



# Attendance Policy

Version: **Date**

Ratified by the (\*Board of Trustees)

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**The latest version of this policy is available on the school website or upon request from the school office.**

## 1. The importance of attendance

- 1.1. At Thrive Education Partnership, we recognise the importance of good attendance. We want all of our learners to come to school and feel like they belong.
- 1.2. Every child of compulsory school age is entitled to full-time education and it is our duty to ensure that this is suitable for all learners and their individual needs. We do this in line with the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- 1.3. Calthorpe Academy is committed to providing all learners with a high-quality, effective education in a safe, supportive and happy environment. Every learner is welcomed valued and respected and is encouraged to show respect for themselves and others. Regular attendance is essential to achieving these goals as it ensures that learners can fully engage with the curriculum, build positive relationships and develop both academic knowledge and essential life skills.
- 1.4. We believe that education is essential for all, and to achieve their full potential learners need to attend regularly and punctually. Research has shown that there are links between attendance and academic performance ([Department for Education, 2025](#)), as well as future earning potential ([Department for Education, 2025](#)).
- 1.5. This policy is influenced by the statutory guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#). For information about the legislation that this is based on, see the section 'Relevant legislation' in this guidance.

## 2. Roles and responsibilities

- 2.1. At school, attendance is everyone's business. This section outlines the key role that all have to play in this.
- 2.2. The **Headteacher** should:
  - 2.2.1. Ensure that all roles within school have sufficient time and resources to fulfil their duties around attendance
  - 2.2.2. Ultimately decide if a learner's absence is authorised or unauthorised
- 2.3. The **Senior Attendance Champion** should:

- 2.3.1. Develop and oversee the implementation of an effective attendance strategy, focused on improving and maintaining good attendance
  - 2.3.2. Have a deep understanding of the school's attendance data, monitoring this regularly and using this to influence strategy
  - 2.3.3. Ensure that the daily attendance procedures are being followed by all
  - 2.3.4. Deliver appropriate training to staff on attendance
  - 2.3.5. Seek the views of parents and carers when updating the policy and share the policy with the school community annually
  - 2.3.6. Ensure that all roles within school have sufficient time and resources to fulfil their duties around attendance
  - 2.3.7. Ultimately decide if a learner's absence is authorised or unauthorised
  - 2.3.8. Our Senior Attendance Champion is Mounir Meghalsi. You can contact them by [m.meghalsi@calthorpe.thrive.ac](mailto:m.meghalsi@calthorpe.thrive.ac) 0121773-4637.
- 2.4. The **Attendance Officer** should:
- 2.4.1. Operationally lead the daily attendance processes, being mindful of the link between absence and safeguarding
  - 2.4.2. Arrange and lead meetings with parents and carers around attendance
  - 2.4.3. Support in the collation and analysis of attendance data
  - 2.4.4. Identify learners and families with barriers to attendance and offer support to these
  - 2.4.5. Where support is required beyond what the school can offer, signpost to other services and make referrals where necessary
  - 2.4.6. Bring ideas and suggested improvements around attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion
  - 2.4.7. Raise concerns around a learner's attendance to the Senior Attendance Champion. Where there are also safeguarding concerns, alert the Designated Safeguarding Lead
  - 2.4.8. Ensure that N codes on the school Management Information System are amended within five school days
  - 2.4.9. Where learners have a social worker, notify them when the learner is absent without explanation or is going to be deleted from the school roll

2.4.10. Our Attendance Officer is Rabia Hassan. You can contact them by [r.hassan@calthorpe.thrive.ac](mailto:r.hassan@calthorpe.thrive.ac), 0121-773-4637.

