



Thistly Meadow Primary School ATTENDANCE POLICY

Approved by Governors (date)

Signed on behalf of the Governing Body

Chair of Governors

Thistly Meadow Primary School

ATTENDANCE POLICY

At Thistly Meadow Primary School we believe that regular and consistent attendance plays a major role in the quality of learning for each of our pupils. Whilst 100% attendance would be ideal, we do recognise that children have time off due to illness, doctor's appointments, out of school music exams etc. This policy is intended to set out what is expected within school regarding the minimum attendance required of all pupils, the procedures for monitoring and evaluating persistent absenteeism and lateness and outlines the procedures that are in place to deal and reduce such issues.

Aims of the Policy

- To set out expectations of attendance, both nationally and within school;
- To detail procedures regarding absence from school;
- To detail procedures regarding 'lateness';
- To detail procedures regarding 'Absence requests';
- To detail how absenteeism is monitored and evaluated;
- To detail how lateness is monitored and evaluated

Expectations for Attendance

- Across each term we expect all children at Thistly Meadow to maintain **at least a 95%** attendance rate on an annual basis.
- Your child can enter the playground from 8.45am and the school whistle is blown at 8.55a.m. We expect all children to be in class by 9.00am. If your child arrives after this time, the playground gate will be locked and they must be signed in at the school office.
- If your child is in Foundation Stage then they need to be coming in through the Foundation entrance door at 8.55am.

Procedures Regarding Absence from School

1. Every class is required to be registered twice daily; once at 9.00am and again at 1.00pm. Any children arriving later than this will be deemed as arriving 'late.'
2. Parents are requested to inform school of the child's absence each day. This can be done by leaving a telephone message with the school office, ideally before 9.30am if possible or by using the Parentmail App. The office staff will contact parents if no such contact is made. This is to ensure each child's safety.
3. A reason for absence is marked in the attendance register.
4. In the event of absence for a dentist or doctor's appointment, parents have a responsibility to inform school by means of a letter or a phone call to the office. If

your child is absent for a full session, morning or afternoon, the absence can be coded as 'Medical'. If your child is collected from school for the appointment, they should be signed out at the school office and signed in when they return to school.

Procedures regarding 'lateness'

Children who arrive after registration are recorded on the registers as a 'late'. Their time of arrival and reason for lateness will be recorded.

Requests for Leave of Absence / Holidays

From 1st September 2013, a change in the law removes a Head teacher's ability (at their discretion) to authorise any leave of absence of up to 10 days. Therefore, **no requests for holiday absence will be authorised from 1st September 2013.**

The Head teacher will not authorise any leave of absence unless:

- An application has been made in advance by the parent with whom the pupil normally resides **AND**
- The Head teacher considers that there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application. Exceptional circumstances for leave of absence may constitute a music or performing arts exam, participation in a local or National Sporting event, the wedding day of a close relative etc.

Any Leave of Absence for 'exceptional circumstances' must be requested in writing to the Head teacher.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Attendance

- Attendance is monitored on two weekly basis by the school.
- The school SIMS computer system can identify which children have **not** maintained the minimum attendance. If any child has **less than 90%** attendance a standard letter is sent home to the parents highlighting the fact that their attendance has fallen below the required percentage. Occasionally this conversation might be verbal, for example at Parents Evening.
- If an adequate response to the first letter is not received, and the situation regarding absenteeism continues, a second letter requesting medical evidence for absenteeism is sent to the parents of the child, at the next monitoring.
- The matter may be referred to our Family of Schools Attendance Improvement Officer (A.I.O.) to pursue. The A.I.O. will make contact with parents themselves and arrange home visits to discuss a child's attendance in more detail. Targets for improvement will be discussed but in some cases the A.I.O can take legal action against parents of poor attending pupils.

- Individual attendance figures are reported to parents in each child's annual report. Whole school attendance figures are reported to Governors annually.
- Certificates are given out to children with 100% attendance at the end of each academic year.

Monitoring and Evaluation of 'lateness'

- The school SIMS computer system can identify children who frequently arrive at school late. A standard letter will then be sent home to the parents highlighting the fact that their child is frequently arriving at school late and requesting improvement. Occasionally this conversation might be verbal, for example at Parents Evening.
- If an adequate response to this first letter is not received, and the situation regarding lateness continues, then the matter may be forwarded to the A.I.O to pursue.

Legal Note

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and full time attendance at school of registered pupils (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on best practice guidance produced by the Department for Education and the Local Authority. The Attendance Improvement Service aims to work with schools and families to promote good attendance and avoid legal action. However in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if unauthorised absences continue. For cases that do proceed to court and subsequent prosecution, for periods of unauthorised absence that occur from 1st September 2013 onwards, the amount of the penalty paid will be:

- £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice and
- £120 if paid within 28 days.

