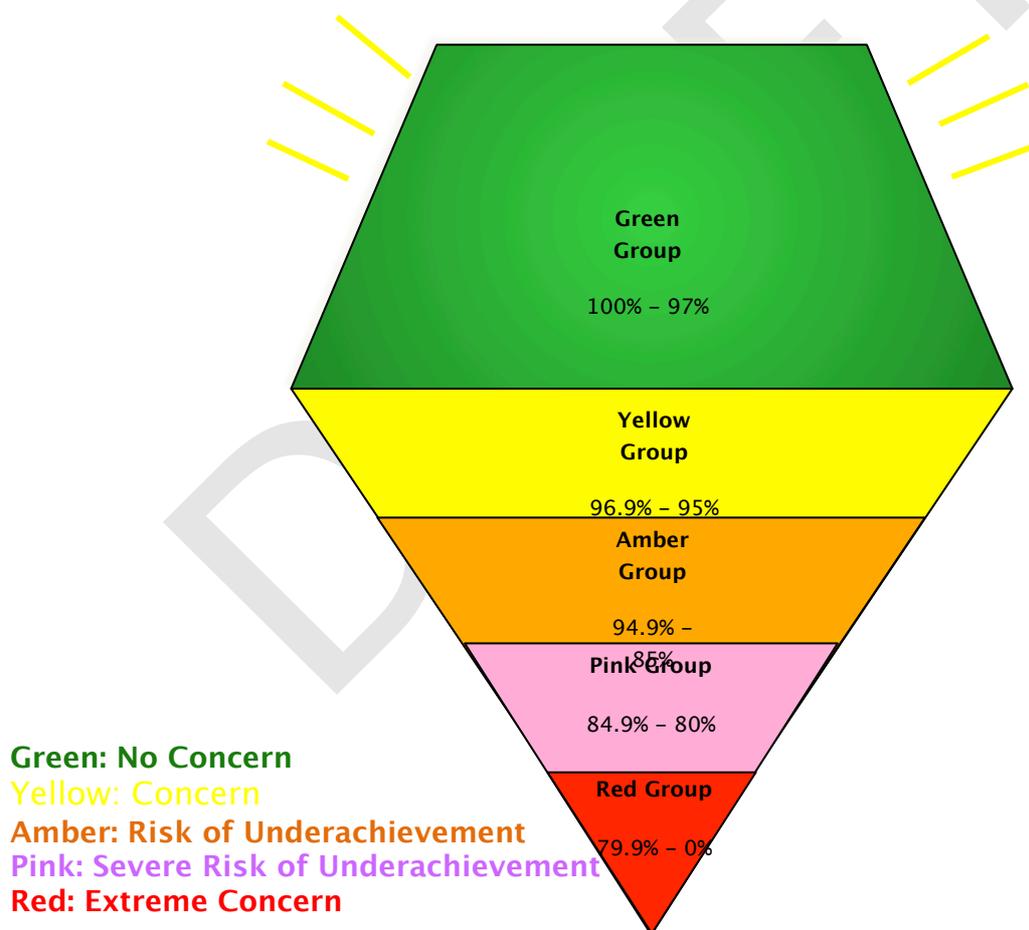
Aims of the policy

- To increase overall School attendance to 96.5% or above
- To raise the profile of the importance of high level attendance among students, parents and other staff
- To outline a procedure for monitoring attendance and punctuality and intervention strategies
- To eradicate persistent lateness
- To explain the legal processes for persistent lateness and absence

Attendance practice

Improving attendance is a whole school initiative. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, students and all members of school staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole School approach to attendance monitoring and intervention. This is led by the Head Teacher who works with her team of staff to monitor and improve attendance, while raising the profile and emphasising the importance of attendance at individual and whole school level.



Positive reinforcement

In order to promote high levels of attendance and to recognise individual and collective high percentage attendance or improvement, the School uses a range of rewards and positive reinforcement strategies. As appropriate to student age these include:

- Display of individual attendance
- Display of tutor/class attendance
- Stickers
- Certificates
- Letters
- Mention in assemblies
- Reinforcement through small prizes
- Inclusion in prize draws

Attendance monitoring and intervention

As evident from the attendance diamond, the School has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concern.

