



## **Attendance Policy**

## Mission Statement

***'To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ's Gospel'***

### Principles

Students are expected to attend school every day. A student should only be absent if the reason is 'unavoidable'. Allowing a student to be absent without good reason is unlawful, and ultimately parents could be fined by the courts.

Every half day absence from school has to be classified by the school, not the parents, as either authorised or unauthorised. Hence information about the cause of each absence is always required.

Authorised absences are morning or afternoon sessions away from school with good reason; for illness or other unavoidable cause.

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This includes keeping a student off for trivial reasons; truancy, absences or late arrivals which have never been properly explained.

Students should never be kept off school for reasons such as shopping, looking after the house, or looking after siblings or relatives. Where communication from parents / guardians does not specify the reason for absence, further investigation may be necessary after consultation with the Deputy Head or the Head Teacher of Thornton College

On very rare occasions where a student needs encouragement to attend school regularly, any problems are best resolved between the school, parents and the student. If problems cannot be resolved this way, the school will contact / may refer the Education Welfare Officer from the relevant Local Education Authority. He or she will also try to resolve difficulties by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve a student's attendance have failed, these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute students or to seek an Education Supervision Order on the student. Parents may wish to contact the Education Welfare Officer themselves for advice. They are independent of the school. Their telephone number is available by contacting the appropriate Local Education Authority.

### Procedures

Thornton College applies the following procedures in deciding how to deal with absences:

#### **Illness or Other Legitimate absence**

If students are ill and unable to attend school, parents / guardians are requested to contact the school before 9.00am on the first morning of absence, giving an indication of the possible duration of the absence. This can be done using the email address [office@thorntoncollege.com](mailto:office@thorntoncollege.com) or via the switchboard number: 01280 812610. (The school has an answering machine until 7:45am; thereafter Reception will take your call.)

If no contact is made during the day, the form tutor will contact parents / guardians, via email, explaining that their daughter has not registered and requesting an explanation for their absence. Tutors and / or Heads of Year will telephone the following day should a parent / guardian not respond to the initial email. Following this, the Deputy Head will make contact and continue to monitor records.

Where a student returns to school and parents / guardians have not contacted school, the unauthorised absence will be followed up by the class teacher in the Prep School or form tutor in the Senior School. The

teacher will make a note in the school journal requesting explanation for the absence in writing and then telephone home if no reply is received. Should no explanation be provided, form tutors and class teachers will refer the unexplained absence to the HOY. The HOY will continue to contact home until an explanation is received by the school.

If a student is absent for reasons other than ill health, this must be communicated to the school on each separate occasion. For such incidents, including planned appointments to the doctor, dentist, etc. communication should be received **at least three days in advance**. Parents / guardians may email Form Tutors or Heads of Year directly or students may bring a signed and dated letter from their parents / guardians. Tutors / Heads of Year will forward such requests to the Head Teacher for authorisation. In these circumstances it is not necessary to telephone the school on the day of absence.

If a student is required to leave school without notification and for reasons other than illness, an explanation must be provided and the absence must be authorised by the Head Teacher.

All students who leave the school during the school day must sign out at front reception. Should a student return that day, she must sign in.

When attendance causes concern, the Deputy Head will contact home and continue to monitor records. The school will continue to work with and support parents / guardians to ensure that their child maintains a good attendance record. Long term absenteeism will be reported to the appropriate authorities via the school's DSL. (See Safeguarding policy)

### **Holidays**

Please note that we ask parents **not** to make holiday arrangements that require their daughters to miss days during term-time. Holiday leave in term time will not be granted unless circumstances are exceptional. Our terms are short and intensive and a relatively long period of holiday is available. If your daughter needs to be away from school in exceptional circumstances, a letter requesting permission should be sent to the Head Teacher of Thornton College.

### **Registration**

Students in Reception to Year 2 are permitted to enter the Claudine Thevenet from 8am. They will be supervised in the Early Birds Club by a member of staff. Prep school students from Years 3-6 should enter the school via reception and register with the member of staff on duty in the Quad. They will remain in the quad or attend reading club in the Library, following registration on the quad. In wet weather, all early students will gather in the Assembly Hall or Library, dependent upon numbers. Senior students enter through the side door and go to the Dining Room before 8:30 and after 8:30 to their form room. Sixth Form students can make their way to their common room or to the Friends Café before 8.30am but must be in the common room by 8.30am and into their form rooms by 8.40am. It is important that all students are in their form rooms by 8.35am each day for registration (at 8.40am). If a student arrives after 8.45am she should enter via Reception and sign in.

### **Lateness**

Students must attend registration on time in order to be marked as present for that session. Parents are expected to ensure that their daughters are present at registration.

### **Publication of Attendance Information**

Parents have a duty to ensure that their daughters attend school.

