



ATTENDANCE POLICY

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.

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 or all day absences for appointments that were only in the morning)

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 encouraging 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 an annual trip to Kidzania, ticket to which are awarded to all pupils with 100% attendance each term.

ABSENCE PROCEDURES

First Days of Absence

If a child is absent, parents should call the school office by 9am on the first day of the absence stating a reason. The Admin Officer 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”.

If contact explaining the child’s absence fails to be made by parents or carers, then the Admin Officer will contact the home by telephone on the first day and every day thereafter until contact has been made with the parent.

If the school is unable to make contact within 3 days, the Admin Officer will write a letter to the parent/carer requesting a reason to cover the dates(s) concerned. When this has been received they will update the register.

If no contact is made after this letter, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised

The Academy’s Protocol

- Pupil absence rates are reviewed weekly by the Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)
- When attendance rates fall below 95% for the year to date, or if there are regular periods of unexplained absence, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) will inform the Admin Officer, who will send a ‘Below 95% Attendance Alert’ to parents (See end of policy), informing them of our concern and asking them to present any additional medical evidence if applicable.
- If attendance falls below 92%, the EWO will invite parents in to discuss the reasons for the absences and consider possible solutions.
- Any child with attendance between 85% and 92% will remain under EWO focus until a sustained improvement is seen. Where there is little or no improvement, a fixed penalty notice may be issued and/or court proceedings instigated. Pupils who have less than 90% attendance with any period of unauthorised absence within a 6 week period will receive a warning letter from the Education Welfare Officer. This letter will state the student’s overall attendance percentage and that if there is no improvement in attendance, normally within the subsequent 3 week period then a fixed penalty notice will be issued.
- If a child’s attendance drops to 90% or below, with at least 10% unauthorised absence then they will qualify for a referral to the localities team. These referrals will be undertaken by the EWO to the Localities Manager for the South of the Borough: anna.rickards@lbhf.gov.uk
- Those pupils with attendance below 85% are classed as ‘Persistent Absentees’ and as such receive particular attention. This may include home visits from the EWO and a close analysis of the factors affecting attendance. These pupils are highlighted as ‘Vulnerable Pupils’ to our Learning Mentor who will liaise with the appropriate support agencies such as Social Care or Localities.

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.

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.

Schools will not authorise family holidays 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 the Request for Leave of Absence Form at the back of the policy

In considering whether or not to authorise leave of absence, the School 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. KSI and KS2 SATs.

Where leave of absence has been granted, the pupil must return no later than the agreed date of return. Penalty Notices (PN) will be issued where a child returns to the School after the agreed date, whatever the reason for the late return. In cases where there is more than one pupil in the family, a PN will be issued for each child. Penalty Notices (PN) are currently £60 for each child (£120 if not paid within 28 days).

Parents who take their child(ren) out on holiday without the School's permission may be issued with a PN and the matter will be referred to the EWO. In cases where there is more than one pupil in the family, a PN will be issued for each child and each parent.

Unexplained Absences and Changing Schools

- If the attendance is longer than a period of twenty continuous days and is treated as unauthorised absence then the LEA must be informed if the child cannot be located and is classed as missing from education.
- All steps will be taken by the EWO to ascertain the student's whereabouts and documentation should be kept on this process. The protocol's followed are outlined in the 'Orange Folder' - the reference manual from the tri-borough ACE team
- It is important that if families decide to send the child/children in their care to a different school they 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 family will be referred to the Education Welfare Service and Social Services.

Punctuality:

Pupils who are consistently late disrupt not only their own education but also that of others. The School day begins at 8.50 a.m. and all pupils are expected to be settled and ready for registration at 9.00 a.m. Pupils arriving after 9.00 a.m. will be issued with a late slip by a member of the Senior Leadership Team. Those pupils arriving after 9.00 a.m. but before the close of registration will be marked as late (L) by the Admin Officer.

After 9.30 a.m. pupils will be marked with (U) and recorded as absent for the (am) session. Parents will then be asked to provide a reason for the absence; this will determine whether the absence is recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

In cases of persistent lateness, the parent/carer(s) will be invited to meet with the Head teacher, or EWO to seek a resolution.

Any parent/carer of a student who records more than 5 U codes in any one half-term will be issued with a fixed penalty notice. This will be preceded by a warning letter to the parent/carer after the 3rd U is recorded in the School register informing of the consequences of reaching a 5th U in the register.

See also: [Safeguarding Children Policy](#)

This policy will be reviewed annually			
Created: July 2015	By:	Miles Chester & Jo Copland	
Latest Review: Jan 2018	By:	Miles Chester & The Personnel, Policies and Safeguarding Committee	
Next Review: Jan 2019	By:	Miles Chester & The Personnel, Policies and Safeguarding Committee	

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:



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.

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 falls below 92%, the Educational Welfare Officer will invite you to the school to discuss the reasons for the absences 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,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Miles Chester".

Miles Chester
Head teacher