



WICKERSLEY
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Attendance and Punctuality Policy (Primary)

Thrybergh Primary School

DATE: September 2024

WICKERSLEY PARTNERSHIP TRUST

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This Policy has been developed in conjunction with DfE and LA Guidance. It is written taking into account the principles set out in Working Together to Improve Whole School Attendance.

Reference to parent/carer throughout this document also includes any person who has parental responsibility or who cares for them.



1. Aims and Good Principles of Attendance

In line with DFE guidance, all schools are expected to appoint a Senior Attendance Champion who has strategic oversight of whole school attendance. The contact details of Thrybergh Primary School's Senior Attendance Champion are:

Name: Mrs Parry-McDermott

Position: Headteacher

Contact Details: rparry-mcdermott@thryberghprimary.org

- School is committed to maximising the achievement of all students. Improving attendance is everyone's business.
- A broad and balanced education is dependent on regular attendance and at school.
- The Department for Education states that 'Students with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (SATs examinations) have higher rates of attendance compared to those with the lowest attainment'
- As a result, there is a clear and unquestionable link between good attendance and educational achievement.
- Regular and punctual attendance is vital if students are to benefit fully from the academic, personal and social opportunities, which are offered to them within the school.
- Parents/carers play an important role in supporting the school and encouraging students to reach good attendance levels.
- Where absence is identified as a concern the school will work with parents/carers in a timely manner to support both the students and their family to improve attendance to school.
- Schools will always take appropriate action to promote and encourage good attendance through our WPT Attendance Pathway initiative.
- At each phase of intervention through the WPT Attendance Pathway the school will work with parents and carers to implement effective intervention to raise student attendance.

2. Statement of Expectations

What the school expects of our students:

- The school day begins at 8:40 at which point all students are expected on site and in registration.
- At 8.45am registration is formally taken.
- The school day ends at 3.15pm.
- Students are expected to attend school every day where possible. Where a student cannot attend school, we expect to be informed in a timely manner and prior to the start of the school day.
- The school registers close at 9am
- All students who arrive prior to 9.20am are marked present for the morning session.
- Any student who arrives to school after 9.20am will be coded U (late after the register has closed) which is an unauthorised absence.
- Students arriving after 9.20am will not receive their attendance mark for the morning session.
- All students are expected to arrive on time to all sessions within the school day and be ready to learn.
- All students who arrive late to school must report to the office and sign in.
- Students who arrive late before the register has closed will be coded (L) and be directed to their class.
- All students who arrive late to school after the closing of the register must report to the office and sign in. Students will be coded (U)
- All students are expected to inform the office of any reason that will prevent them from attending school.

3. What the School Expects of Parents/Carers

The DFE guidance states that 'where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance of school.'

In line with this guidance the school expects that all parents/carers will:

- Fulfil their responsibility by ensuring their children attend school every day and on time.
- Ensure that they contact the school every day that their child is unable to attend
- Ensure their child arrives on time and is well prepared for the school day [full uniform, equipment, completed homework etc.]
- Contact the office in confidence whenever any problem occurs that may keep their child away from school.
- Inform the office and seek authorisation for any forthcoming Leave of Absence requests or appointments and, where possible, arrange appointments outside of the school day.
- Ensure the continuity of their child's education by not taking holidays during term time.
- When reporting a child's absence, parents should contact the school confirming the child's name, why they are not in school and when they will be back in school. **This can be reported via: 01709 850732 – speaking to the school office.**

4. Involvement of Parents/Carers

It is vitally important that parents are actively engaged in promoting good attendance.

- Information will be sent home via; Progress Reports, School's own leaflets and letters which set out and reinforce the importance of regular school attendance. Information can also be accessed through our website.
- The school will react positively to any parental concerns. Parents will be encouraged to contact school to discuss any issues impacting on their children's attendance.

4.1 Key Contacts for Parents

The first port of call for all parents is the office staff.

The following are the additional key contacts for parents in relation to whole school attendance.

