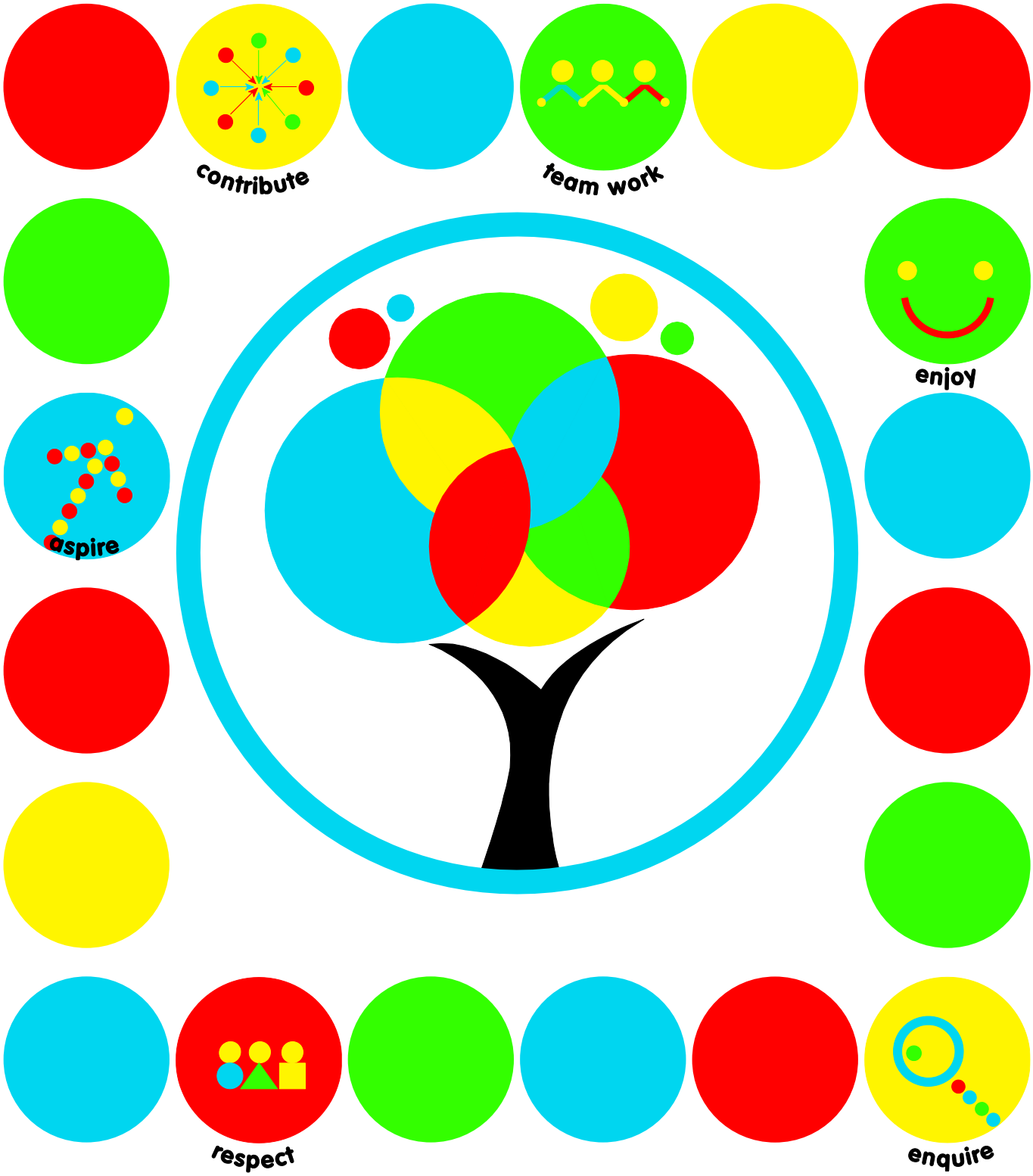


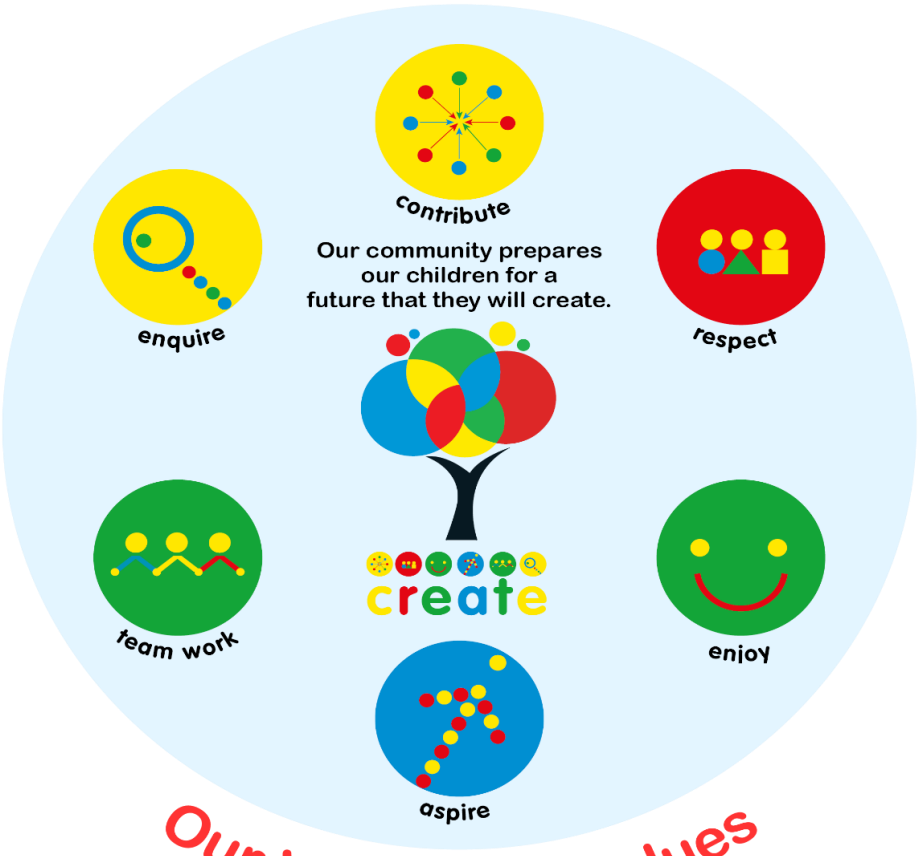
Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Head teacher signature:

Chair of Governors signature:

Review date: November 2026

Thomas Buxton Primary School
Learning Together



Our Vision and Values

RIGHTS RESPECTING SCHOOLS
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GOLD – RIGHTS RESPECTING

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ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Thomas Buxton Primary School
Learning Together

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Thomas Buxton Primary School
Learning Together

Statement of intent

Thomas Buxton Primary School believes that to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Regular school attendance enables children to achieve their full potential, academically, personally and socially. Children learn effectively if they attend school regularly. We recognise that raising the level of achievement for all the children in school depends upon raising and maintaining a high level of attendance. It is important, too, that children arrive to school on time so as not to miss any part of their learning and to start the day well.

We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents.

We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance.

We are committed to:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence.
- Promoting and supporting punctuality in attending lessons.
- Acting early to address patterns of absence proactively with necessary support and challenge to bring forth improvements.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance and provide them with support in order for their children to attend school.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our pupils.
- Working collaboratively with the Local Authority Education Welfare team.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which outlines that the parent of child of compulsory school age shall ensure they receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude. This includes pupils with SEND accessing regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.

The Assistant Headteacher oversees the work of the school's **Pathways Attendance Lead**. They can be contacted via telephone or email admin@thomasbuxton.towerhamlets.sch.uk . Staff and parents will be expected to contact the **Pathways Attendance Lead, Angie Lycett,** for queries or concerns about attendance.



As a UNCRC Rights Respecting School, children's rights underpin our school ethos. Every child has the Right to an Education (Article 28, UN Convention on the Rights of the Child). Persistent absence or lateness can impact on children receiving the full education they are entitled to.

Any absence affects the pattern of child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. Any pupil's absence or late arrival disrupts teaching routines and so may affect the learning of others in the same class. Ensuring a child's regular attendance as school is the parental responsibility and allow absence from school without good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.

We aim for above **97%** attendance for every child. Alongside the academic benefits, attending school regularly is also about being and playing with friends and part of the school's community. The routine of school can be comforting and familiar for children, providing a consistent support network and a sense of security.

