



**Thornhill Primary School**

**Thornhill Gardens**

Shildon

Co. Durham DL4 1ES

Head teacher: Miss S Overfield

Telephone: 01388 772906

Email: [thornhill@durhamlearning.net](mailto:thornhill@durhamlearning.net)

3<sup>rd</sup> September 2025

Dear Parents/Carers,

### ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

Last academic year, we had the best overall attendance in the last 5 years, which was a brilliant achievement. Thank you for all your support with this. It is fantastic that our pupils are in school learning and enjoying time with their friends.

This year, our aim is to continue to build on this success and ensure pupils are in school as much as possible. Good, consistent attendance at school is crucial to give your child the best chance of success in all areas.

Establishing strong attendance habits from the beginning of the school year is vital and regular and punctual attendance is essential for your child's academic progress, personal development and wellbeing. While we understand that some absence is unavoidable, it is vital that we work together to minimise time away from school. Every school day matters.

Your child must attend school every day. Children who are regularly absent from school miss out on opportunities which can affect their life-long chances.

To support good attendance please:

- Be punctual - The school day starts at 8.45am. The register closes at 9am. If your child arrives after this time, they will receive an unauthorised absence mark. From September, we will be closing the gates on the yard at 8.50am.
- Contact school on each day of absence before 9am and provide reasons for absence.
- Keep school informed on a regular basis if your child is absent for a long period.
- Make appointments out of school time. If this is not possible, your child should miss the minimum amount of school time necessary. Proof of appointments is required.
- Try to get your child into school to achieve the expected 96% target.
- You need to make sure your child attends school regularly and on time.

### Holidays in term time

All pupils registered at school are expected to attend every day the school is open. Parents are advised to book leave during school holiday periods.

Holidays are **unauthorised** and a warning will be issued. The school follows DCC guidance,

Headteachers cannot grant leave during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and cannot grant permission retrospectively.

Please fill out a Leave of Absence form and hand into school 2 weeks prior. This can be found on the school website or contact the office. You will receive a letter in the post and this goes to both

parents.

### Changes to Fixed Penalty Notices from August 2024

Under the new national framework, Fixed Penalty Notices will be considered when a child has missed ten or more sessions (five days) for unauthorised reasons in a period of ten school weeks. A notice may also be issued where the five day level of absence has not been reached, for example, if there are several periods of leave.

From August 2024:

- The first penalty notice is £160 if paid within 28 days, reduced to or £80 if paid within 21 days.
- If a parent receives a second notice for the same child within any three year period, the amount of the notice will be £160 to be paid within 28 days.
- A third penalty notice cannot be issued. Legal action may result (for example, prosecution).
- 

For further information please see DCC website - <https://www.durham.gov.uk/article/2208/Holidays-in-term-time>

### Support

School is here to help and we want to support you and your child/children to achieve good attendance.

We monitor pupils' attendance and support will be offered should your child's attendance drop below 96%.

Children who are absent in the first two weeks of the academic year are significantly more likely to become Persistently Absent (absence below 90%) over the rest of the academic year.

Therefore, we hope to see all our pupils back to school tomorrow to make the positive start to the academic year. We know some children will be very excited, others nervous, but we are looking forward to seeing them all and each child will receive a small treat on their way into school!

Thank you for your continued support. I have attached our Attendance Leaflet, which lists key expectations for attendance at Thornhill Primary School.

Kind Regards,

Miss Overfield – Head teacher