- Office number: 01709 850732
- Headteacher: Mrs Parry-McDermott (rparry-mcdermott@thryberghprimary.org)
- Office: Mrs McHale (office@thryberghprimary.org)

4.2 What Parents and Carers should Expect of the School

All staff members are required to adhere and reinforce the school's attendance policy at all times and create a culture of positivity around attendance where students can flourish

5. The Governing Body

The Governing Body supports the school in its efforts to raise attendance. To facilitate this role they will receive attendance information through the Headteacher's reports. Parents, staff and students will be made aware of this Policy and reminded periodically of its contents.

6. Staff-Specific Roles

Senior Leader with Designated Responsibility for Attendance

The Senior Leader with designated responsibility for attendance will ensure the implementation of the whole school action plan.

The specific responsibilities of the Senior Leader with responsibility for Attendance include:

- Whole school vision for attendance underpinned by high expectation and core values
- Leading on the creation of a culture of good attendance in the school
- Contribution to the whole school attendance policy working in collaboration with WPT
- Creation and review of the whole school attendance plan for improving whole school attendance and reducing persistent and severe absenteeism
- Presenting to the Headteacher on Attendance Panels
- Responsibility for registration procedures throughout school
- Interrogation of the impact of all attendance driven interventions
- Lead on persistent and severe absence tracking
- Delegation of key pupil groups for intervention as identified through the persistent and severe absence tracker
- Reporting on attendance to SLT and Governors
- Identifying students for, and leading on, attendance driven 'Team Around the Child Meetings'
- Representative at WPT attendance meetings
- Lead on the 100% attendance specific whole school rewards
- Mentoring of students with poor attendance as identified through the Attendance Band analysis
- Contribute to Attendance Summit Meetings
- Strategic lead for first day contact procedures

Middle Leader - for Attendance

- Interrogation of whole school attendance bands
- Interrogation of the persistent and severe absence tracker
- Interrogation of whole school attendance data
- Strategic lead for punctuality and whole school punctuality action plan
- Implementation of the whole school punctuality action plan
- Ensuring attendance is a key feature within the pastoral curriculum
- Mentoring of students with poor attendance as identified through the Attendance Band analysis
- Leading on the celebration of attendance in assemblies
- Contacting the parents of each member of their allocated cohort to ensure excellent attendance
- Contributing to Team around the Child meetings where appropriate
- Ensure all students within the 100% receive their privilege cards for each half term

Attendance Officer/Office Staff

They will deputise for the Attendance Manager in their absence and must have the skills and attributes to be able to drive whole school attendance.

The specific responsibilities of the attendance officer include:

- Support the Attendance Manager with first day contact procedures
- Support the Attendance Manager with registration procedures including closing of registers at 9.20am
- Ensure all classroom registers are completed and log daily points of failure to liaise with the Attendance Manager and Senior Leaders within school
- Lead on clearing of code N
- Lead on whole school punctuality monitoring including late to lesson
- Monitor absence triggers for letters
- Monitoring and intervention for punctuality, including late to lesson
- Lead on the distribution of attendance letters including FPN pathway as directed by the Attendance Manager
- Support in regard to whole school attendance displays, social media and rewards

Attendance Administrators (Attendance Call Centre)

Whole school administrative staff (Admin Level 2 and Level 3) may be deployed as Attendance Administrators depending upon the need of each individual school. They are the first port of call for communication regarding first and second absence for all students. They will work as directed by the Attendance Manager.

The specific responsibilities of the attendance triage team include:

- Lead on first day contact procedures as directed by the Attendance Manager for students first and second absences
- Ensure that registration procedures are effective and consistent including closing of registers no later than 9.20
- Ensure all N codes during registration are cleared in a timely manner
- Lead on whole school attendance displays, social media and rewards as directed by the Attendance Manager

Safeguarding

The Safeguarding team is responsible for tracking, monitoring and intervention for students who are severely and persistently absent to school. They will prioritise home visits to families where the attendance of the child is 90%, below 90% or in danger of falling below 90%. They have an additional responsibility for tracking and monitoring the attendance of severely absent students; those with an attendance of below 50%. This is a key role for the liaison between external agencies and the school.

