ATTENDANCE POLICY

This Policy applies to all year groups at Thomas's Schools, including the EYFS.

This Policy should be read in conjunction with Thomas's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

CONTENTS   **Page**

1. INTRODUCTION

Thomas's London Day Schools aim to encourage and assist all pupils to achieve excellent levels of attendance and punctuality.

Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. The School also has a duty of care towards children who are seen to be missing from education for any extended periods.

Throughout this policy the term 'parent' is understood to include carer and guardian.

2. AIMS

Thomas's is committed to meeting their obligations with regards to school attendance by:
- promoting good attendance and punctuality and reducing absence, including persistent absence;
- ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- acting early to address patterns of absence.

The school 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.

3.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1   The Head
- To ensure the policy is implemented at the school.
- To monitor school-level absence data.

3.2   The Attendance Lead
- To monitor attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level.
- To follow up concerns about attendance.

3.3   Class Teachers/Form Tutors
- To record attendance on twice daily basis, using the correct codes and submitting this information to the school office.

3.4   School Administrative Staff
- To take calls from parents about absence and record it on the school system.

3.4   Parents
- To ensure their children attend school within the published term dates
- To ensure their children arrive at school punctually, properly dressed and equipped, and in a fit condition to learn.
- To be familiar with the contents of this Policy and work with the School to overcome any problems of their child's attendance or punctuality.

3.5   Pupils
- To cooperate with their parents to ensure they attend school regularly and on time.
- To be punctual for lessons.
- To not leave school without permission.

4.   PROCEDURES

4.1   Registration
- Registration will be carried out twice daily, first thing in the morning and before afternoon lesson begin.
- Registers will be marked in accordance with the guidance in **Appendix 1** of this Policy.
- During the coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic, children who are accessing schooling remotely will be given code X. This will not be counted as an absence in attendance statistics.

4.2   Absences
The School is responsible for deciding whether an absence is to be recorded as authorised or unauthorised.
- Absence from school may be authorised if it is for one of the following reasons:
  - sickness
  - unavoidable medical/dental appointments (Parents should make every effort to make medical/dental appointments out of school hours)
  - days of religious observance
  - exceptional family circumstances e.g. bereavement.
  - visits to or interviews at future schools

2

- All absences must be explained by a parent or, in the case of a planned absence, permission requested in writing.
- Parents should contact the school on the morning of each day of unplanned absence, no later than 9.00am.
- During the Michaelmas term Reception children whose birthdays fall between 1st May and 31st August inclusive may go home for Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. Parents should inform the class teacher in the morning on the days they wish to take up this option.

4.3   Holidays

Holidays taken in term time adversely affect a child's education as much as any other absence. The effect on the child of missing the beginning or end of a term is far-reaching and any expectation on staff to accommodate such absences is unjust. The School takes a very strong line on pupils missing school for family holidays; authorised absence will not be granted for holidays taken during term time except in exceptional circumstances.

4.4   Long Term Absence through Illness

In the case of long term absence due to illness the School will make every effort to support the child through providing appropriate work and guidance during the absence and will plan for successful reintegration on the child's return to school.

4.5   Children Missing from Education

All children, regardless of their circumstances, are entitled to a full time education which is suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special educational needs they may have. Local authorities have a duty to establish, as far as it is possible to do so, the identity of children of compulsory school age who are missing education in their area.

Appropriate safeguarding policies, procedures and responses are implemented for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions.
The School's Designated Safeguarding Lead will report to the local authority any pupil who fails to attend school regularly or has been absent, without the school's permission, for a continuous period of 10 school days or more.

In addition the school will inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register where they:

- have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education;
- have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- have been certified by the school medical officer as unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school before ceasing to be of compulsory school age, and neither he/she nor his/her parent has indicated the intention to continue to attend the school after ceasing to be of compulsory school age
- are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period
- have been permanently excluded.

4.6   Lateness

Pupils who arrive at school after the registers have closed must report to the school office before joining their class.

4.7 Following up Absences/Lateness
- If a pupil is absent at morning registration and no notification has been received from the parent by 9.00am, a member of the Office staff will initially speak to the form teacher to check if they may be at any morning activity and if not, then try to make contact with the parent.
- If the Office staff member is unsuccessful in contacting the parent, she will call the emergency contact numbers and, if necessary, other relevant services.
- If a pupil is absent because of illness for five consecutive days, the School may request supporting evidence.
- If a pupil is persistently late or absent, the Head will write to the parents in the first instance and will invite them to a meeting if the problem continues.

