



TIMOTHY HACKWORTH PRIMARY SCHOOL

‘Respectful and resilient; being the best that we can be’

ATTENDANCE POLICY

CRC Article 28: All children have the right to learn.



Date policy approved/adopted	March 2021
Next review date	March 2022
Approved by:	Governing Body
Head Teacher signature:	<i>L. Boulton</i>
Governor Signature:	<i>P. Crook</i>

Attendance Policy

Timothy Hackworth Primary School

Date of Policy:	March 2021
Review Date:	March 2022
School Attendance Officer:	Mrs. B. Mathwin
Attendance Governors:	Miss N. Stainsby Mr. A. Jones

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2020;
- Respectful Relationships Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Remote Learning Policy;
- School Improvement Plan.

All policy and practice in Timothy Hackworth Primary School respects children's dignity.

Our Timothy Hackworth School Vision

May our Rights Respecting School be a happy place for us all to learn; where every one of us is valued and safe in our Timothy Hackworth School Family. May we all be the best that we can be by making a positive difference to each other, our community in Shildon and the wider world in which we all live.

Mission Statement (written by children):

We would like our school, which reflects British Values, to be at the heart of the community, sharing, supporting and learning together with everyone as equals. Our children have the right to high quality learning experiences to help them to be the best that they can be.

We encourage our children to be creative, unique, open-minded and independent individuals, respectful of themselves and of others in our school, our local community and the wider world.

We aim to nurture our children on their journey through life so they can grow into safe, caring, democratic, responsible and tolerant adults who make a positive difference to British Society and to the world.

Values

Ours is a happy school with high hopes and ambitions for all our children and we welcome working in partnership with parents and carers to ensure that everything is done in the best interests of the children at all times.

All of our staff take their responsibility towards the children seriously and they strive to help each child reach their full potential as global citizens physically, emotionally, socially and academically. We are fully committed to the [CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD \(CRC\)](#).

To us, every child is unique and precious and we endeavour to foster a high level of motivation towards learning and behaviour. We are committed to the basic skills of English and Maths.

At all times we aim to centre the teaching in an atmosphere of mutual respect and personal respect. A high quality education is [the right of every child](#), and at Timothy Hackworth Primary School, we embrace that responsibility and strive to achieve it for all of our pupils.

Equalities Information

This policy should be read in conjunction with our school's 'Equalities Policy Statement', 'Equalities Objectives Summary' and 'Equalities Information and Objectives'.

We welcome our duties under the Equality Act 2010 to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations in relation to age (as appropriate), disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation (LGBTQ+).

Attendance at Timothy Hackworth Primary School

Timothy Hackworth Primary School seeks to ensure that all of its pupils receive an education which maximises opportunities for each pupil to be the best that they can be. Our school provides a welcoming, caring environment, whereby each member of our school community feels wanted, secure and respected.

We believe that all children benefit from the education we provide, and therefore from regular attendance. Regular school attendance plays a vital role in children's wellbeing and their education, ensuring that their current learning needs are being met but also building their future ability to learn, preparing them for their next steps in their education and beyond.

From September 2020, it once again became a parent's legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and on time. As a school, we will continue to work with children and their families to support parents to meet these legal duties and to ensure that children benefit from attending school regularly.

Our school has established an effective system of incentives and rewards which acknowledges the efforts of parents, carers and children to improve their attendance and timekeeping. Our school will challenge the behaviour of those pupils and parents who give low priority to attendance and punctuality.

This policy has been reviewed and rewritten in line with the DFE 'School Attendance - Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities', (August, 2020), 'School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures', (January 2015) and DfE 'Guidance for Full Opening of Schools', (Updated 3rd February 2021).

1. Attendance and Attainment

We recognise that the relationship between attendance and achievement of our children is inextricably linked.

Regular school attendance is crucial to maximise pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason, our school is dedicated to ensuring that this Attendance Policy is adhered to.

We will ensure that:

- All children have an equal right, and access to, an education in accordance with the National Curriculum, or agreed alternative;
- Children will not be deprived of their education opportunities by, either their own absence or lateness, or that of others;
- Action is taken where necessary to secure an improvement in attendance.

2. The Law

Parents and carers need to make sure that their child attends school regularly and on time. Because parents are responsible for this duty in law, parents and carers will be **breaking the law** if they do not do this and there are no good reasons for missing school.

The School and Local Authority **want to help parents and carers if there is a problem.** If attendance does not improve, or, if parents and carers do not accept help and support offered, the Council may issue parents and carers with a warning notice, Penalty Notice or ask parents and carers to attend an interview to ask questions about whether they have broken the law.

If parents and carers go to court and are found guilty of an offence, they could be fined up to £1,000 for a less serious offence or up to £2,500 if the law breaking is more serious. **In very serious cases, the court may involve the probation service or consider up to 3 months in prison.**

3. Attendance Procedures

a) On the first day off

If a child is absent for any reason, parents or carers are asked to telephone the School Office giving a reason for the child's absence. If a child is absent from school and there is no phone call from home to provide a reason for absence, then school will phone home to speak to the child's parent/carer to enquire about why the child is absent. If there is no response to this phone call, then a text will be sent to the parent/carer.

