



Thames View Infants Attendance Policy

Rationale

'Our aim is to provide the best education and learning opportunities for all by providing quality teaching that will enable children to learn and achieve high standards.'

We have high expectations of our children's learning and if these are to be realised we need to establish high expectations of attendance and punctuality.

To achieve this we need to ensure that children know that they are valued and that school is a secure and inviting place to be. We also need to help parents understand the importance of regular attendance and that children need to arrive at school in time for the start of lessons.

We are ever mindful that low attendance affects children in many ways:

- Children miss out on opportunities to develop social skills.
- They may withdraw and have difficulties in forming good relationships with others – which may stay with them during later life
- Children can become unnecessarily worried about returning to school.
- Every lesson really does matter. Children may not be able to keep up with school work. In a busy school day it is difficult for a child to catch up.
- Low attendance at school is statistically linked to achieving low grades during National Curriculum Tests and (later in life) GCSE.
- Employers want to recruit people who are reliable. Children who have a poor school attendance record may have less chance of getting a good job.
- Research has shown that children who are not in school are most vulnerable and are easily drawn into crime.

We believe that poor attendance can be an indicator of wider issues and also mirrors how a school is perceived by families and a reflection of home-school engagement and connectivity.

Purpose

- To develop a safe secure environment in which children feel valued and comfortable and so will want to come to school.
- To communicate to parents the importance of regular school attendance and punctuality and help them understand that lost teaching time cannot be substituted with written exercises to complete at home.
- To support parents if their children are unsettled or unhappy at the start of the day and initiate strategies to support their children.
- To begin to develop the habit of regular attendance from the time the children arrive in nursery.

- To care for vulnerable children who are unsettled in school and may need additional support in tackling work and in developing relationships.
- To ensure that systems are in place to monitor children's' attendance and take action to try to ensure that attendance is improved.
- To work with the LA to promote regular school attendance.

Guidelines

1. Children are absent from school for a variety of reasons, however the majority of school days are lost as a result of illness. An unwell child needs to be at home where they are most comfortable. Sometimes when children are very young, parents are anxious and will keep their children at home with very minor ailments such as coughs, colds and a 'tummy ache'. It is often difficult for parents to make a decision about how ill their child is and whether they should be in school or not. Parents need to feel confident that if their child is unwell in school they will be well cared for. Teachers should always enlist the help of support staff and also inform the office staff, who are first aid trained, if a child is feeling unwell. Parents will be informed if there are real concerns.
2. Some children are particularly vulnerable and will ask their parents/carers to stay at home, perhaps because work seems hard or friendships are difficult. We are aware that these children need support to help them with their difficulties. A member of staff will be available to welcome them each day and to support them through this difficult time. Teachers should be mindful that they should monitor children's work and behaviour to understand the child's difficulty.
3. Teachers should be aware that when children return to school after a prolonged absence they might feel uncomfortable and anxious. Their friendship group may have changed and they will have missed significant amounts of work. Action needs to be planned to help children feel welcome and integrate back into the class. They may also need a catch up programme of work.
4. Parents will want their children to do well in School, and to achieve this they have a duty to ensure that their children are in School each day and to arrive punctually. It is the school's duty to communicate this to parents.
5. The importance of regular attendance at School is steeped in legislation. **'The parent of every child of compulsory school age must ensure he/she receives efficient full-time education suitable to: his/her age, ability and aptitude, and to any special educational or additional learning needs he/she may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'** (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996.) Keeping Children safe in Education also sets out the School's legal responsibility for being "alert to any issues that might put a child at risk" and underscores the importance of monitoring attendance patterns and collaborating with local authorities to ensure the safety and well-being of all children.

6. Schools in England have a statutory duty to monitor and analyse attendance patterns to ensure pupils' consistent engagement with education. This involves regularly examining attendance data to identify trends, individuals and pupil groups requiring support, and implementing effective strategies to address issues. The Department for Education's guidance, "Working together to improve school attendance," emphasises the importance of this practice. By diligently tracking and analysing attendance patterns, Schools can proactively address absenteeism, ensuring that all children receive the full benefits of their education.
 - The home/school agreement identifies that parents are responsible for their children's attendance but also acknowledges the school's role in supporting this. Parents commit to this when signing the home/school agreement admissions' meetings.
 - The School prospectus informs parents of the School policy.
 - The Headteacher and attendance leader will discuss attendance issues with parents at parents meetings.
 - The school will raise issues about attendance in letters to parents.
7. Whilst attendance of children below compulsory school age (children in the nursery and some reception class children) cannot be legally enforced, we will work with parents to help them understand the importance of the EYFS Curriculum and its importance in teaching children the skills they will need if they are to succeed as they grow older.
8. Parents are asked to telephone the school by 9:30am on each day of their child's absence unless special circumstances apply. (For example, if the child has a more prolonged illness and has been advised to remain at home by their GP and the school are informed of this). The school follows DfE guidelines when deciding if an absence is authorised or unauthorised. The School follows NHS and Public Health England (PHE) guidance when advising parents on how long their child should stay at home to recover for.
9. If a child is absent, parents will be contacted on each day of the absence by the attendance leader. If a satisfactory reason is given the absence will be recorded as authorised. If the absence is recorded as unauthorised the parent will be contacted by the Headteacher or attendance leader to discuss the matter further.
10. Lateness is also monitored; and whilst being punctual is always encouraged, it is better for a child to attend if running late, rather than not at all.
11. The School has adopted the LA's Policy of not granting leave of absence during term time for family holidays. Any absence during term time for anything other than ill health, will be classified as an unauthorised absence. In these circumstances, the unauthorised absence will be passed onto the LA's Attendance Officer and a fixed penalty notice may be issued (per child and per parent). The family will risk the child's school place being offered to another family.

12. The Headteacher, attendance leader and LA Access and Attendance Officer will monitor the registers and attendance data on a continual basis to identify trends and patterns in absenteeism and to identify children and pupil groups whose attendance is causing concern. Where necessary, the LA's Officer for Children Missing in Education will be contacted.
13. When a child is absent persistently (below 90%) a letter will be sent to parents to make them aware of the situation. An attendance meeting will be arranged to discuss the possible barriers to a child's attendance and where required, a parenting partnership plan agreed.
14. When School action fails to improve a child's attendance, further letters and meetings will take place to support the family in improving attendance. At the School's discretion, home visits may be conducted by School Staff to the family home. The School works closely with the LA's Access and Attendance Officer, who may also instigate support meetings and conduct home visits.
15. The School will also follow "Attendance and Register Routines" guidance, which gives more details about session timings and other attendance-related procedures.
16. Attendance data will be monitored by the Headteacher and attendance leader to identify patterns and trends in attendance across the School in terms of pupils groups and take action to improve attendance.
17. Children with significantly low attendance will be reported to the DfE as a Persistent Absentee. The School will work incredibly hard with families in order to support them to avoid this occurring. Children with attendance less than 50% will be reported as a Severe Absentee. In certain situations, legal action may be pursued. Poor attendance can be an indicator of wider safeguarding concerns; and in all these instances, the School has a duty of care to make a referral to Children's Services. In upholding this duty of care, the School will escalate to outside agencies as a precaution if we are unsure or cannot be certain as to a child's whereabouts or safety.
18. Keeping Children safe in Education sets out the School's legal responsibility for being "alert to any issues that might put a child at risk".