The specific responsibilities of the Safeguarding Officer include:

- Leading on the 'Get out of PA' family liaison
- Leading on the home visits strategy
- Making first day phone calls for designated cohorts of students
- Undertaking daily home visits for identified students
- Completing the home visit tracker daily
- Liaising with external agencies
- Participating in team around a child meeting

Class Teacher

Registers taken by class teachers form an overall picture of attendance and ensure we are aware of the location of all students in school. It is a very important document with regards to registration and safeguarding. The class teacher must ensure that attendance to lessons is as high as possible.

The specific responsibilities of a class teacher include:

- Completing an accurate, verbal, register within the first ten minutes of the lesson
- Ensure the register is refreshed prior to taking. This will update the register with the most up to date information including existing codes.
- Inform the attendance team and Key Stage Team of any suspicious absence immediately.
- Amend the register quickly in the case of late arrivals
- Notice when students have returned from absence and welcome them back into lessons positively
- Do not question prior absence during a lesson or in front of other students
- Celebration of excellent attendance.
- Individual mentoring of students with poor attendance
- Maintaining the form group display which includes attendance summaries
- Discussing attendance with parents, including to congratulate those with excellent attendance
- Discuss attendance at parent engagement evenings
- Challenge poor punctuality from the previous day

7. Attendance Protocol

7.1 The School's Day to Day Processes

- Students are expected on school site from 8.40 am and are registered in class at 8:45am. Lessons begin at 8:45am where students are registered by classroom teachers.
- The times for the sessions are stated early in this documentation.
- Afternoon registration takes place at 1pm.
- The school will adopt the following non-negotiable procedures in relation to the daily monitoring of absence:
 - Voicemail procedures will begin promptly at 8:00am. SLT will decide upon any necessary follow up phone calls
 - Absence calls will be directed straight to the office staff
 - The office staff will make proactive phone calls to parents/carers of students who are at risk of persistent absenteeism or severe absence
 - First Day contact procedures will commence following registration and consequent (N) codes
 - The office staff will contact home for all recorded absences
 - The Office will contact home for all recorded absences in the morning for students who are at risk of persistent absenteeism
 - All parents/carers will receive an automated text message requesting they contact the school as their child is absent from registration
 - Following registration at 9.20 a manual text message is sent to all parents/carers of students who are still unaccounted for
 - Phone calls will be ongoing during the text message initiative
- Following registration, the procedure for liaising with parents is non-negotiable

- Parents will receive a phone call, follow up text message if no response, a follow up phone call and a home visit if the school feels one is necessary.
- All students late to school will be registered as (L)
- All students that are in school after 9:20 are registered as (U) and classed as unauthorised absent for the morning session based on new guidance
- Students who are at risk of persistent absent have their attendance monitored daily by the Attendance Lead
- All (N) codes must be cleared by the end of the school day and no later than 3:20pm
- Attendance data is available each day and can be communicated through school via the attendance office. All schools will receive attendance data as requested.
- The Attendance Officer is responsible for communicating attendance through the attendance office at each feeder school.

7.2 The School's Day to Day Processes following Contact from Parents

Where parents or carers have contacted school in order to explain their child's absence the Attendance Team may still make contact regarding the child's wellbeing and possible length of absence.

- In the event of long-term absence, the school will adhere to the following procedure:
- Day 1 – 5 – the school will continue to liaise with parents regarding absence. It is likely that on day 3 of absence the attendance team will phone home following on from parental contact explaining absence. This will be in order to enquire about the child's wellbeing and their likely return to school.
- Day 6 – following 5 school days of absence, and a corresponding weekend, the Attendance Team will complete a home visit in order to complete a safe and well check.

7.3 The School's Day to Day Processes following no Contact or Communication with Parents

Where parents or carers have not contacted school in order to explain their child's absence the Attendance Team will make contact regarding the child's wellbeing daily.