When a pupil is persistently late or absent without good reason and the School's efforts to effect improvement have been unsuccessful, it may be necessary to refer the matter to the Education Welfare Officer. In this case the School will write to the parents informing them of the referral.

4.8 Promoting Attendance/Punctuality
- The School will regularly promote to pupils and parents the value and importance of good attendance and punctuality.
- Members of staff will set a good example by being punctual to registration and lessons.
- Members of staff will use the School's rewards and sanctions procedures to encourage punctuality.
- Parents will be kept regularly and fully informed of any concerns regarding attendance and punctuality.

Individual cases where pupils experience attendance difficulties will be investigated by the Form Teacher/Mentor/Tutor and where necessary referred to the Head.

5. MONITORING

Attendance statistics will be collected and analysed weekly and reviewed as a whole each term to identify individuals or cohorts whose attendance causes concern.
- Persistent Absenteeism concerns those children who fall under the 90% attendance threshold during an academic year and this is carefully monitored and followed up.
- Pupil attendance records generally form part of the information on senior school reference forms

6. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

This Policy bears due regard to the following statutory guidance and other advice.

DfE statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2020)
DfE statutory guidance 'Children missing education' (September 2016)

7.   POLICY REVIEW RECORD

This policy will be reviewed every two years unless there is a change in legislation		
Created: March 2010	By:	Jill Kelham, Vice Principal
Latest Review: November 2020	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Nicola Diggle, Director of Admissions, Battersea Jon Chesworth, Deputy Head – Community & Welfare, Clapham Willa Barham, PA to Head, Fulham Adrian Costello, Deputy Head - Pastoral, Kensington
Approved: November 2020	By:	Tobyn Thomas, Ben Thomas, Principals Simon O'Malley, Headmaster, Battersea Phil Ward, Headmaster, Clapham Annette Dobson, Headmistress, Fulham Jo Ebner, Headmistress, Kensington Ben Thomas, Head, Battersea Square
Next Review: November 2022	By:	Joanna Copland, Vice Principal Cross-School Leads

8.   APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Thomas's Attendance Register Codes

ATTENDANCE POLICY APPENDIX 1

THOMAS'S ATTENDANCE REGISTER CODES NOVEMBER 2020

		Meaning	Examples of usage	Type of Absence
/		Present for morning	Pupil present in school at time of registration	N/A
****		Present for afternoon	Pupil present in school at time of registration	N/A
#		School Closed to Pupils	Half terms, holidays, bank holidays, school used as polling station. Also when year groups start on different days (eg Fulham Reception in Sept)	N/A
B		Educated Off Site	Eg physiotherapy sessions, Dyslexia Institute, Visits to Educational Psychologists or other SEND specialists.	Listed as present
C		Other Authorised Circumstances	Authorised leave of absence for exceptional circumstances not covered by other codes, eg compassionate - at a funeral / child performer All "C" absences need an explanatory note	Authorised
D		Dual Registration	eg in a hospital school but returning, so still on the school roll, or attending another school for a term	Authorised
E		Excluded	As stated, up to 6 consecutive days	Authorised
G		Family Holiday (NOT Agreed)	As stated	Unauthorised
H		Family Holiday (Agreed)	As stated	Authorised
I		Illness	Pupils sick at home (not appointments)	Authorised
J		Interview	School Visits, Open Days, external exams, school uniform days, travel to any of the former	Authorised
Late Button		Late (Before Registers Closed)	No L code used, just Late Button with Minutes (0 to 240)	N/A
M		Medical / Dental Appointments	As stated	Authorised
N		No Reason Yet Provided	As stated, although this should be followed up and code amended	Unauthorised
O		Unauthorised Absence	School not satisfied with pupil's reason for absence (similar reasons to C but not authorised). Also if no reason given for N after a period of time	Unauthorised
P		Approved Sporting Activity	Matches that take place outside normal games lesson times, eg a day tournament	Listed as present
R		Religious Observance	As stated	Authorised
U		Late (After Registers Closed)	As stated	N/A
V		Educational Visit or Trip	All school organised residential trips, including Daheim	Listed as present
X		Non-Compulsory School Age Absence	Reception half days for those born after 30th April All COVID-19 related absences other than confirmed case	Authorised (not counted in statistics)
Y		Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	Snow days, school closed due to unavoidable cause (gas leak) local or national emergency resulting in travel disruption that means pupils can't get to school	Authorised (not counted in statistics)
Z		Pupil Not Yet on Roll	Used for future classes, eg new Reception class lists in summer term	N/A

Codes **B**, **D**, **P** and **V** are listed as present for statistical purposes but in the event of a fire drill these pupils would be shown to be out of school