

Dear Parent/Carer

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce Education Welfare Ltd who will be supporting Thornaby Academy to monitor and investigate pupil absence, put measures in place to improve school attendance and reduce Persistent Absenteeism (a pupil's attendance which is at or below 90%).

Should your child's attendance be of concern you will be contacted as directed by local authority school attendance procedures and where necessary taken through to penalty notice and or legal action. Your child maybe spoken to in school regarding their attendance and punctuality; this is a Local Authority requirement.

We would encourage those parents/carers who are contacted by Education Welfare Ltd to engage and cooperate with our agency and ensure that their child attends school every day and on time therefore avoiding prosecution under the Act.

We have listed below what is expected from you and your child whilst they are on roll at Thornaby Academy:

School Attendance

- Your child is required to attend school every day and on time and be fully equipped for the school day.
- Your child is not expected to be absent from school for general mild illness where a GP consultation is not required for example coughs and colds.

First Day Absence

- You are required to contact school within half an hour of school opening on the first day of your child's absence and thereafter daily until your child returns to school. Failure to do so will result in school having to initiate their first day response system in line with safeguarding procedures. Telephone calls are logged including the reason for any absence. Please ensure that school have three nominated contacts and that contact details are up to date. A home visit may take place if contact is not possible or maintained.

Medical Appointments

- Please try making medical appointments outside of the school working day, if this is not possible, your child is expected to attend school before and after their appointment. It is not acceptable for your child to be absent from school the whole morning or afternoon for their appointment and definitely not all day. Please provide school with evidence to support all appointments.

Medical Evidence

- It is good practice to provide school with evidence to support all absences, for example, appointment card or text message for face to face or telephone GP consultation, or prescriptions slip, or prescribed medication and any Covid test results. Please note that if your child's school attendance is a cause for concern, medical evidence will be required in order for school to authorise the absence, once requested, this will be on-going.

Leave of Absence

As you are aware, schools are now open and fully operational to all pupils. In recognition of the importance of education and the missed learning pupils across the country have had to experience due to the pandemic, the government has provided every school with a 'Catch Up Premium' to bridge the gaps in their learning. Therefore, it is vital that your child does not have any unnecessary absence from school to prevent these gaps getting larger.

Whilst we appreciate that families would like to benefit from having a holiday, we would strongly urge you to avoid doing this in term-time to allow your child the best chance at their education, which is their legal right.

Please be reminded that there are thirteen weeks in an academic year where school is closed; please utilise this time for your family holiday.

A family holiday does not normally qualify as exceptional circumstances. For those parents who choose to remove their child from school during term time without the head teacher's permission, then the local authority will be issuing penalty notices. In line with school attendance policy Leave of absence applications are to be received by school at least four school weeks prior to dates requested.

For absences of five days or more where it is suspected that a parent has taken their child out of school in term time without completing a Leave of Absence in Term Time Request form, further action will be taken following local authority penalty notice procedures.

Please work with school and Education Welfare Ltd and ensure that your child attends school on time every day.

If you would like to discuss any topics raised in this letter, please contact school to arrange a meeting with us.

Whilst Education Welfare Ltd would like to support parent/carer to address issues that impact on their child's attendance, it is the parent/carer who has the duty to secure the regular attendance of their child at school. Failure to do so is an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Yours faithfully

Mrs Andrew
Mrs Pickersgill
Mrs Pearson

Education Welfare Ltd