For absence that occurs partly or wholly before 1st September 2013, the payment periods remain:

- £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice and
- £120 if paid within 42 days.

Thank you for your support in helping us to maintain high standards.

ADDENDUM TO ATTENDANCE POLICY (COVID-19)

1. Scope and definition

This addendum applies during the period of school closure due to COVID-19 and for subsequent re-opening, likely to be phased according to year groups from 1st June 2020, subject to key government conditions being met.

It reflects updated advice from our Local Authority (LA) Leicestershire County Council and follows the government's guidance for schools.¹

2. Key workers and vulnerable pupils

During the period of lockdown, the school will accept the children of keyworkers as defined in the government's list of critical workers². For those children attending school, they will receive childcare that enables their parents to work on the frontline in the battle against coronavirus.

In addition children who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or who are vulnerable; children who have a child in need plan, a child protection plan or are a looked-after child or who have otherwise been assessed as being vulnerable, will be able to attend school. For parents who do not wish to send their vulnerable child to school or who have concerns about the risk of their child catching the virus, the school will liaise with the social worker (if any) and family to ensure their education provision continues. See also the addendum to the school's safeguarding policy.

Other children will remain at home and will be provided with work to do at home and remote learning support for their parents.

3. Attendance registers

Between 23 March and 1 June, schools do not need to take an attendance register. For administrative purposes, Code # (planned whole or partial closure) will be used for children not attending school.

Keyworker and vulnerable children attending school will be included in a daily return to the DfE, reporting whether they are open and how many children and staff are in school. Where a child attends a school other than their own, they will appear on the return for that school. These arrangements will apply where pupils from our school are cared for at Greenfield Primary school.

¹ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-school-closures/guidance-for-schools-about-temporarily-closing#attendance>

² <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-maintaining-educational-provision/guidance-for-schools-colleges-and-local-authorities-on-maintaining-educational-provision>

4. Returning to school

From 1st June 2020 primary schools in England are being asked to welcome back children in reception, year 1 and year 6. Siblings in different year groups will not attend unless those siblings are keyworker or vulnerable children.

Thistly Meadow will only open to more pupils when we are in a position to do this safely. Any date set by the government must not override the health and safety legislation which requires us to ensure that staff and children are kept safe.

When more pupils return to school, the school will resume taking the attendance register. The daily return will continue to be submitted via the online portal reporting whether the school is open and how many children and staff are in school.

Start and finish times will be staggered to minimise contact and mixing and therefore pupils will not be marked late, however, they will need to be brought to school at their allocated time to join their 'bubble' group.

5. Medical conditions

Extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding³

Children who are considered extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should continue to shield and will not be expected to attend. Children who live in a household with someone who is extremely clinically vulnerable and shielding should only attend if stringent social distancing can be adhered to and the child is able to understand and follow those instructions.

Clinically vulnerable

Clinically vulnerable (but not clinically extremely vulnerable) are those considered to be at a higher risk of severe illness from coronavirus. Parents should follow medical advice if their child is in this category. Children, who live with someone who is clinically vulnerable and including those who are pregnant, can attend.

The school will not apply any pressure if a parent decides to keep their child at home for a further period. Parents will be provided with information regarding the measures the school is putting in place to reduce the risk of transmission in order to help them make their decision as to whether to return their child to school.

We will also provide parents with materials to help them prepare their child for returning to school and to help them understand that school will not be the same as it was, for the time being.

³ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing/staying-alert-and-safe-social-distancing#clinically-vulnerable-people>

Parents will not be fined for non-attendance at this time.

6. Absence

Parents will be advised to follow government guidelines⁴ if anyone in their household is displaying coronavirus symptoms. They and their household members should follow the advice for households with possible coronavirus infection.

The main symptoms of coronavirus are:

- a high temperature
- a new, continuous cough
- a loss of, or change to, your sense of smell or taste

Parents should notify the school immediately if their child or any member of the family has suspected coronavirus symptoms and/or is tested positive.

Pupils who display symptoms of coronavirus whilst at school, will be isolated in a nominated area and their parent/carer asked to collect them immediately. An adult who will be wearing PPE will wait with the child until their parent/carer arrives.

All other absences should be reported in the usual way.

This addendum and our attendance policy will continue to be reviewed in line with updated guidance from the LA and the government and DfE.

⁴ (<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/coronavirus-covid-19-information-for-the-public>) and nhs.uk.

Version	Date	Comment
V3	Date created: May 2020 Review date: Sept 2020	Addendum COVID-19