The principles underpinning the model will be used to promote consistency both across the different year groups of compulsory school age and within each year group. In summary these are as follows:

- The attendance statistics for every student at the School will be displayed weekly by the Parent Link Worker
- Attendance matters will receive positive reinforcement in assemblies
- Green 97–100% and Yellow 95–96.9% – The Class Teacher has responsibility for praising students in the green group for high attendance and encouraging and supporting improvement for students in the yellow group through monitoring, dialogue with the student and recognising improvement
- Amber 85–94.9% – The Parent Link Worker and Family Support Worker, work with parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the amber group
- Pink 80–84.9% The Parent Link Worker and Family Support Worker works with parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the pink group
- Red 0–79.9% The Parent Link Worker and Legal Services at Northamptonshire Local Authority work with parents/carers to improve the attendance of the students in the red group. This includes taking legal action where required.

To support this process the Parent Link Worker and Family Support Worker will hold regular, preferably weekly, attendance meetings for each year group in which all students are monitored and banded in relation to their attendance percentage. In these routine meetings the attendance of students whose attendance is in the red, pink or amber groups and those whose attendance is declining will be reviewed. A series of actions to support improvement will be agreed, delegated and recorded.

These principles and the concept of colour coding will inform the practice adopted by the primary sector but with the Amber, Pink and Red percentage bands serving as the absolute minimum at which action is taken. In practice preventative intervention, working closely with parents and the active involvement of the County Council's Education Entitlement Service is likely to be initiated much earlier.

Education Entitlement Service

The Education Entitlement Service is a statutory service and a legal requirement. The Education Entitlement Service involvement is usually triggered by an unacceptable level of:

- Unauthorised absence
- Persistent absence
- Lateness

Authorised and unauthorised absence

If a student is absent from the School, it is vital that a parent contacts the School at the earliest opportunity to provide a sufficient reason for absence. This should be by telephone in the first instance supported by a written note on the student's return

Absence can only be authorised where there is good cause. If no sufficient reason for absence is provided, attendance will be recorded as unauthorised.

Parents cannot authorise absence. This is a decision which rests with the School in accordance within the boundaries set by The Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1996. Where deemed necessary, the School reserves the right to request medical evidence to support absence due to illness

Lateness

It is the School's responsibility to provide the best education possible. This can only be achieved if students attend regularly and punctually. The School expects all students to arrive at school, registrations and lessons on time. Poor punctuality is not acceptable. A student arriving late will disrupt not only their own continuity of learning but also that of others and the matter will be addressed with parents. A build-up of lateness or patterns of lateness over a period of time will result in further follow up investigation and action.

Avoiding holidays & appointments during term time

In order to maximise individual achievement, parents should avoid making routine appointments for pupils during the school day or taking family holidays during the term time period.

The School will only consider authorising an absence in relation to leave during term time based on individual need and exceptional circumstance and only where the following criteria have been met:

- An application is made to the head Teacher in advance of the leave by a parent the child normally lives with.
- There are special reasons for needing to take leave.

In line with the recommended guidance, the School will judge each leave request on an individual basis taking into consideration:

- the time of year for the proposed leave
- if the proposed dates are close to any exam dates
- the pupils's overall attendance record
- any leave already taken in the school year
- the age and stage of education of the pupil
- the ability of the pupil to catch up the work that they have missed
- the reason why the parent/carer is requesting the time off during term time

While authorised absence may be granted for leave it is entirely the School's' decision and not a parental right. Parents should be advised that absence

without the consent of the School could result in further action and sanctions including a penalty notice

Legal action

All parents have a legal responsibility to ensure their child attends the School on a regular and punctual basis. Should any student's attendance or punctuality become a concern, they will be subject to an investigation by the County Council's Education Entitlement Service. The School and Northamptonshire County Council work together in partnership where legal action is required.

Legal action includes:

- **Penalty Notice:** A penalty notice may be issued for each student who has unauthorised absence or lateness. The penalty is a £60 fine, if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. If the penalty is not paid in full within the 28 day period, a prosecution will be sought.
- **Prosecution for unauthorised absence:** It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the School. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per child, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months.

Any prosecution will appear on a criminal record.

Supporting and working with parents

In order to support parents in meeting their legal requirements and to maximise individual student attendance, the School seeks to keep parents/carers informed of their child's attendance and to actively involve parents on attendance issues. Methods include:

- Unexplained/unaccounted for absence letter asking for reasons
- Second and Third Warning letters for continual absence
- Parental meetings
- Active involvement staff
- Included on student reports
- At Parents' Meetings/Evenings

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The Head Teacher will review this policy annually and submit a report to the Governing Body. The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the School.

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