Doctor and dentist appointments should be made outside of school time. If this is not possible, children should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. If they are well enough to come back to school following the appointment, they need to do this. Medical evidence is always required regarding an appointment.

b) Coronavirus Symptoms

If a child, or a member of a household, has any of the following symptoms; new and persistent cough, a high temperature or loss of, or change in, their normal sense of taste or smell then the following actions must **immediately be taken**:

- Report the reason for absence to school;
- Self-isolate;
- Arrange a coronavirus test;
- Provide school with the results of that test.

Self-isolating - the person with symptoms must self-isolate for 10 days and other members of their household (including any siblings) should self-isolate for 14 days from when the symptomatic person first had symptoms. If a person has tested positive whilst not experiencing symptoms, but develops symptoms during the isolation period, the 10 day isolation period should restart from the day symptoms develop.

If a person is self-isolating, they should not leave their home. This includes going to work/school, going shopping, even for medication, going for exercise (this can be done in the yard/garden). The person in isolation should also not have any visitors.

How our school will support a person/people self-isolating:

- We will ask why your child is absent from school and will ask for test results to be provided, so that we can protect all of our pupils, staff and families;
- We will make sure the reasons for absence are correctly recorded on our attendance register. Where parents have done all that has been asked in reporting absences and providing test results, these absences will be authorised by the school;
- We will follow all safety measures set out by the Government;
- If pupils are self-isolating but do not have symptoms, we will provide work for them to do at home, stay in touch and monitor the work that they are doing as part of our Remote Learning Policy;

- If any additional support is required, parents and carers must contact school.

Periods of extended absence (not related to coronavirus)

If a child's absence continues beyond 3 days, then parents and carers are requested to notify the school to update them. If a phone call is not received, then the school will contact home to verify the absence.

If the school receives no reason for any absence, then an unauthorised absence will be recorded. Continued absenteeism and unauthorised absences could result in further action such as referral to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider enforcement action and possibly a fixed penalty notice (this includes unauthorised absences accrued through leave of absence taken during term time).

c) Help and Support:

If parents and carers need help with attendance, it is important that they contact school about the issues as soon as possible. The quicker school knows about a potential issue, the sooner that this issue can be resolved, and a plan put together to meet children's needs to ensure that children can benefit from all that school has to offer. Where needed, we can also involve other services to make sure that children and families access the right support, at the right time, from the right people.

d) Communication:

We are asking all parents to please remember to report and explain the reasons for absence and to make sure that contact and emergency contact details are up to date, including the provision of more than one emergency contact.

It is vital that school can contact parents at all times, for example, if a child becomes unwell during the school day or in order to discuss the reasons for absence.

Our school will analyse absence across the whole school. As a result of this, some families will receive letters to inform them if their child's absence is lower than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to coronavirus/frequent hospital appointments and/or long term medical needs). If school has concerns regarding a child's attendance, then school may contact you by phone, letter, invite you to a meeting or make a visit to your home.

Parents and carers may identify concerns about school attendance early on if they have seen a change in their child's attitude to school or in their willingness to attend. If this is the case, concerns must be shared with school so that parents and schools can work together to ensure that school attendance doesn't ever need to decline. The quicker that concerns are shared, the quicker they can be resolved.

Our school will work with parents and carers to discuss ways that support can be offered as a way to improve attendance.

e) Enforcement Action:

If, following the school's attempts to intervene, there is no significant improvement and no good reasons for absences (i.e. absences are not supported by relevant evidence), or parents and carers have not co-operated with the school's attempts to improve the situation, our school is required to consider referring the matter to the Local Authority for enforcement action.

The High Court has confirmed that the school's Head Teacher authorises absences. If a child misses school a lot because of illness, or if our school does not know of any serious health issue that would mean a child could miss school a lot, our school will ask to you to provide medical evidence to authorise absences.

We are committed to supporting your child effectively, to ensure that they get the very best education possible and therefore have the best life chances. All challenges made concerning persistent absences, will be handled sensitively and in confidence.

f) Punctuality:

Registration time is at **8.50 a.m.** and **12.55 p.m.** at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by our school's Main Reception. Currently, due to the pandemic, our school operates a timetable incorporating staggered start and finish times to fulfil Government social distancing guidelines. It is so important for all children to be on time, as missing the first few minutes of any lesson can be disruptive and unsettling, both for children and for the rest of the class. If a child arrives in school up to 15 minutes after this time, then a late mark will be recorded in the register (L). Registers will be closed at this point and any children arriving more than 15 minutes late will be recorded as (U) which is a late after registers close mark and this is classed as an unauthorised absence (a number of these marks can also contribute to a fixed penalty notice being issued).

If a child is late for school:

All children arriving late at school will be asked the reason for their lateness and this will be recorded on the school's attendance database (SIMs).

1. If a child is late (after registers close) for school on a number of occasions;

A letter will be sent home from school to parents to say that their child's punctuality is causing some concern. An appointment with our school's Attendance Officer will be offered to discuss ways in which our school can offer support in finding a way improve this.