To contextualise this aim:

Missing 19 days in a school year means only being in school for **90%** of the time. Being late 15 minutes, every day would mean missing two weeks of learning in a year.

95%	=	47 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 8 days in total or 1 week and 3 days
90%	=	95 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 16 days in total or 3 weeks and 1 day
85%	=	142 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 24 days in total or 4 weeks and 4 days
80%	=	190 LESSONS MISSED EACH YEAR 32 days in total or 6 weeks and 2 days

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance. It meets the requirements of the Working Together to Improve School Attendance from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- DfE (2022) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- DfE (2025) 'Keeping children safe in education 2025'
- DfE (2016) 'Children missing education'

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Tower Hamlets Protocol for issuing Fixed Penalties regarding School Attendance.

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Children Missing Education Policy
- Exclusion Policy

Roles and responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Holding the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. Setting attendance goals and providing support around delivery against those goals.
- The link governor for attendance and punctuality is responsible for monitoring attendance, school systems and procedures.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Having regard to 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- Ensuring the policy is implemented consistently across the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors

The Headteacher also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

The Assistant Headteacher is responsible for:

- Leading, championing and improving attendance across the school
- Overseeing the work of the schools Pathways Attendance Lead.
- The strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Supporting the Pathways Attendance Lead to monitor and analyse attendance data.
- Supporting the Pathways Attendance Lead to devise specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data.

The Pathways Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data at a school and individual pupil level.
- Reporting concerns about attendance to the Assistant Headteacher and Headteacher.
- Working with the LA AWA to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices.
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance.
- Analyse attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Follow up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Conducting home visits when needed.

Class Teachers will:

- Class teachers are responsible for recording attendance daily, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office. Registers must be completed by 9am each day. An afternoon register must also be completed at the start of each afternoon session.

The School Admin Team will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system.

- Transfer calls from parents to the Pathways Attendance Lead to provide them with more detailed reports on attendance.

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day and on time.
- Call the school to report their child's absence before start of the school day, on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.
- Seek support, where necessary, for maintaining good attendance, by contacting Ms Chau (Assistant Headteacher) or Ms Lycett (Attendance Lead).

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day and be on time

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency.

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absence (PA):

- Missing 10 percent or more of schooling across the year for any reason

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils. Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day; they are required to be at school for the full day.

Gates open at **8.45am**. There is a **"soft start" from 8.50am** when classroom doors are opened and class teachers greet and supervise children. The **official start time is 8.55am,** the children should be in class ready to begin lessons at this time. If a child arrives **after 8.55am** their adult takes them to the main entrance and the child is recorded as late.

- **EYFS and Key Stage 1** children enter via the Infant Gate, children are dropped off by adults at the classroom door.
- **Key Stage 2** children enter via the Junior Gate. On the child's first day one adult can enter the site and accompany their child to the classroom door. After their first day, children enter via the Junior Gates without an adult. Children who require adult support in school will be met at the Junior Gate by a Teaching Assistant.

Break and Lunchtime

Pupils will have a morning break for 15 minutes and a lunch break that will last for 60 minutes. Pupils will be expected to have returned from each break and be ready to recommence learning at the stated times.

- Nursery and Reception-11.30am-12.30pm (lunchtime)
- Key Stage 1- 10.45am-11.00am (playtime) and 12.00pm-1.00pm (lunchtime)
- Key Stage 2- 10.45am-11.00am (playtime) and 12.30pm- 1.30pm (lunchtime)

Absence procedures

Parents/ carers will be required to contact the school office via telephone **before 9:00am** on the first day of their child's absence – they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. There is an answering machine on which parents/ carers can leave a message.

Where a pupil is absent, and their parent/ carer has not contacted the school by **10.00am** to report the absence, the Pathways Attendance Lead will contact the parent/ carer by telephone call on the first day that they do not attend school. Unauthorised absences are also followed up during daily 'first day calling'. The Pathways Attendance Lead records authorised absence by using codes set out by the local authority and government guidelines. These codes are used to complete the registers accurately. The Inclusion Team keep a list of children deemed 'vulnerable' whose parents/carers are phoned immediately by the Pathways Attendance Lead after the registers are returned if the child is marked absent.