2.5. **All staff** should:

2.5.1. Create a supportive atmosphere, where all learners want to come to school and feel like they belong

2.5.2. Foster collaborative relationships with families to allow positive communication around attendance

2.5.3. Share concerns or patterns that they have noticed around attendance with the Attendance Officer

2.5.4. Remember that absence can be a symptom of safeguarding concerns, including neglect, sexual abuse and criminal or sexual exploitation

2.6. **Governors** should:

2.6.1. Hold leaders to account over attendance data and practices, holding high aspirations for learners

2.6.2. Ensuring that action is being taken to support the cohorts of learners who face additional barriers to attendance

2.7. **Parents and carers** should:

2.7.1. Where they bring their child to school, make sure that this is on time. Where a child accesses transport, ensure that they are ready leave at the expected time

2.7.2. Ensure that their child attends school properly equipped and ready to learn

2.7.3. Ask for help from the school around attendance where they feel they need support to improve or maintain this

2.7.4. Inform the school each day their child is unexpectedly absent. While transport assistants may be alerted, it is important that parents and carers **always** contact the school directly to inform them of this

2.7.5. Arrange routine medical appointments outside of school time. Where this is not possible, they should be arranged towards the start or the end of the school day. Pupils are expected to return to school following the appointment, where practicable

- 2.7.6. Where an appointment is booked in school time, the appointment card/medical appointment letter (clearly showing the pupil's name, date and time of appointment) should be shown **in advance** to the school
- 2.7.7. Formally request a leave of absence in advance of taking their child out of school
- 2.8. Where possible, **learners** should:
  - 2.8.1. Attend school regularly and on time

### **3. Processes**

#### **3.1. Morning registration period**

- 3.1.1. The school day begins at 9:00 am and learners are expected to be on site ready to learn at this time.
- 3.1.2. Learners arriving after 9:30 a.m with a valid reason such as an Accessible Transport bus not collecting the learner this will be recorded as late using the L Code. However, if a learner arrives after 9:30 a.m. without a valid or acceptable reason, the period of absence will be recorded as unauthorised using the U- Code
- 3.1.3. Lateness which is not due to an School Transport issue or without an acceptable reason, will be marked as an (U-code)

#### **3.2. Afternoon registration period**

- 3.2.1. The school afternoon registers open at 13:00 and learners are expected to be back in class, ready to learn at this time
- 3.2.2. Arrival between 13:30 and 30 MINS AFTERWARDS (13:30) will be marked as late (L Code)

#### **3.3. End of the school day**

- 3.3.1. The school day ends at 15:20. Learners are expected to be collected at this time by parents, carers or arranged transport
- 3.3.2. Where a parent or carer is collecting their child, and they expect to arrive late, they **must** inform the school as soon as possible

3.3.3. In some circumstances if school have concerns around the safety or welfare of a child who is being collected late, school will seek guidance from Children's Social Care or the police may be contacted, depending on the circumstances

### **3.4. Where the learner will not be attending school**

3.4.1. If a child will not be attending school as expected, parents and carers **must** contact Rabia Hassan by phone or email as soon as possible

3.4.2. This message **must** be shared directly with the school via the above means. While parents may inform transport assistants and guides about the absence, they are not always able to pass this message to the school and it is important that this comes directly from the parents and carers

3.4.3. Parents and carers should provide a sufficiently detailed reason for absence – for example, explaining that their child has a 'fever, sore throat and high temperature' rather than is just 'ill'

3.4.4. On certain occasions, the school may request evidence for a learner's absence, such as a letter from a medical professional. Where an appointment is booked in school time, the appointment card/medical appointment letter (clearly showing the pupil's name, date and time of appointment) should be shown in advance to the school

3.4.5. Where a parent or carer wants to discuss support or concerns around attendance, they should contact Rabia Hassan by phone or email.

### **3.5. Requesting a leave of absence**

3.5.1. At Calthrope Academy leave of absence are only granted in exceptional circumstances and will not be routinely authorised