This contact will be a phone call in the first instance. Where the school has been unable to make contact over the phone a safe and well text message will be sent requesting contact from parents or carers.

Where no contact has been established with parents and carers, the school will adhere to the following procedure:

- Day 1 – phone call attempted and, where no contact, a safe and well text sent
- Day 2 – phone call attempted and, where no contact, a safe and well text sent
- Day 3 – phone call attempted and, where no contact, a safe and well text sent. If the school has still not had contact from parents a home visit will be completed in order to complete a safe and well check.

Our attendance team will routinely make home visits on a daily basis as a core part of their work. This is a very important part of their work in order to enquire about the wellbeing of students who are unaccounted for and to work with parents in order to transition the student back to school.

8. What Parents and Students can Expect of the School

- A broad and balanced education that is dependent on regular attendance at school.
- The encouragement and promotion of good attendance
- Regular, efficient and accurate recording of attendance

- Contact with parents in a timely manner when a student fails to attend school without providing good reason. The Wickersley Partnership Trust Pathway initiative prompts discussions and meetings around attendance following 3 days of absence within a 6-week period. More information in regards to this can be found on the school website
- The school will act promptly in response to any problems notified
- Close liaison with Early Help to assist and support parents and students where needed
- Notification to parents/carers of their child's attendance record through regular reports home
- The Office will record all attendance related incoming messages from parents
- School and year group attendance data will be collected, analysed and monitored. The school will respond to any areas of concern identified.

9. Rewards and Incentivising Attendance

It is important for schools to acknowledge, incentivise and reward good attendance. More detail in relation to rewards can be seen on the school website but the following approaches to rewards and recognition may be used in school:

- Awards Assemblies that recognise 100% attendance across an academic year
- Year group incentive leagues that recognise good attendance
- The 100% Reward Scheme
- Most improved attendance awards. Certificates may be awarded to students with high attendance rates and significantly improved attendance
- At the end of the year, certificates & 100% Attendance Badges may be awarded to all those with 100% attendance
- Verbal praise
- Targeted incentives that are thematic throughout the year
- Award credit systems operate in which attendance and punctuality are accredited

10. Reintegration into School after Absence

The school will endeavour to support students returning to school after a long period of absence.

School staff and Early Help, will liaise closely on this issue and employ appropriate reintegration strategies. Looked After Children (LAC) will be supported following significant disruption to their education by implementing a Personal Education Plan. Students could be referred to the Education Support Team for LAC for support with reintegration, where appropriate.

The school operates a positive reintegration after absence Class Teachers will welcome all students back to school after any absence.

11. How the School uses Data to Target Improvements in Attendance and Persistent Absenteeism

The school tracks and monitors attendance data on a daily, weekly, monthly and half termly basis through the following:

- OFSTED data dashboard to show three-year trends in regards to whole school attendance and persistent absenteeism
- Persistent Absence Tracker that is updated daily for ongoing intervention
- Monitoring and intervening with students who are severely absent to school
- Attendance Bands initiative to identify patterns in absence
- The Wickersley Partnership Trust Pathways that identify when a student hits an absence trigger in order to support parents/carers in improving a student's attendance

The longer absence goes untackled, the more likely it is to become embedded within a student's approach to education. The school operates waves of intervention that are graduated to ensure we support our families in improving student attention. Once a trigger has been identified through the WPT Attendance monitoring pathways, waves of intervention will be agreed through Attendance Support Plans and Attendance Panels.