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

Where a pupil is absent for more than **three** school days in a row, or more than **10** school days in **one term**, the pupil's parent will be expected to provide a signed letter with an explanation for the absence(s).

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

In the case of PA, arrangements will be made for parents/ carers to speak to the Pathways Attendance Lead. The school will inform the LA, on a half termly basis, of the details of pupils who fail to attend regularly, or who have missed 10 school days or more without authorisation.

If a pupil's attendance drops below **95 percent**, the Pathways Attendance Lead will be informed, and a formal meeting will be arranged with the pupil's parent/ carers.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for 10 days after an authorised absence or is absent from school without authorisation for 20 consecutive school days, the school will remove the pupil from the admissions register if the school and the LA have failed to establish the whereabouts of the pupil after making reasonable enquiries.

Attendance register

The schools MIS system Arbor is used to log attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities. Registers will be taken as follows throughout the school day:

- The morning register will be marked by **9:00am.** Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time. Pupils attending after this time will receive a mark to show that they were on site, but this will count as a late mark.
- The morning register will close at **9:30am.** Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- The afternoon register will close at **1:35pm.** Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present.

Designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. **The following codes will be used:**

Attending the school

- **/** = Present in the morning
- **** = Present in the afternoon
- **L** = Late arrival before the register has closed

Attending a place other than the school

- **K** = Attending education provision arranged by the local authority
- **V** = Educational visit or trip
- **P** = Participating in a supervised sporting activity
- **W =** Attending work experience
- **B** = Attending any other approved educational activity
- **D** = Dual registered – at another educational establishment

Absent – leave of absence

- **C1** = Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance
- **M** = Medical or dental appointments
- **J1 =** Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for admission to another educational institution
- **S =** Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination
- **X** = Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school
- **C2** = Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil subject to a part-time timetable
- **C =** Leave of absence for exceptional circumstances granted by the school

Absent – other authorised reasons

- **T** = Parent travelling for occupational purposes
- **R** = Religious observance
- **I** = Illness
- **E** = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made

Absent – unable to attend school because of unavoidable cause

- **Q** = Absent- unable to attend school because of lack of access arrangements by LA to facilitate their attendance
- **Y1 =** Unable to attend due to transport normally provided not being available
- **Y2** = Unable to attend due to widespread disruption of travel
- **Y3** = Unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed
- **Y4** = Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed

- **Y5** = Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention
- **Y6** = Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law
- **Y7** = Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause

Absent – unauthorised absence

- **G** = Unauthorised holiday (holiday not granted by the school)
- **N** = Reason for absence not yet established
- **O** = Unauthorised absence
- **U** = Arrived in school after registration closed

Administrative codes

- **Z** = Pupil not on admission register
- **#** = Planned whole school closure

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '**#**' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

All amendments made to the attendance register will include the original entry, the amended entry, the reason for the amendment, the date of amendment and the name and role of the person who made the amendment.

Every entry received into the attendance register will be preserved for **three years**.

Authorising parental absence requests

Parents/ carers will be required to request certain types of absence in advance. All requests for absence will be handled by the Headteacher – the decision to grant or refuse the request will be at the sole discretion of the Headteacher, taking the best interests of the pupil and the impact on the pupil's education into account. The Headteacher's decision is not subject to appeal; however, the school will be sympathetic to requests for absence by parents and will not deny any request without good reason.

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. To have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school will expect parents/ carers to contact the Headteacher **in writing** at least **two weeks** prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to

grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays. The school will comply with guidance set out for schools by the London Borough of Tower Hamlets.

Requests for leave will not be granted in the following circumstances:

- Immediately before and during statutory assessment periods
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above **10 percent** for any reason
- Leave of absence will not be granted for a pupil to take part in protest activity during school hours

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents/ carers will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents/ carers will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents/ carers will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Religious observance

Parents/ carers will be expected to request absence for religious observance at least **two weeks in** advance.

The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents/ carers would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion.

The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parents/ carers belong to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent/ carers will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child at least **two weeks** in advance. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for SEND pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or care plans that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. Children and families will be signposted to the appropriate support service.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there have been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Early Help Assessment (EHA).
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and break times (fun with food provision).
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil leaving school during the school day must be collected by a parent/ carer and signed out at the school office and sign back in again on their return.

Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a pupil might be truanting. If truancy is suspected, the Headteacher is notified, and they will contact the parent/ carer in order to assess the reasons behind the pupil not attending school.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be issued where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school.

The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Safeguarding Policy.

Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the Headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
    - All classrooms
    - All toilets
    - All intervention rooms
    - The library
    - The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found **after 15 minutes,** then the parents of the pupil will be notified.

- The school will attempt to contact parents/ carers using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents/ carers have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents/ carers and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Attendance intervention

In order to ensure the school has effective procedures for managing absence, the Pathways Attendance Lead, supported by the SLT, will:

- Establish a range of evidence-based interventions to address barriers to attendance.
- Monitor the implementation and quality of escalation procedures and seek robust evidence of the escalation procedures that work.
- Attend or lead attendance reviews in line with escalation procedures.
- Establish robust escalation procedures which will be initiated before absence becomes a problem by:
    - Sending letters to parents.
    - Engaging with LA attendance teams.
    - Using fixed penalty notices.
    - Hosting attendance surgeries.

The school will use attendance data, in line with the 'Monitoring and analysing absence' section of this policy, to develop specific strategies to improve attendance where patterns of absence are emerging. These strategies will be developed on a case-by-case basis and will consider the particular needs of the pupils whom the intervention is designed to target.

The school will acknowledge outstanding attendance and punctuality in the following ways:

- Attendance certificate and trophies

- Rich Mix cinema trip
- End of year reward

The school will develop strategies for ensuring that pupils with health needs or home circumstances that result in additional absences are not unfairly excluded from attendance rewards, e.g. by setting individualised targets.

Working with parents/ carers to improve attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents, carers and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services and early help.

The school will ensure that there are **two** sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation.

The school will ensure that parents/ carers are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents/ carers will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the Headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents/ carers about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parent/ carers are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally.

If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the Pathways Attendance Lead will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents/ carers to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches.

Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Pathways Attendance Lead will work with the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL, SENCO, phase leaders to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Pathways Attendance Lead will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents/carers to access support that they may need.

Persistent Absence

Persistent absence (PA) 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 for improving attendance.

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need (CIN)
- Looked After Children (LAC)
- Previously Looked After Children (PLAC)
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for FSM
- Pupils with EAL
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use several methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school. These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading regular check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHC plan or care plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.

The school will focus particularly on pupils who have rates of absence over 50 percent and will work with the LA and other partners to engage all relevant services needed to identify and address the wider barriers to attendance these pupils are facing.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may constitute neglect, and will escalate any concerns in this regard in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Legal intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one half term, the Pathways Attendance Lead in collaboration with the Assistant Headteacher will work with the Local Authority to take forward further action. Where there are safeguarding concerns the school will engage children's social services.

Schools can request that the Local Authority fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age (the first term after their 5th birthday).

The first penalty notice issued to a parent in respect of a particular pupil will be charged at £160 if paid within 28 days. This will be reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days.

A second penalty notice issued to the same parent in respect of the same pupil is charged at a flat rate of £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. This will often include considering prosecution, but may include other tools such as one of the other attendance legal interventions.

The decision on whether to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the Headteacher, following the government guidance for issuing penalty notices laid out in *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*.

The threshold is 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks. A school week means any week in which there is at least one school session. This can be met with any combination of unauthorised absence (e.g. 4 sessions of holiday taken in term time plus 6 sessions of arriving late after the register closes all within 10 school weeks). These sessions can be consecutive (e.g. 10 sessions of holiday in one week) or not (e.g. 6 sessions of unauthorised absence taken in 1 week and 1 per week for the next 4 weeks). The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years (e.g. 2 sessions of unauthorised absence in the Summer Term and a further 8 within the Autumn Term).

The Access to Education Team will issue penalty notices on behalf of schools and will always serve them by first class post. The team will also ensure that the issuing of penalty notices is closely monitored with the relevant financial penalty being imposed.

If the penalty notice has not been paid within the 28-day deadline the case may be escalated and consideration given to prosecution for the original attendance offence.

Parents/carers may receive more than one separate penalty notice resulting from the unauthorised absence, but not in excess of three penalty notices for an individual child in any three-year period. A penalty notice will be issued to each parent of each child.