3.5.2. Holidays for leisure or recreation in term-time will rarely, if ever meet this threshold (Code G)

3.5.3. Leave of absence **must** be requested in advance by completing the leave of absence form.

3.5.4. If the learner does not attend the school on the agreed return date, the processes at 3.4 will be followed

### **3.6. If a learner does not attend school as expected**

- 3.6.1. Calthrope Academe has a responsibility to safeguard all the learners on our school roll. Therefore, if a learner does not attend as expected, we will follow this up robustly
- 3.6.2. If a learner does not attend school and there has been no notification received from their parent or carer, then we will contact parents or carers
- 3.6.3. If no response is received, we will call the learner's emergency contacts. Each learner is expected to have at least two recorded on the school system
- 3.6.4. If the school has concerns about the safety of the learner, a home visit may be carried out on the first day of absence and safeguarding partners, such as Children's Social Care and the police, may be informed
- 3.6.5. A home visit will be carried out on the fifth day of absence in all the cases however in certain complex cases a home visit may be carried out on the same day the absence begins.
- 3.6.6. Outline your process for Children Missing Education here, it varies between LAs - Parents MUST inform the Academy when a learner is absent. If a learner is missing from the Academy without a parent or carer informing school of the reason, the Academy will contact the CME team. The Academy may also be in touch with Social Services/MASH or the Police to locate the learner.

#### **4. Absence – authorised and unauthorised**

- 4.1. Where a child is absent, this is either recorded as authorised or unauthorised
- 4.2. **Authorised absence** is where the Head teacher agrees that the learner does not need to attend the school at that time. Examples of this could include:
  - 4.2.1. A learner is unwell and there is evidence of this (*Code I*)
  - 4.2.2. A learner is attending a medical appointment that cannot be arranged outside of school hours (*Code M*)
  - 4.2.3. A learner is suspended from school (*Code E*)
  - 4.2.4. There are exceptional circumstances, such as a significant family emergency taking place (*Code C*)

- 4.3. Another example of authorised absence is an agreed **part-time timetable** (Code C2). This is when the Headteacher agrees that a learner does not need to attend school full-time and will be authorised to be absent for some parts of the week Part-time timetables **must**:
  - 4.3.1. Only be used in exceptional circumstances, as they infringe on a learner's right to a full-time education
  - 4.3.2. Be agreed with parents or carers
  - 4.3.3. Be temporary, ideally no longer than a few weeks, with an agreed end date
  - 4.3.4. Be regularly reviewed by the school and parents or carers to ensure that they are working and remain appropriate
  - 4.3.5. Consider a reintegration strategy when the timetable ends
  - 4.3.6. Be accompanied by a Thrive PTT1 and PTT2 form
  
- 4.4. **Unauthorised absence** is when the Headteacher believes that the learner should be attending school at that time and does not authorise the absence. Examples of this could include:
  - 4.4.1. A learner is on holiday (Code G)
  - 4.4.2. No reason for absence has been provided or the reason provided is insufficient (Code O)
  - 4.4.3. A learner arrives at school after the register has closed (Code U)
- 4.5. Persistent or prolonged unauthorised absence can not only affect the education of the learner, but it can also have a significant impact on the family too, such as:
  - 4.5.1. Referrals to local safeguarding partners for neglect, such as Children's Social Care or the police
  - 4.5.2. The issuing of penalty notices, where parents or carers are fined
  - 4.5.3. Criminal prosecution
- 4.6. The scenarios above are always the last resort and the school will **always** offer support to families before enforcement action is considered

## **5. Data monitoring and attendance strategies**

- 5.1. We recognise the key role that attendance data plays in identifying barriers to attendance. We therefore regularly monitor this by e.g. Weekly review with the head teacher, more detailed half-termly review with head teacher.
- 5.2. We note that the statutory guidance refers to 'Persistent Absence' (PA, under 90% attendance) and 'Severe Absence' (SA, under 50% attendance). While we recognise and use these labels, we are mindful of the fact that all of our learners have significant medical and educational needs, meaning that many learners will at points in their school life be PA or SA and the context for us is very different to a mainstream school
  - 5.2.1. We still monitor the levels of PA and SA at our school on a weekly basis and work to identify patterns in this data
- 5.3. To help us better understand our attendance, we benchmark our attendance figures against national and local special school attendance statistics
- 5.4. To support us in this, we also regularly meet with the Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Manager.
- 5.5. Aside from this policy, we have a live attendance strategy which guides our focus on the cohorts requiring more support and is updated through the academic year. The latest version of this will be made available upon request

## **6. How we encourage positive attendance**

- 6.1. We celebrate and incentivise good attendance at school. To do this we:
  - 6.2. celebratory phone calls to parents/ carers
  - 6.3. Award Certificates/ Prizes
  - 6.4. Class Rewards or assembly based celebrations