The following waves of intervention include, but are not limited to:

Wave 1 Intervention
1. Daily meet and greet procedure 2. Morning check in with identified member of staff 3. Positive reintegration culture 4. Late Initiative 5. Friendship restorative meetings where appropriate 6. Extra-curricular initiative and signposting 7. Break time initiatives
Wave 2 Intervention
1. Adjusted start times 2. Key Worker Mentor 3. Breakfast Club Initiative 4. Attendance Report 5. Circle of Friends 6. Curriculum Support Referral 7. Timeout Pass 8. Targeted intervention 9. Timetable RAG 10. Incentive League
Wave 3 Interventions
1. Family Support Team Referral 2. GP referral (parent led) 3. Sensory Safe Space 4. Adjusted Timetable 5. Parenting Programme 6. Parent Workshop 7. Early Help Assessment and subsequent referral 8. Signs of Safety Planning 9. Focussed Interventions

Wave 4 Interventions
1. Part Time Timetable 2. MASH referral (neglect) 3. Home Tuition 4. Hospital Home referral 5. Education Psychologist referral 6. Education Health and Care Plan 7. External Respite 8. Managed Move 9. Offsite Direction
Inclusive Waves (Possible at all levels)
1. Weekly text message home for students being monitored (100% attendance) 2. Formal review 3. Attendance contract with agreed interventions 4. Young Carers Support if identified 5. Behaviour Modification where appropriate (for example sleep deprivation) 6. Sleep Clinic referral or School Nurse where appropriate 7. Attendance contracts 8. School uniform bank referral where appropriate 9. Home visit incentive where appropriate

12. The School's Strategy for Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Any student who is identified as persistent or severely absent from school will be identified through the WPT attendance pathway detailed above in order to intervene and support students.

At School we identify, half termly, those students who are categorised as:

- Persistent absent – with an attendance of 90% or below
- Severely absence – with an attendance of 50% or below

For all students who have been identified as persistent or severely absent the school will act in line with DFE guidance detailed in Working Together to Improve Whole School Attendance by:

- Ensuring that they understand the individual needs of the student and their family
- Working in partnership with the student and their family to put in-school support in place
- Working with the local authority and other agencies where external support is needed and available
- Working with families and other agencies to ensure the regular attendance of every student
- Facilitating pastoral support with the clear aim of improving attendance
- Considering reasonable adjustments to practice and policies to help meet the needs of students who are struggling to attend school
- Regularly reviewing any adjustments that have been agreed with students and their families
- Ensuring pastoral care is joined up where needed
- Formalising support in partnership with the Local Authority in line with their Code of Conduct.

- Information in regards to additional support and the Local Authority Code of Conduct can be found at <https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/education-2/school-attendance#:~:text=The%20School%20Attendance%20Matters%20Pathway%20requires%20school%20to%20offer%20support,Pathway%20has%20been%20followed%20appropriately>

13. Fixed Penalty Notices

At School we monitor all absences. Early intervention is a significant factor in limiting student absence and ultimately improving student attendance. As a school we ensure that a rigorous attendance monitoring and family support system works in partnership with our parents in their statutory duty of ensuring their children attend school regularly. This system will add an additional layer of support before the Fixed Penalty Notice pathway directed by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. Our attendance monitoring system implements 4 phases of intervention prior to pursuing the Fixed Penalty Notice Pathway. This can be seen below.

Monitoring	Level of absence	Intervention
Phase 1	3 days' absence between September and October or, 5 days' absence between September and December or, 7 days' absence between September and February or, 9 days' absence between September and April or, 11 days' absence between September and May or, 13 days absence between September and July	Attendance Monitoring
Phase 2	3 or more days absence over a 4 week period	Attendance Manager or Head of Year for Attendance Informal Attendance Support Plan
Phase 3	3 or more further days absence over a 4 week period	Meeting with Head of Year or Assistant Headteacher Formal Attendance Support Plan
Phase 4	3 or more further days absence over a 4 week period	Formal Attendance Panel with Headteacher and Governing Body Fixed Penalty Notice Pathway

Progressive actions will be taken to increase attendance before the issuing of a FPN.

14. Statutory Requirements, the Law and the Local Authority (including Holidays in Term Time)

14.1 Holidays in Term Time

The school requests that parents do not arrange family holidays during term time. The school will not agree to an absence for a holiday in term time in line with legal frameworks. The law says that parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for holidays during term time.

If you feel there are exceptional circumstances that mean your child needs to be absent from school, you should apply, in advance, by writing to the Headteacher explaining clearly the dates and reasons you are requesting leave of absence.

