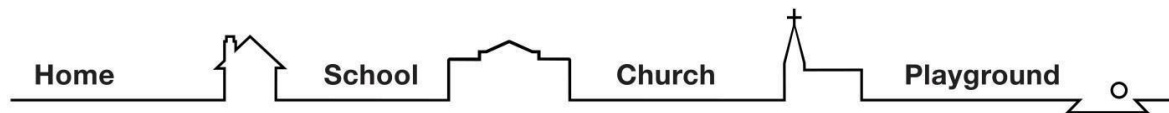




# ATTENDANCE POLICY

Person Responsible:	Deputy Head CGS
Last Reviewed:	Spring 2023
Adopted by Governors:	Spring 2023
Next Review due:	Spring 2024



Thornleigh Salesian College recognises the clear link between the attendance and attainment of students. The aim of this policy, therefore, is to encourage the highest possible levels of attendance (190 days per year) for individual students within the school. Regular and punctual attendance at school is a legal requirement and it is also essential in order for students to maximise their chances of success.

In April 2017, the Supreme Court held that attending school '*regularly*' means attendance in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school and not '*sufficiently frequent attendance*'. This means that a child **must attend school on every day that the school requires him or her to do so** and failure to do this may lead to the commission of an offence. There is clear evidence showing strong links between excellent GCSE results and excellent attendance.

In order to achieve this, all members of the school community have an important contribution to make. The policy should be read in conjunction with the Attendance Procedural Framework.

## Aims

- To improve the overall percentage attendance of students at Thornleigh Salesian College
- Reduce the number of persistent absentees
- Raise the profile of attendance amongst the school community
- Ensure the provision of appropriate guidance for parents, students and staff
- Develop and monitor clear procedures for the maintenance of accurate registers
- Develop a systematic approach to gathering, analysing and acting upon data
- Develop a whole school approach to ensure consistency of intervention strategies

At Thornleigh Salesian College, in order for an attendance record to be good, it must be 97% or above:

- 100% Excellent Attendance
- 98% Very Good
- 97% Good Attendance

Each year a number of students from every year group achieve 100% attendance, emphasising that it is an achievable target. Some students achieve this year upon year. Absence during term time, for any reason including authorised absences, interrupts a student's education and risks disrupting their education progress.

## Rights, Roles and Responsibilities

We have a procedural framework to complement this policy that will define agreed roles and responsibilities for:

- Parents and Carers
- Students
- School staff

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- Governors

This framework will identify how we will deliver our aims in respect of regular and punctual attendance. This procedural framework will include guidance on:

- Registration
- What constitutes unauthorised absence
- Leave of absence requests and penalty notices
- Systems for monitoring attendance and punctuality for students
- Systems for dealing with absence
- Systems for identifying and tackling poor attendance
- Systems for recognising and rewarding good attendance
- Systems for monitoring whole school attendance

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Taking holidays in term time will affect a child's schooling as much as any other absence. We ask all parents not to book holidays during term time. Any savings that parents/carers may make by taking holidays in school time may be offset by the cost to their child's education.

If a child is absent from school for a holiday, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and we are obliged to pass this information on to the Early Intervention Service which will result in a Penalty Notice being issued.

### **Religious Observations in Term Time**

The school will authorise absence that is due to religious observance, but the day must be exclusively set apart from religious observance by the religious body. All requests for leave due to religious observance must be made in advance and in writing to the Headteacher.

### **Emergency closure, eg, snow days**

It is extremely rare for the school to shut for emergencies such as snow. If in doubt, students are advised to check the school website: [www.thornleigh.bolton.sch.uk](http://www.thornleigh.bolton.sch.uk) Parents/carers are asked not to telephone the school. If parents/carers have not heard otherwise we will expect all students to be in school. Absence will not be authorised if the school is open.

### **Partnership Working**

Thornleigh Salesian College will work with the Local Authority and support agencies as appropriate to ensure regular attendance at school.

### **Rights and Responsibilities**

#### **School:**

- Students are registered accurately and efficiently
- Attendance targets are set for individual students and year groups
- Attendance and punctuality is regularly reviewed

- Parents are contacted on the first day and subsequent days of absence if there are unexplained absences
- Encourages good attendance and punctuality
- Discuss with parents any problems with attendance and punctuality
- Letters are sent home consistently regarding issues with attendance and punctuality
- Will liaise with the LA over specific attendance issues
- Where necessary, support families to improve their child's attendance
- Refer students with poor attendance to the LA for additional support
- Use the 'Fixed penalty notices' and 'Fast track' prosecution processes when attendance does not improve
- Ensure parents and all students understand the issues and procedures for attendance

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Ensure all staff understand the issues and procedures for registration and attendance

