



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 a good quality education.



Date policy approved / adopted	February 2025
Next review date	February 2026
Approved by:	Governing Body
Head Teacher signature:	<i>L. Boulton</i>
Governor Signature:	<i>P. Crook</i>

Attendance Policy

Date of Policy:	February 2025
Review Date:	February 2026
School Attendance Officer:	Mrs. M. Ridley
Attendance Governors:	Mrs. N. Nixon

This policy should be read in conjunction with our:

- Safeguarding Policy;
- Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2024;
- Respectful Relationships (Behaviour) Policy;
- Anti-Bullying Policy;
- Remote Education Provision - Information for Parents and Carers.

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 Sildon 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 with regard 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 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' (August 2024), 'School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures', (January 2025), and 'School Attendance: Improving the Consistency of Support. Government Consultation Response.' (May, 2022). The guidance is based on the following pieces of legislation, which set out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of the [Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of the [Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, and 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The School Attendance \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2024](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013 and the 2024 amendment](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

1. Attendance and Attainment

Timothy Hackworth Primary School 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;
- 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 the 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 three 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.

Please also consider using the Think Pharmacy First Common Ailments Scheme. Community Pharmacies are highly trained competent professionals and are ideally placed to provide help and advice to patients with minor ailments.

b) Periods of extended absence

If a child's absence continues beyond three 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 sooner school knows about a potential issue, the quicker this issue can be resolved, and a plan put together to meet the 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 urge 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 higher than it should be if no prior discussion has taken place (unless this is due to 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 school 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) Notices to Improve:

If the national threshold has been met and support is appropriate, but parents do not engage with offers of support, Timothy Hackworth Primary School may offer a Notice to Improve to give parents a final chance to engage with support.

Notices to Improve will be issued in line with processes set out in the local code of conduct for Durham County Council.

They will include:

- Details of the pupil's attendance record and of the offences;
- The benefits of regular attendance and the duty of parents under [section 7 of the Education Act 1996](#);
- Details of the support provided so far;
- Opportunities for further support, or to access previously provided support that was not engaged with;
- A clear warning that a penalty notice may be issued if attendance doesn't improve within the improvement period, along with details of what sufficient improvement looks like, which will be decided on a case-by-case basis;
- A clear timeframe of between 3 and 6 weeks for the improvement period;
- The grounds on which a penalty notice may be issued before the end of the improvement period.

f) 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, Timothy Hackworth Primary 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 regularly 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 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.

g) Penalty Notices:

Parents can be fined for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age, by issuing a Penalty Notice.

If the school issues a Penalty Notice, we will check with the local authority before doing so, and send it a copy of any Penalty Notice issued.

Before issuing a Penalty Notice, the school will consider the individual case, including:

- Whether the national threshold for considering a Penalty Notice has been met (10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks);
- Whether a Penalty Notice is the best available tool to improve attendance for that pupil;
- Whether further support, a Notice to Improve or another legal intervention would be a more appropriate solution;

- Whether any obligations that the school has under the Equality Act 2010 make issuing a penalty notice inappropriate.

Each parent who is liable for the pupil's offence(s) can be issued with a Penalty Notice, but this will usually only be the parent/parents who allowed the absence.

The payment must be made directly to the local authority, regardless of who issues the notice. If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

If issued with a **first** Penalty Notice, the parent must pay £80 within 21 days, or £160 within 28 days.

If a **second** Penalty Notice is issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil, the parent must pay £160 if paid within 28 days.

A **third** Penalty Notice cannot be issued to the same parent in respect of the same child within 3 years of the date of the issue of the first Penalty Notice. In a case where the national threshold is met for a third time within those 3 years, alternative action will be taken instead.

A Penalty Notice may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification, during the first 5 days of a suspension or exclusion (where the school has notified the parents that the pupil must not be present in a public place on that day). These Penalty Notices are not included in the National Framework, not subject to the same considerations about support being provided, and do not count towards the limit as part of the escalation process.

In these cases, the parent must pay £60 within 21 days, or £120.

h) Reducing persistent and severe absence:

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school. Reducing persistent and severe absence is central to the school's strategy for improving attendance.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence;
- Consider potential safeguarding issues and, where suspected or present, address them in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education;
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable or at risk of persistent or severe absence, or who are persistently or severely absent, to:
 - Discuss attendance and engagement at school;
 - Listen, and understand barriers to attendance;
 - Explain the help that is available;
 - Explain the potential consequences of, and sanctions for, persistent and severe absence;

- Review any existing actions or interventions;
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance, in conjunction with the local authority, where relevant;
- Consider alternative support that could be put in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. In doing so, the school will sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence;
- Implement sanctions, where necessary.

i) Punctuality:

Registration time is at **8.50 a.m.**, at which point the pupil entry gates will be locked and all pupils must enter by our school's Main Reception. Afternoon registration time is dependent upon year group staggered lunchtimes. 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. 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).

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 to improve this.

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.

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.

j) 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**. Timothy Hackworth Primary 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.

Promoting good attendance and punctuality

In order to promote good attendance and punctuality, Timothy Hackworth Primary 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.

Children Missing from Education

If parents and carers move from the area and a child's whereabouts become 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**.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

Governing Body:

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

- Set high expectations of school leaders, staff, pupils and parents/carers;
- Make sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties, including:
 - Making sure the school records attendance accurately in the register, and shares the required information with the DfE and local authority, including for children who are educated off-site;

- Making sure the school works effectively with local partners to help remove barriers to attendance, and keeps them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- Ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting and directing the relevant school policies and guidance to parents and staff;
- Make sure the school's attendance management processes are delivered effectively, and that consistent support is provided for pupils who need it most by prioritising staff and resources;
- Make sure the school has high aspirations for all pupils, but adapts processes and support to pupils' individual needs;
- Regularly review and challenge attendance data and help school leaders focus improvement efforts on individual pupils or cohorts who need it most;
- Work with school leaders to set goals or areas of focus for attendance and provide support and challenge;
- Monitor attendance figures for the whole school and repeatedly evaluate the effectiveness of the school's processes and improvement efforts to make sure they are meeting pupils' needs;
- Work with school leaders to develop a comprehensive action plan to improve attendance;
- Make sure all staff receive adequate training on attendance as part of the regular continued professional development offer, so that staff understand:
 - the importance of good attendance;
 - that absence is almost always a symptom of wider issues;
 - the school's legal requirements for keeping registers;
 - the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up on and improving attendance, including working with partners and keeping them informed regarding specific pupils, where appropriate;
- Make sure dedicated training is provided to staff with a specific attendance function in their role, including in interpreting and analysing attendance data;
- Hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy;
- 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.

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 an 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 part of 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 they have 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;
- Work with the parents/carers of pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with SEND, including where school transport is regularly being missed, and where pupils with SEND face in-school barriers;
- Communicate with the local authority when a pupil with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan has falling attendance, or where there are barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs;
- 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 part of 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:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time;
- 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;
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child;
- 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.