If the school refuses a request for leave of absence and the child is still taken out of school this will be recorded as unauthorised absence and noted in the child's record.

You may also receive a penalty notice for the period of absence.

Please note: all absences on the last day of term will be unauthorised unless we have medical evidence. This will count towards the Fixed Penalty Notice process.

14.2 Working Together to Improve Whole School Attendance states that:

Where all voluntary support options are unsuccessful or are not appropriate (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time), the local authority's school Attendance Support Team should liaise with school and the early help lead practitioner or social worker (where applicable) to take forward attendance legal intervention in line with chapter 5 to formalise support and/or enforce attendance. All local authorities are therefore expected to:

- Understand and make use of formal support options including attendance contracts and education supervision orders and use them fairly and consistently.
- Set out clearly for pupils, parents, and schools when and how attendance legal intervention will be used where voluntary support is not appropriate, or where absence was not for legitimate reasons and support has not been engaged with and/or been successful.
- Secure effective joint working between the School Attendance Support Team and statutory children's social care services to work together where there are safeguarding concerns or absence becomes severe. This should include building attendance expectations into children in need and child protection plans where appropriate or considering developing a plan as an intensification of support where formalised attendance support (such as an education supervision order) is no longer sufficient or has not been effective.
- Issue Notices to Improve and penalty notices in line with the National Framework where absence was unauthorised and support has been provided but has not worked or been engaged with, or would not have been appropriate in the circumstances of the offence (e.g. an unauthorised holiday in term time).
- Take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort where all other routes have been exhausted or deemed inappropriate.

In regards to the new National Fine Thresholds schools and Local Authorities will have to consider a fixed penalty notice if a student misses 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of ten school weeks. However, this is a decision that the school will take on an individual basis.

However, the school and Local Authorities retain the discretion to issue one before a threshold is met.

In Rotherham, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority to avoid duplicate notices. This ensures consistent and equitable application of policy, protects school-home relationships, and allows alignment with other enforcement sanctions and statutory interventions.

Fixed Penalty Notices will only be issued for offences where the Local Authority is willing and able to prosecute and that are agreed at either the Local Authority School Attendance Panel (LASAP) or the FPN panel.

The Local Authority will ensure that the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices will be closely monitored to ensure that recipients pay the relevant fine. In instances where the penalty is not paid within the appropriate period, the Local Authority will prosecute.

- A Fixed Penalty Notice can only be issued in cases of unauthorised absence
- The Local Authority will receive requests to issue Fixed Penalty Notices from schools and requests will be screened to ensure adequate evidence of support and intervention, as required by the pathway, is submitted

Rotherham Metropolitan Council explains the following on their website in regards to school attendance:

“The Local Authority takes poor school attendance very seriously, and enforcement action will be taken if a child’s attendance does not improve, or if a child has an unauthorised leave of absence in term time. School’s will follow the School Attendance Matters Pathway and refer to the Local Authority for enforcement action to take place. “

Enforcement action can be one of the following:

- A Fixed Penalty Notice is £80 per parent, per child. This increases to £160 if not paid within 21 days. If a Fixed Penalty Notice is not paid, then it will be referred to the Magistrates Court. There is no right of appeal once a Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued according to the Code of Conduct.
- An Education Supervision Order is a court order made in the Family Court, which gives the Local Authority a supervisory role over a child’s education. When an Education Supervision Order is made, the child’s parents are legally required to comply with any directions the court makes under the Education Supervision Order. If parents do not comply with the Education Supervision Order they can be prosecuted.
- A referral to the Magistrates Court for prosecution. This could result in a fine of up to £2,500, an order to do unpaid work or imprisonment of up to 3 months.
- In some cases, it may also be necessary to refer to Children’s Social Care.

All sanctions are used to improve attendance and punctuality and reduce absence. Further information in regards to the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Notice Pathway can be found here:

<https://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/3098/code-of-conduct-september-2022>

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