### **Parents or Carers:**

- Ensure children attend regularly, and punctually and promote good attendance (97% and above)
- Contact with school expected on first day of absence and any subsequent days via the schools' Gateway system or contacting school on (01204) 301351
- Parental notes expected on return from absence
- Discuss planned absences with the school in advance and seek the appropriate leave of absence in good time
- Requests for leave of absence to be submitted on the authorised documentation and for the attention of the Headteacher
- Attendance to school meetings if concerns are identified
- Support the school in agreed interventions/action plans
- Arrange medical or other appointments outside of school hours except in emergencies
- For extended periods of absence or recurrent absences, medical confirmation needs to be provided

### **Students:**

- Attend school regularly and be punctual
- Aim for 100% attendance
- Inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences
- Adhere to appropriate systems for late registration
- Arrive to school and lessons on time – (persistent late comers will adhere to the appropriate sanctions for poor punctuality)
- Remain in school unless given permission to leave; students will collect and keep on their person an exeat slip
- Speak with the appropriate staff member to catch up with missing work
- Make themselves aware of their current attendance levels and any targets appropriate to them

### **School staff:**

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all students
- Promote regular attendance and punctuality
- Provide current attendance and punctuality levels
- Be aware of the factors that can contribute to non-attendance
- To be aware of the part all staff can play in ensuring attendance is seen as important for all students
- Monitor daily attendance and support the implement of interventions as appropriate
- Work with Pastoral Teams to ensure the students attend
- Ensure that all absence notes are stored in a secure place
- Where parents/carers fail to make contact providing a reason for absence, the School Attendance Officer and/or Assistant Year Leader will endeavour to contact them
- Teachers will only use A, N and L codes in registers

### **Governors:**

- Agree adoption of attendance policy and review  
Primary responsibility for the implementation of this policy lies with Governors of the Care, Guidance and Support Committee
- Monitor attendance figures
- Lead attendance panels as required
- Appoint a link governor for attendance

### **Governor Approval and Review dates**

This policy was reviewed and adopted by the full governing body in December 2018 and will be reviewed every three years.

### **Attendance Procedural Framework:**

#### **Registration:**

The Attendance Officer should ensure that staff responsible for marking registers are aware of the codes to be used and that registers are marked accurately and consistently.

- The school day begins at 8.40am for students, students are encouraged to arrive on school site for 8.30am.
- At 8.45am when the registration bell is sounded and students should go immediately to period one.
- Students entering the school premises after the registration bell are late for school. 'L' code will be used by the period 1 teacher and the minutes late will be logged on class charts. Students will make up minutes late in a lunchtime pastoral detention the same day. Failure to attend will lead to an after school detention.
- Students arriving after registration has ended at 9.05am **MUST** report to the main school reception where they must sign in and explain the reason for lateness.
- Students late for school will be issued with an after school pastoral detention that week.
- If students arrive after the register has closed they are marked with a 'U' code
- Afternoon registration takes place AT 12.30 TO 13.00 for Years' 8,10,12 and 12. Registration for Years' 7, 9 and 11 takes place at 13.00 and 13.30 in form rooms.
- Staff will ensure that registers are completed within the first ten minutes of the lesson.
- If a student needs to leave school during the day they must provide confirmation from parents either verbally or by letter for the reason.
- Students must get an exeat signed by the appropriate member of staff and sign out at the main reception and back in on their return to school.
- Students are expected to attend school before or return to school following any medical/ agreed appointment taken during the school day.

#### **Unauthorised Absences:**

An absence will be recorded as unauthorised if:

- Any absence where the school has not given permission
- Truancy from school, with or without parent's knowledge
- Parentally – condoned absence (i.e. parents know their child is absent from school but make no intervention)
- Delayed return from a period of absence

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- Arriving late at school after the register has closed

### **Internal Absence from Lessons:**

Children should never be allowed to leave the premises during school time without permission from a member of the Senior Leadership Team or Care, Guidance and Support Team. It is possible however, that on some occasions, a child will leave the premises without the knowledge or permission of a member of staff.

- If a child does not arrive at their lesson the class teacher should enter 'N' on the register and change this to 'L' once the student has arrived and log the number of minutes late on class charts
- If an 'N' code remains on the class register, the Attendance Officer must check if the child has been sent to First Aid and check reception to see if they have signed out and left the school site officially
- If they have not signed out officially and are believed to be still on the premises; members of staff not supervising students may be directed to search the school site and immediate vicinity
- If the child is not found within a short period of time, the parents/carers should be contacted by the Attendance Officer
- If a member of staff finds the child, a senior member of staff must be told at once; parents/carers, and external agencies will be notified where appropriate

### **Children who run:**

- If a child runs away from school and is in the eye line of adults, the adult should call after the child or try and talk to them to encourage them back into school. Under no circumstances, should a member of staff physically restrain a child, unless the child is in immediate danger of hurting themselves or putting themselves in a dangerous situation.
- A member of staff should never put themselves at risk in the process and should not attempt to intervene without assistance unless it is an obvious emergency.
- The member of staff should ring the Attendance Officer, who will immediately contact parents/carers

### **Internal Truancy Actions**

The system for tackling daily truancy is clear, consistent and robust. Students who truant are logged on Class Charts by the Attendance Officer. A detention is sanctioned until 4.15pm with a member of SLT the same day. Non-attendance to this detention will result in one day spent in the Inclusion Unit the next day.