Thornton College has a legal duty to promote attendance and to publish its absence figures, if required by the DCFS. The School is usually asked to disclose information on attendance and punctuality when writing references for students.

The School is committed to working with parents to achieve as high a level of attendance as possible.

### **Notification of removal or addition of student on the register**

The school will notify the local authority when they are about to remove a student's name from the school admission register under any of the fifteen grounds listed in the regulations in Annex A of the Students missing education guidance September 2016. The school will provide the authority with (a) the full name of the student, (b) the full name and address of any parent with whom the student normally resides, (c) at least one telephone number of the parent, (d) the student's future address and destination school, if applicable, and (e) the ground in regulation 8 under which the student's name is to be removed from the admission register (see Annex A of the Students missing education guidance September 2016)

The School will make reasonable enquiries to establish the whereabouts of the student jointly with the local authority, before deleting the student's name from the register if the deletion is under regulation 8(1), sub-paragraphs (f)(iii) and (h)(iii) (see Annex A of the Students missing education guidance September 2016)

**Thornton College** will notify the local authority **within five days** of adding a student's name to the admission register at a non-standard transition point. The school will send all the registration details to the local authority.

### **Attendance Policy amendments in light of Coronavirus outbreak**

In light of the coronavirus (COVID 19) outbreak, the College will be clear that attendance will be mandatory from the start of the new school year, except where statutory exemptions apply. The College will ensure that parents are clear about when students should not attend due to public health or clinical advice (see guidance) and plan a process for keeping absence for these reasons under review, for example when a self-isolation period should come to an end. Students who are unable to attend due to COVID 19 (isolation and/or illness) will have access to remote education via Zoom and Firefly and staff will continue to monitor engagement. Students will be expected to return once well and/or when the period of isolation stipulated by NHS guidelines comes to an end.

Parents / Guardians will be reminded of the expectation that they will let the College know if a child is unable to attend and the reason. The College will contact the pupil's parent / guardian on the first day of absence where this does not happen, reiterating, where necessary, that pupils of compulsory school age must be in school unless a statutory reason applies.

The College will make it clear to parents/guardians that remote education will only be provided for students in the following categories:

1. Individuals in receipt of a letter from a consultant stating the need for continued shielding.
2. Individuals with a positive diagnosis of Covid-19
3. Individuals who have received confirmation of the need to isolate as part of the track and trace system
4. Individuals who have been asked by the college to isolate as part of a confirmed case of Covid-19 in school.

Where pupils are absent due to reasons related to the COVID19 outbreak but not listed above, for example, due to anxiety, the College will reassure parents / guardians about the measures put into place to ensure

the health and safety of all at school. Support will be given to families / individuals to support their return to school.

Procedures relating to registration are amended to reflect the need to maintain social distancing and will continue to be reviewed. Procedures from September 2020 are as follows:

All girls, who arrive prior to 8.20am, should enter school, according to the doors indicated below.

- Reception Students are to go to the Nursery Room accessing by the patio doors in the nursery playground.
- Students from Year 1 to Year 2 to go to the Group Room, via the gates and patio doors at the front of the Claudine Thevenet building (Year 1, on the right and Year 2, on the left)
- Years 3 and 4: to enter via Reception
- Years 5 and 6 : to enter via the St Clare Building, under the archway. **Girls will move to their classrooms at 8.20 am.**
- Years 7-9: Senior students up to and including Year 9, who arrive before 8.20am should also enter via Reception, go to the Dining Hall to sign in and then girls in Year 9 may go to their Form Room to sit or read quietly. Years 7 and 8 will be able to wait in the Dining Hall in socially distanced seating until 8.20am.
- Years 10-11: Students in Year 10 and above should enter school via the door opposite the Bursary building, near Mrs Holmes's office and follow the one way system to the Dining Hall to sign in. They may then go to their own Form Room to sit or read quietly.
- Years 12-13: Sixth Form should also enter via the same door as Year 10 and above and should make their way to the Sixth Form area and to their Form Room.

Normal Entry (after 8.20am) and Exit

- Nursery, Reception, Year 1 and 2 to Claudine Thevenet Building,
- Nursery and Reception via side gate and Nursery playground door into respective Nursery and Reception Rooms
- Year 1 and 2 via doors directly into classroom from the small front playground. Year 1 to enter via the gate closest to Mrs Thomas's classroom (right hand gate) and Year 2 to enter from the gate closest to the Group Room (left hand gate)
- Years 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9 non-bus students will enter via the main school Reception door and head for their Form Rooms.
- Years 5 and 6 should be dropped off towards the fountain lawn side of the building and should walk under the arch to enter the St Clare building and proceed to their Form rooms.
- All students who arrive by bus and all students in Years 10-13 should enter school via the door nearest to the Headteacher's office and head for their Form Rooms.