



THE
**THOMAS
AVELING**
SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

REVIEWED: OCTOBER 2023

REVIEW DATE: SEPTEMBER 2024

RATIFIED BY GOVERNORS: NOVEMBER 2023

Members of staff responsible:

Associate Assistant Headteacher/Attendance Lead – Ms R. Hatter

Deputy Designated Safeguarding Lead/Childrens' Team Manager – Miss T. Latchford

Statement of intent

The Thomas Aveling School is fully committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. We expect pupils to attend school every day when the school is open as such attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. Research shows that all students who attend school every day and arrive punctually achieve much better results than those who experience attendance problems. The Government recommends that students' attendance does not drop below 96% (or 7days absence in 1 academic year), except in serious medical cases. Thomas Aveling shares this expectation and requires all students to aim for *at least* 96% attendance.

The effect that poor attendance at school can have on a child's education can be permanent and damaging. Students need to be in school to access key learning and information and to close gaps in knowledge, understanding and application. The table below outlines the correlation between yearly absence rates and the number of lessons missed (based on our five lessons a day timetable).

% Attendance	Days of absence	Lessons missed
96%	7	35
93.68%	12	60
92.63%	14	70
91.05%	17	85
90%	19	95
88.42%	22	110
85.79%	27	135
82.11%	34	170
80%	38	190
73.68%	50	250

Thomas Aveling is committed to raising attendance and to supporting parents and students with high attendance expectations. We actively promote good attendance for all our students using a variety of rewards and incentives. We have a whole school approach which involves the teamwork of students, parents/carers, staff, the Head Teacher and the School Governors and, where required, the Local Authority.

This policy will be reviewed, amended as necessary and published annually in accordance with current legislation and guidance. The [DfE guidance Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2022](#) states that attendance to school is "essential for pupils to get the most out of their school experience, including their attainment, wellbeing, and wider life chances".



Parental responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school every day and arrives on time. Daily attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child who should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Poor attendance undermines a child's education and sometimes puts the child at risk, encouraging anti-social behaviour. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe.

Parents are asked to notify the school of any absence through the EduLink app or by leaving a message as early as possible via telephone.

Parents/carers are informed at each school reporting stage of their child's attendance figure. Attendance information (including rates for individual subjects, week, month and academic year) is also available to parents/carers within the EduLink app.

Members of the Attendance Action Alliance have worked with the Department for Education to develop this short guide to assist parents understand how they can work with their school and local authority to support their children to attend school and get the right support. [The parents' guide Working together to improve school attendance](#)

It is the parent/carers' responsibility to ensure that all changes to a student's circumstances are given immediately to the school. It is often necessary to contact parents/carers during the day and therefore vital that the school is informed of current telephone numbers, email and home addresses as well as emergency contact details.

Late registration

Students are expected to arrive no later than 8.35 a.m. in order to register in their form room at 8.40 a.m. Arrival to school after **8.40am** will be recorded as late (L) in the AM register. If a student arrives late to school between 8.40am and 9am, they must proceed to their form room to register. If they arrive after 9am they must go straight to their Assistant Director of Learning to register, whereupon the reason for lateness is recorded.

AM registers formally close at **9.30am**. If a student is not present in school after this time and the parent/carer has not provided information to justify their child's absence, the absence will be recorded as Unauthorised (U) and contact home will be made via the Student Services Welfare Officer (SSWO).

Any student present in lessons but with no evidence of them having registered during form time will be sent to the aDOL to sign in. Students failing to register will lead to parents/carers being notified of an unexplained absence and a sanction imposed by the DOL.

PM registers open at **1.55pm**. Students that arrive to lesson after 1.57pm will be recorded as late (L). Where students are marked absent (N) to period 5 but were present earlier in the day, teachers must inform the SSWO and the appropriate House team to ascertain the location of the student. PM registers close at **2.55pm**.



The role of school staff

The Associate Assistant Head Teacher for Attendance and the Children's Team Manager have overall responsibility for attendance. Form tutors complete the first register of the day and then class teachers complete a register in each subsequent lesson.

Marking the attendance register twice daily (AM and PM) is a legal requirement. Teachers mark students present, absent or late – any causes for concern (for example, if a student is marked present earlier in the day but has not come to a later lesson) should be reported immediately to the Student Services Welfare Officer and the appropriate aDOL/House team.

It is the responsibility of the Student Services Welfare Officer to:

- Ensure attendance and lateness records are up to date.
- Ensure parents/carers are contacted on the first day of absence if a reason for absence has not been received
- Ensure written communication is sent out if no response is received from first day contact.
- Ensure registers are accurately completed and the correct codes for attendance and absence are used (using National Attendance Codes).

It is the responsibility of the overall Childrens'/Attendance team to:

- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality, using social media, form time notices and other communications to parents.
- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.
- Provide regular attendance reports to appropriate school staff/SLT etc to facilitate discussions with pupils and families, use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies reducing persistent and severe absence.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (Early Help, Social Services, AASSA etc).
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy and deal consistently with absence.
- Have procedures in place to help children settle back to school after a long absence. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence

Good attendance at school is vital. It is recognised that some young people suffer from longer term medical issues and such absence would normally be authorised by the school as there will be clear medical evidence to support the absence. The school would also work with the Inclusion and Attendance Service and others, as appropriate, to assist such young people in continuing their education.



Parents are requested to complete medical information forms and to send these into the main school reception. Where medical issues arise during the school year, parents are required to notify the main school office of such conditions, as well as providing any relevant doctors' certificates/letters. The school maintains a confidential medical register which is shared with staff working within the school.

First/Second day of absence

Parents are actively encouraged to report their child's absence through the EduLink app. The appropriate absence code will be entered onto SIMS by the SSWO.