## 7. How we support those with barriers to attendance

- 7.1. While we celebrate good attendance, we recognise that there are many learners and families who face significant barriers to attending
- 7.2. Where a learner's attendance drops below 87% we initiate a meeting with parents or carers to discuss the reasons for this and the support available
  - 7.2.1. These meetings will focus intensely on the barriers to attendance and, where appropriate, look to initiate early help or other support from external partners
  - 7.2.2. Where high levels of absence persist and parents and carers do not fully engage with the support process, this will be formalised and enforcement action may be considered as a last resort, with the support of the local authority
- 7.3. Our local authority does not currently offer Targeted Support Meetings. To fill this gap, we meet with the Trust Safeguarding and Attendance Manager on a termly basis to explore the support available for these families
- 7.4. More detail on specific interventions that we are putting in place is available in our attendance strategy

## 8. Enforcement as a last resort

- 8.1. Attendance enforcement is always a last resort at Calthorpe Academy. Prior to this stage, we will explore the barrier to attendance in detail and offered extensive support to the learner and family
- 8.2. Where we proceed with attendance enforcement, we will always consider whether the learner is experiencing, or at risk of, harm and a referral is required to Children's Social Care
- 8.3. Where it is apparent that a parent or carer is not properly engaging with the support available, a formal **Attendance Contract** will be considered, outlining the attendance requirements, the support we are offering and an agreement from the parent/carer that they will comply with this
- 8.4. If an Attendance Contract is not appropriate, or it becomes apparent that a parent or carer is not properly engaging with this, other forms of enforcement may be considered following consultation with the local authority, including:
  - 8.4.1. Education supervision orders

- 8.4.2. Attendance prosecution
- 8.4.3. Parenting orders
- 8.4.4. Notice to improve
- 8.4.5. Penalty notices
- 8.4.6. Information on all of these interventions is outlined in Chapter 6 of [Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024](#). Further information on penalty notices is outlined below

## **8.5. Penalty Notices**

- 8.5.1. The Headteacher (or someone they authorise to do so), local authority or the police can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a penalty notice
- 8.5.2. If we issue a penalty notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so and send it a copy of any penalty notice issued
- 8.5.3. Before issuing a penalty notice, we will consider the individual case, including:
  - a) Whether the national threshold for considering a penalty notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks)
  - b) Whether a penalty notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil
  - c) Whether further support, a notice to improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution
  - d) Whether any obligations that we have under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate
- 8.5.4. Each parent or carer who is liable for the learner's offence can be issued with a penalty notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents/carer/carers who allowed the absence
- 8.5.5. The payment **must** be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice. We receive no financial benefit from issuing penalty notices
  - a) If issued with a first penalty notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days

- b) If a second penalty notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days
- c) A third penalty notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first penalty notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead

8.5.6. A penalty notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day)

- a) These penalty notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process
- b) In these cases, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days

**9. Appendix 1 – Key information for parents and carers**

- 9.1. Attending school is important for your child's development. Every child has the right to a full-time education and we want them to attend each day of term-time
- 9.2. The school day starts at 9:00 and your child needs to be in by this time. The school day ends at 15:20 and needs collecting at this time
- 9.3. Try to arrange medical appointments for your child outside of school time. If you can't do this, tell the attendance officer as soon as you can
- 9.4. If your child won't be coming to school, you must inform the attendance officer. Tell us this directly. Transport assistants or guides might not pass the message on
- 9.5. If you want to arrange time off school for your child (called a 'leave of absence'), you need to complete a leave of absence form.
- 9.6. If your child doesn't attend school, and you don't tell us about this, we will call you, the emergency contacts and might come to your house to check everything is ok. If we are really worried about your child we might get help from other agencies, like the police
- 9.7. If your family need help with attending school, you can contact us by 0121773-4637. We might contact you first if we think you might need support
- 9.8. If your child misses a lot of school without a good reason, or you don't work with us when we offer help, we might look to take formal action, like issuing you with a fine

**Changes**

Description	Date	Page	Section