### **Leave of absence including Holidays in term time:**

- Parents are strongly discouraged from taking their child out of school, for any reason, during term time
- Parents must apply for leave of absence using the school's application form which can be downloaded from the website

- If a student fails to return from an agreed period of absence, investigations will be made by staff (Telephone calls/Home visits where appropriate)
- Following continuous absence and without parental contact with school, a referral will be made to the Children Missing Education Team
- Penalty Notices will be issued in line with Local Authority guidelines
- All requests for leave of absence should be requested from the Headteacher in a reasonable amount of time prior to the absence. This will be declined unless parents can evidence exceptional circumstances



Exceptional circumstances include:

- illness of student
- representative event (for example sport, music or school)
- religious observance
- family bereavement (immediate family)
- family crisis
- employer/further education/school interview

Any other '*exceptional circumstances*' will be at the discretion of the Headteacher and a student's attendance record will be taken into account when deciding whether or not to grant permission for absence.

'Exceptional Circumstances' Do not include:

- looking after siblings
- birthday or other celebrations
- shopping
- attendance at local events

### **Penalty Notices:**

A penalty notice is an alternative to prosecution and the criteria for issuing a penalty notice will be reduced and a fine will be considered where a student has had 10 sessions (equivalent of five days - consecutive or otherwise) of unauthorised absence over the period of two consecutive half terms.

This change has been introduced because of:

- The DFE's desire to strengthen sanctions for unnecessary absence from school
- Increasing numbers of students who are classed as persistently absent
- An increase in the amount of absence due to family holidays during term-time

The school will send a formal letter of warning telling the parent that a penalty notice may be issued. This warning letter will also include details of the child's absences. If a warning letter is received, it is an opportunity for parents to work with the school to improve their child's attendance and avoid the need to issue a penalty notice.

No further unauthorised absences from school must occur from the date of the letter. If unauthorised absences continue and reach ten sessions (five school days or more) a penalty notice will be issued.

There is no limit to the number of times a formal warning may be issued. This depends on each individual case. However, the school is not required to send a warning letter where the absence is due to an unauthorised holiday during term time.

In law, an offence occurs if a parent or carer fails to secure their child's regular attendance at school and that absence is not authorised by the Headteacher. Penalty notices are issued by

the Local Authority. The fine for unauthorised absences currently stands at £60. If payment is made within 21 days of receipt of a penalty notice or £120 if you pay after this but within 28 days. (per parent, per child). There is no right of appeal by parents against a penalty notice. If payment is not made within 28 days, Bolton Council is required to commence proceedings in the magistrates' Court under the Provisions of Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act for the original offence of failing to ensure the regular attendance of a child.

### **Identifying and Tackling Poor Attendance:**

- Attendance levels and patterns for individuals, form groups, year groups and the whole school are monitored and action taken to address poor attendance at each level
- Long term absentees are provided with appropriate support to enable them to make a positive return to school (examples may include; phased return, agreed start and finish times, alternative curriculum provision)
- Early identification of potential poor attendees is part of the school's primary liaison work prior to transition
- Appropriate strategies are put in place to support students and parents where appropriate
- Regular contact with parents via telephone calls, letters in regards to any attendance and punctuality issues such as; students with five or more sessions unauthorised absence parents will receive a warning notice, notifications of poor punctuality

### **Recognising and rewarding good attendance**

- Good attendance is acknowledged and rewarded
- Monthly and termly opportunities for individual students' good attendance will be celebrated and rewarded

### **Monitoring, Analysis, Evaluation and Action Planning**

The Attendance Officer has responsibility for monitoring whole school attendance and evaluating the effectiveness of the school's policy and procedures.

- Data on attendance will be collected and analysed regularly throughout the year by the Attendance Officer and daily, in conjunction with the Assistant Year Leaders
- Patterns of absence
- Patterns of lateness
- Patterns of medical appointments
- Regular checks will be made to ensure the correct and consistent use of absence codes across the school
- Trends in particular groups (SEND, PP, FSM, CP, gender, Year Groups) attendance data will inform action planning
- Monitor and evaluate the impact of interventions
- Frequency and feedback of analysis of attendance data to governors- termly, designated staff – fortnightly as part of attendance meetings
- Feedback to identified students – via face to face contact when required (daily for monitoring cohort, attendance meetings with parents/carers as part of Staged Intervention Process)

- Feedback to parents - via verbal contact (telephone- where required), attendance meetings as part of Staged Intervention Process