Planned absence for medical appointments can also be reported through the EduLink app in advance. Supporting evidence (e.g., appointment letters) can be electronically attached to the form and this will be held on file.

Any pupil premium students not in school are followed up by phone calls. Home visits may also be carried out by the Home School Support Worker (HSSW) or Intervention Officer.

Protracted Absence

Regular register monitoring and data analysis is used to identify pupils with a pattern of absence that could result in a classification of 'persistent' or 'severe.' Initially the school will try to resolve the problem with parents/carers and this may involve requesting medical evidence in order for the school to authorise any further absence due to ill health. Parents/Carers of children whose attendance drops to below 96%, will receive a percentage information letter. In the event that there is then further absence from school, a letter to parents will now request that medical evidence is provided by the parent to enable the school to authorise any further absences due to ill health.

Further unauthorised absence will result in a parental meeting to allow a plan of support to encourage regular attendance. Students may be enrolled onto a daily intervention programme whereby morning telephone calls are made to parents and/or students (if above the age of 15) to encourage good attendance that day. This allows parents to discuss any issues their child may face coming into school and an opportunity for these to be resolved before the day begins. The HSSW worker, House team and Childrens' Team Manager also coordinate home visits for families where telephone interventions may not be suitable. An action plan may be formulated (in collaboration with parents) that includes strategies to improve attendance and allow students to settle back into to a regular attendance pattern. Families of students considered to be 'vulnerable' will receive additional support from the Early Help team and can also be referred to external support agencies and/or Social Services.

Parents who have concerns about their child's mental wellbeing can contact our school's Mental Health Lead, Mrs S. Williams (or other key professionals, including the House teams) for further information on the support available. Many children will experience normal but difficult emotions that make them nervous about attending school, such as worries about friendships, schoolwork or exams. It is important to note that these pupils are still expected to attend school regularly.



It is the responsibility of the Thomas Aveling School to work together with the local authority and other relevant professionals to ensure any child who is going to be absent for longer than 15 days due to medical reasons either consecutively or cumulatively, will have access to relevant and appropriate education. The Local Authority can make arrangements on behalf of the school for the provision of suitable education at school, or otherwise than at school, for those children of compulsory school age who, by illness, exclusion from school or otherwise, may not receive suitable education unless such arrangements are made for them.

The Department of Education (DfE) and Local Authority states that Head teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless in exceptional circumstances.

Head teachers will not authorise term time holidays during the 190 days each year designated for school. The Head Teacher may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Head Teacher, acting on behalf of the Governing Body. If the parent/carers decision remains unchanged and they decide to take their child out of school, it will be recorded as unauthorised and will be referred to Attendance Advisory Service (AASSA), Medway Council, in line with S444(1) Education Act 1996.

Unauthorised absence totalling 10 or more unauthorised sessions in a six-week period will result in a referral to the Local Authority for consideration of a Penalty Notice/Court action.

Penalty notices and local authority action

If a child of compulsory school age who is a registered pupil at a school fails to attend regularly at the school, the parent is guilty of an offence under s.444 (1) Education Act 1996.

"Parents who fail to secure their child's regular attendance at a school, for which there are 2 separate offences: section 444(1) where a parent fails to secure the child's regular attendance; and section 444(1A) where a parent knows that the child is failing to attend school regularly and fails to ensure the child does so. The section 444(1) offence may result in a fine of up to level 3 (£1,000) and the section 444(1A) offence may result in a fine of up to level 4 (£2,500), and/or a community order or imprisonment of up to 3 months."
Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices are issued to each parent/carer who has day-to-day responsibility for the child and are issued per child also. The Penalty Notice is £60.00 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days from the date of issue, and £120.00 per parent, per child, if paid within 28 days. Failure to make the Penalty Notice payment within the 28-day period may result in prosecution.

Children missing in education (CME)

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is at risk of missing education (CME).



Suspected Truancy from Lessons

If students who are missing from a lesson but have been marked present previously in the school day, the SSWO/aDOL should be informed. The student's whereabouts will then be ascertained and parents/carers and DOL informed.

On return to school the truant is:

1. Seen by the DOL/Subject Leader and referred to the Form Tutor and the aDOL/DOL will contact home as appropriate.
2. The student will be placed on an Attendance Report.
3. The student may be placed in the Inclusion Zone.
4. The Form Tutor/ADOL will then monitor closely attendance in the subsequent weeks and talk to the student if there is a problem and refer to the Childrens' Team Leader as appropriate.

Students Off Site

No Key Stage 3 or 4 students are allowed off site at break or lunch. If they are caught doing so parents/carers are contacted by the aDOL by email to explain the sanctions as appropriate, which can include Break and Lunchtime Report, Community Service, time in the Inclusion Zone or with their form tutor and in persistent cases Parental Supervision at lunchtimes off site or a fixed term exclusion.

Attendance awards

The Thomas Aveling School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These include a number of different rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance:

- Merits and 100% attendance certificates awarded for excellent attendance in end of term House assemblies.
- Attendance Lottery – Every Friday a form and register position is chosen at random. If the student selected has no unauthorised absence for the current term, they win an Amazon Voucher. If the student selected has an unauthorised absence, the prize rolls over to the next week for the next lottery draw.
- Students classed as 'persistently absent' can be enrolled on a 4-week attendance intervention with the Intervention Officer/Childrens' team manager. Students can earn a 'queue jump' pass and food item from the canteen at the end of each week completed with full attendance.
- Students with 100% attendance at the end of the term are invited to a VIP themed celebration where they will receive a certificate of recognition.
- Students with 100% attendance at the end of the academic year are invited to VIP pizza party where they will receive a certificate of recognition and a 100% attendance pin badge.



Sixth form attendance expectations and procedures are outlined in the Sixth Form Handbook, which can be found on our school website.

