

Attendance Policy

(Draft – subject to approval)

Theale Green School

Theale Green School



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1. Aims

The school's mission is to '*transform lives through learning*' and good attendance is key to achieving this for all students. We aim to ensure that both individual and groups of students participate and engage in a full range of educational opportunities available to them through maximizing attendance levels. With direct relationship between attendance, punctuality and attainment this policy aims to set out how Theale Green School will improve the overall percentages of attendance and punctuality across the whole school.

Students' welfare is of paramount important to us and we believe regular attendance throughout their time at Theale Green School is essential for their success and fulfilment.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every Student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

At Theale Green School regular attendance is defined as attendance of at least 95%, although the school will begin to put in measures to support students when their attendance falls below 97.5%.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- [The Education Act 1996](#)
- [The Education Act 2002](#)
- [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2010](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2011](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2016](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all students are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all students must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive in school by 8.30am on each school day, with tutor beginning promptly at 8.35am.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.35am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 2.00pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 8.35am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Parents can notify the school of their child's absence by:

- Email to absence@thealegreen.w-berks.sch.uk
- Calling the Absence Line on 01189388555

Parents are required to give the following information when reporting an absence:

- Student Name
- Year group and/or tutor group
- Detailed reason for absence should be given, rather than a report of general lack of wellbeing or ill.
- Predicted length of absence

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences. Parents can notify the school of any medical or dental appointments via the absence line or email address (see section 3.2). A parent maybe asked to submit evidence of the appointment, such as an appointment letter, card, text message or other appropriate form of evidence.

However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A student who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (see appendix for attendance codes).

Punctuality is closely monitored and students who arrive after 8.35am will report directly to the Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer will record the time the student arrived and any reason. If there is no reasonable excuse for lateness a student will be placed in a 15-minute afterschool detention at the end of the school day. During this detention the student will meet with Attendance Officer to consider ways to improve their punctuality moving forward.

Ongoing punctuality issues may result in the following:

- Letter home with a punctuality target
- Meeting with parents
- Punctuality report

Lesson punctuality is also closely monitored. Every Wednesday the Attendance Officer will pull of lesson lateness data for all students (Wednesday to Wednesday). Students will be placed in a Headteacher's Detention (HTDT) on a Friday to payback the time missed in lessons and consider ways to improve punctuality.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use.

If a parent has not informed the school of their child's absence by closure of the first session, the Attendance Officer will send an alert via text message to contact the school. If following this text message, a parent does not contact the school the Attendance Officer will make every attempt to contact the parent via telephone and email. If contact has not been made by the end of the school day, this will be flagged to the Designated Safeguarding Lead for further support and investigation.

Failure to report a child's absence will be monitored and a letter will be sent to parents to explain the reporting of unplanned absence procedures.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Parents will be informed of their child's attendance record via written report twice a year. The report will report on year to date attendance, authorised and unauthorised absence levels.

If attendance falls below 95% parents will be informed of this via letter.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

Headteachers may not grant any leave of absence to students during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Forces Personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Significant family events or circumstances – these will be considered on an individual basis with you.

Any application for term-time absence should be made via the school request form (available from the Attendance Officer) in a timely manner. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion and the outcome will be communicated to the parent in writing. The following will not meet the criteria:

- Relatives coming to visit
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends who have different half terms or holidays

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as explained in sections 3.2 and 3.3
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the Student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller Students travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the Student is attending educational provision

4.2 Reduced Timetables

In very exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a temporary reduced timetable to meet a student's individual needs. For example, where a medical condition prevents a student from attending full-time education and a reduced timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package. A reduced timetable will only be used as a short-term measure. Any pastoral support programme or other agreement must have a time limit by which point the student is expected to attend full time or be provided with alternative provision. In agreeing a reduced timetable, a school has agreed to a student being absent from school for part of the week or day and it will therefore be recorded as authorised absence.

All students with a reduced timetable will have a plan identifying:

- Clearly define objectives and expected outcomes
- Be for a specified and limited period of time
- Be kept under regular review
- Risk assessed addressing any potential safeguarding, welfare, offending or harmful behaviour concerns.
- Not be implemented without the signed parental agreement and the consent of any key children's services open to the child.

The Attendance Officer will report to the Designated Safeguarding Lead any reduced timetable agreements to ensure the student is appropriately supervised outside of school hours. This information will also be shared with the Local Authority.

4.3 Medical Tuition

If a student is not able to attend school due to medical illness e.g. an extended hospital stay or severe and complex medical conditions requiring the intervention of medical specialists. The Attendance Officer will contact the SENCO to offer support and contact the West Berkshire Medical Tuition Service for further support and guidance.

4.4 Flexi-Schooling

Flexi-schooling is usually a long-term/permanent arrangement, whereby a student of compulsory school age received their education part-time at school and part time elsewhere (usually under the supervision of their parent(s)). There is no legal right for parent(s) to flexi-school. Whilst they may request that their child is flexi-schooled, it is entirely at the discretion of the Headteacher.

A request for a flexi-schooling arrangement must be made directly in writing to the Headteacher. The Headteacher will consider many factors including safeguarding, individual needs, monitoring and reporting of progress and access to the curriculum/full time education.

