



# Thornhill Academy

*Enriching Lives, Inspiring Ambitions*

## **School Attendance Expectations**

Dear Parents/Carers

We are writing this letter to inform you about attendance expectations and to provide you with a clear outline about absence procedures, Thornhill Academy and Local Authority responses to poor pupil attendance. The Governors have made it clear that they will support the Headteacher and Sunderland City Council in promoting high levels of attendance and taking action where there are unsatisfactory reasons for absence.

Unbroken attendance at school is extremely important for learning. However, there will be times when absence is unavoidable. This letter explains the approach we are following to manage attendance.

### **Types of Absence**

Each absence is classed as authorised or unauthorised, both of which affect a student's attendance percentage to reflect the lost learning. Absences are coded as authorised where reasons are considered valid and unauthorised where no explanation or unacceptable reasons are given.

**Students with attendance of 95% or below will be expected to provide medical evidence for absence relating to illness/ injury such as a copy of a prescription or a medical appointment card etc.**

The following reasons are not acceptable:

- care for family members
- days out to theme parks or to attend concerts/shows
- parents' work commitments or business trips
- holidays taken in term time (including long weekends taken on Fridays and/or Mondays)
- parental illness

### **Absence and First Day Call**

If your child is unable to attend school you should inform us on the first day of absence before 8.30am via message or telephone, you will need to state the pupils name your relationship to the student i.e. parent/ carer etc. and the reason for absence. Parents/ carers are required to call each day a student is absent. Thornhill Academy telephone number is 0191 500 7981 – select option 1 for the absence line.

### **Medical/Dental Appointments**

It is better if appointments can be arranged outside school hours. Where it is unavoidable to book a medical appointment outside of the school day, we ask that they are made late in the afternoon so that students have the opportunity to access as much of the school day as possible without disruption to their learning. Where morning appointments are necessary you will need to notify school in advance if the student will be returning for the midday meal. School will need to be notified about the appointment in advance, this can be done via the absence line, telephone 0191 500 7981, select option 1 for the absence line. Medical and dental appointments count as authorised absences.

### **Emergency Occasions**

There are some occasions e.g., bereavements, family problems, etc. where it may be inappropriate for children to attend school; we will be sympathetic to such needs; they will be dealt with on an individual basis.



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## **Punctuality**

Please ensure that your child arrives at school so that they are present and ready for registration; this starts at 8.40am each day. Meeting and exchanging news with friends before school is important for a student's social development. Lateness causes problems over register marking and missed instructions.

## **Requests for absence in term-time**

Permission from the Head Teacher must be sought for all absences that occur during term-time. A 'request for leave of absence form' must be completed in advance of the absence taking place (these are available from the school office). Only the Head Teacher can decide if the absence is to be authorised or unauthorised. Under current regulations, schools cannot authorise any holidays taken in term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. School will require evidence of exceptional circumstances, which should be attached to the 'request for leave of absence form' and the judgement about what is exceptional will be made by the Head Teacher.

## **Penalty Notice Fines**

Regular and punctual attendance of students at school is both a legal requirement (Section 7 of the Education Act 1996) and essential for students to maximise the opportunities available to them to reach their full potential. It is parent(s)/carers responsibility to ensure their child/ren receive(s) efficient fulltime education that is suitable to their child's age, aptitude and to any special educational needs the child may have.

We hope that you find this letter useful and informative enabling all our students to access their full education and achieve future successes in life.

Kind regards,

Thornhill Academy