2. If lateness becomes persistent with no identifiable reason:

A letter will be sent home from school with a specific appointment given to meet with our Attendance Officer for a 'Planning Meeting'. This will aim to address any issues which may be behind this pattern of poor punctuality.

3. If the school continues to have concerns about a child's punctuality:

Then a referral may be made to the Attendance Improvement Team to consider if enforcement action is required.

g) Leave of Absence in Term Time

Head Teachers are no longer able to grant leave of absence during term time **unless there are exceptional circumstances**. Our school will consider each request of absence individually, taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought, the pupil's prior attendance, and any important events taking place in school at that time e.g. termly tests.

An application for leave of absence must be made at least four weeks in advance, via a form which is available from our School Office. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Head Teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Head Teacher's discretion. As stated in the most recent DFE guidance on attendance, if an application for leave of absence is not made prior to the time of the required absence, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised regardless of circumstances.

Please note that absence will not be authorised under any circumstances during any period of public examinations or internal assessments.

5. Promoting good attendance and punctuality:

In order to promote good attendance and punctuality, our school will provide a range of rewards and incentives to emphasise each child's right to learn and the subsequent importance of good attendance and punctuality. Children's attendance percentages will be shared with parents on a termly basis as part of our Pupil Attitude Trackers, at parents' meetings and school attendance figures via our school website on a weekly basis.

6. Children Missing from Education:

If parents and carers move from the area and a child's whereabouts becomes unknown, our school can legally remove a child from our school roll after 20 school days of unauthorised absence. It is **vital that parents and carers keep school informed of any change of details** and regularly update them if details change. A child may be at risk of losing their school place if their whereabouts are not known.

It is also important that emergency contact information is kept up to date and that if parents and carers are leaving the area, details are provided of where and how they can be contacted. If parents and carers do not do this and school is unable to trace a child, this would be treated as a **safeguarding matter**.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, our Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed to parents and staff;
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents, and children to implement the policy effectively;
- Ensure regular meetings of the Personnel and Discipline Committee take place and will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and co-ordinating provision and policies for attendance. Governors' meetings will review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to be fully aware and supportive of expected attendance targets for the year;
- Ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site.

School Leaders:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, our school leaders will:

- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with children and their parents;
- Ensure that our school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that children are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Co-ordinate with the Governing Body to monitor the implementation of the policy and its effectiveness, with annual review of the policy;
- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's Attendance Policy and understand the role that they play in fostering good attendance as every child's right to learn;
- Ensure government legislation on attendance is complied with and that the Leadership Team are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them;
- Ensure that our School Attendance Officer actively leads on and monitors attendance provision, and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to the job;
- Report to the Personnel and Discipline Committee meeting each term on attendance records, data and provision;
- Ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.

School Attendance Officer:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, our School Attendance Officer will:

- Support the Head Teacher with the strategic planning of attendance across the school;
- Be an ambassador for our Rights Respecting school;
- Contribute pro-actively to school policy and planning including the development of a whole school Attendance Policy and liaison with governors as appropriate;
- Advise and support the school in the implementation of School Attendance Regulations and in the use of attendance statistics for the monitoring and management of school attendance;
- Identify reasons for pupil absence;
- Track, monitor and evaluate attendance interventions and evidence impact;

- Analyse, scrutinise and evaluate attendance data and identify next steps as a result of this;
- Design and implement interventions to promote and support the attendance of children;
- Receive referrals and communicate with school staff about the referrals made;
- Where pupils meet thresholds, refer them to the Local Authority enforcement team;
- Make home visits in order to safeguard absent children and engage with families of absentees;
- Invoke and participate in child protection and safeguarding procedures;
- Effectively liaise with other professionals and agencies;
- Report missing children to the Local Authority;
- Prepare reports for SLT, Governors and courts;
- Represent the school and present the school's attendance improvement work to others, such as Ofsted;
- Act as a witness for the Local Authority;
- Be proactive in the development of professional knowledge and skills and attend training identified by the Head Teacher;
- Undertake any other duty commensurate with the post.

School Staff:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, our teachers and support staff will:

- Ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's Attendance Policy and understand the role that they play in fostering good attendance as every child's right to learn;
- Be active in their approach to promoting good attendance with children and their parents;
- Ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that children are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement;
- Ensure that senior leaders are kept fully aware of and up to date with any concerns relating to children that may impact on their attendance;
- Ensure that the correct systems for recording daily attendance are undertaken in line with school policy.

Parents and Carers:

As part of our school approach to maintaining high attendance, we expect that parents and carers will:

- Engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school;
- Promote the value of good education and a child's right to learn and the importance of regular school attendance;
- Follow the procedures outlined in this policy regarding absences, ill health, medical or dental appointments, leave of absence in term time and punctuality;
- Do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences;

- Keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance and work with staff in resolving any issues that may be having an impact on their child;
- Enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same messages at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance.

Attendance continues to be a high priority for us as a school and we will continue to strive to ensure that every child in our school has a right to an education, every day.