Once a decision to flexi-school is made, parents and the Headteacher will meet and discuss how the arrangement will work. Minutes of this meeting will be recorded and a letter with the outcome will be provided to the parent(s). There is no appeal against the Headteacher's decision not to agree to a flexi-schooling request, although parent(s) can complain via the school's complaints process (if appropriate).

4.5 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a penalty notice, parents must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded Student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

5.1. Rewarding Attendance

Good attendance will be promoted and celebrated throughout the school year through:

- The House System

Heads of House will display house attendance figures in their assemblies (every five weeks). A sliding scale of house points will be rewarded for attendance e.g. House in 1st place will be reward 500 points, 2nd place will be reward 400 points. At the end of the year the house with the best attendance will be awarded the Attendance Cup.

- Celebration Assemblies

Students with 100% attendance at the end of a term will be reward 10 house points and a certificate via the Celebration Assemblies.

- Parent Bulletin

Students with attendance between 98 and 100% attendance will have their name printed in the parent bulletin at the end of the term. The best house will also be shared.

- Praise Letter or Postcard

Students with improved attendance will receive a praise letter or postcard from the Attendance Officer, they will also be awarded a super house point (5 house points). Some students may be set individual targets to meet which will be praised via letter or postcard.

- Tutor Group Competition

At the end of every week the Attendance Officer will report of tutor group attendance. The tutor groups will be ranked e.g. 1st, 2nd etc... This information is shared via a display in the canteen and on the screens around the school.

At the start of every academic year an assembly will be held by the Assistant Headteacher PDBW and Attendance Officer to promote good attendance.

5.2 Supporting Regular Attendance

We are keen to work with students and parents to support regular attendance, examples include:

- Communicating early about issues (conversations, meetings, letters and/or telephone calls from a member of staff with first aid training to develop a support plan considering medical need)
- Acknowledgement of positive improvements (praise letters, certificates, postcards, house points).
- Indicating a named contact in school
- Meet and greet on arrival to school from the Pastoral Team or Tutor
- Individual support e.g. travel plans created in consultation with parents and student
- Referral for further support via the school pastoral system (TAPs).

6. Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer monitors Student absence on a daily basis. Registers are taken via SIMs and the overview is held by the Attendance Officer. Weekly meetings are held with the Assistant Headteacher PDBW to improve individual and groups of student's attendances.

The Attendance Officer will share fortnightly with tutors any students who are below 97.5% for initial conversations to happen with students during tutor time. Key actions or outcomes from these conversations will be fed back to the Attendance Officer for monitoring.

Parents are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2). If absence is predicted to be longer than one day, the parent will be contacted in the afternoon for an update on their child's health and consider ways to support them back into school as quickly as possible. A parent is expected to call or email the absence line each day to update.

If a student's attendance falls below 95%, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this. If after contacting parents a student's attendance continues to fall, we will consider the following actions:

- Meeting with Attendance Officer and Tutor to discuss attendance

- Attendance target set via a meeting or letter
- Parenting contract
- Meeting with a member of the Leadership Team
- Individual arrangements e.g. door knocks, wake up phone calls, rewards

If after school support has been offered a student's absence continues to rise, we will consider involving an education welfare officer. If after school support has been offered a student's absence falls, a praise letter will go home and the student will be awarded a super house point (5 house points).

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Student-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.

7. Roles and responsibilities

7.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. Attendance figures will be monitored via the Headteacher's Report and meetings. Meetings will be held between the Attendance Officer, Assistant Headteacher PDBW and the Governors responsible for Personal Development, Behaviour and Attitudes. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Assistant Headteacher PDBW and Headteacher

The Assistant Headteacher PDBW headteacher is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors. The Assistant Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual students and where necessary. The Assistant Headteacher will be held to account for the implementation of this policy via fortnightly link meetings.

The Headteacher will review all applications for absence during term time, flexi-schooling and make the decision to issue fixed-penalty notices.

7.3 The attendance officer

The attendance officer:

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual student level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the key staff: Tutors, Pastoral Mentors and Designated Safeguarding Lead.
- Reports ongoing concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher PDBW.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Implements strategies to improve attendance e.g. letters, targets.
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- If all school systems have not improved attendance, works with the Education Welfare Officer to tackle persistent absence.

7.4 Class teacher and Tutor

Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a lesson basis via SIMs, using the correct codes, and highlight any truancy to Student Support (via SIMS, email or call to Main Reception). Lesson registers are expected to be completed within the first 10 minutes of a lesson. If a class teacher is not completing registers this will be highlighted to their line manager in the first instance, on going concerns with completing registers in a timely or accurate fashion may require the member of staff to attend further safeguarding training.

Tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes via SIMs. Tutors should be vigilant of patterns of absence arising e.g. a student being absent on the same day each week and monitor their tutor's groups wellbeing. Concerns can be raised with parents, the Pastoral Team or Attendance Officer. Where there is a concern over a student's level of absence (usually below 97.5%), the tutor will discuss attendance with the student, offering support and monitoring, and often contacting the parents.

Should a student's attendance fall below 95%, the tutor will be notified of any actions taken by the Attendance Officer and may be required to attend a meeting to offer further support with the student and parents.

7.5 Reception and Administration Staff

Reception and Administration staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system. The Administration staff will check registers have been completed each lesson and highlight any concerns to the appropriate staff.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Headteacher PDBW. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a Student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment

R	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 Student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Student from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for Student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or Student is in custody
Z	Student not on admission register	Register set up but Student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day