~~If an initial Fixed Penalty Notice has failed to secure an improvement in attendance, the Access to Education team reserves the right to proceed with prosecution, providing the necessary casework has been completed by the school. Each case will be considered on its own merit.~~

Monitoring and analysing absence

The Pathways Attendance Lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs.

The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.

- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g. pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g. pupils with SEND, LAC and pupils eligible for FSM.
- Pupils at risk of PA.

The Pathways Attendance Lead in collaboration with the Assistant Headteacher will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a **half-termly, termly and full-year** basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Pathways Attendance Lead will provide regular reports to staff across the school to enable them to track the attendance of pupils and to implement attendance procedures. The Pathways Attendance Lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to any interventions implemented to increase attendance in future. The SENDCO will support with the monitoring and analysis of attendance and punctuality of pupils with SEND.

The governing body will regularly review attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data.

The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local-, regional- and national-level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement, and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

Training of staff

The school will recognise that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

The governing board will ensure that teachers and support staff receive training in line with this policy as part of their induction. Following this initial training, staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

Training will cover at least the following:

- The importance of good attendance
- That absence is almost invariably a result of wider circumstances
- The legal requirements on schools, e.g. the keeping of registers
- The school's strategies and procedures for monitoring and improving attendance
- The school's procedures for multi-agency working to provide intensive support for pupils who need it.

Staff will receive training to ensure they understand that increased absence from school could indicate a safeguarding concern, and know how such concerns should be managed.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is **96 percent** – full details of the school's absence levels can be found on the **school website**.

This policy will be reviewed **every 3 years** by the headteacher (however if there are changes to government guidance this policy may be reviewed earlier). The next scheduled review date for this policy is **September 2026**.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

Appendix 1

Attendance Monitoring Procedures

The Pathways Attendance Lead acts as Attendance Officer liaising with the Headteacher and Assistant Headteacher as necessary to monitor and track attendance and any penalty notices. The Pathways attendance leads monitor pupil absence on a fortnightly basis.

Thomas Buxton Primary School has adopted the following attendance monitoring procedures, to ensure that pupils' attendance meets the expected standard, and effective intervention is provided where pupils' attendance falls below the standard:

1. The Pathways Attendance Lead meets with the Assistant Headteacher fortnightly to discuss attendance concerns and plan the actions that will be taken.
2. Any attendance/punctuality trends noticed by classroom teachers are passed immediately to the Assistant Headteacher or Phase Leaders.
3. Contact is made with parents on the first day of absence for any pupil absence not reported. 'N' codes are used to indicate that the pupil is absent for a reason not yet provided any N codes not established by the end of each day are recorded as an unauthorised absence 'O' code.
4. If a child is absent for 2 consecutive days with no contact from parents or carers this will automatically trigger a home visit to be conducted. If the home visit is unsuccessful the DSL or DDSL will call CPAL (child protection advice line) to discuss concerns. The AWA will also be informed and this may trigger them to conduct a welfare visit.
5. Parents/ carers are expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health. If a child has been had vomiting or diarrhoea, they are not permitted back into school for 48-hours, in line with healthcare recommendations. In this instance, a follow up phone call the next day is not required. If a child has been hospitalised or a doctor has signed them off from school for a set period of time, daily call ins are not required. In all other circumstances of illness, daily calls are required.
6. If a pupil's attendance falls under 95% or persistent lateness is recorded, the pathways attendance lead will look further into the reasons around this through analysis of the pupil attendance record. They will take into account authorised and unauthorised absences, lateness or any illness or other reasons for absence.
7. If a pupil's attendance is 90% or below, the pathways attendance lead will make contact with the pupil's parents or carers to discuss the reasons behind persistent absence and any support

required. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

8. If after contacting parents or carers a pupil's absence continues to rise, a more formal Attendance Support Meeting will be held involving an AWA from the Local Authority.
9. Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average and share this with governors.
10. Persistently Absent pupils' attendance is monitored, if attendance does not improve, parents/ carers are required to attend a meeting in school with the Assistant Headteacher to set targets for their child. If parents/ carers are unwilling to cooperate, or are genuinely unable to attend, the Assistant Headteacher, will then conduct a home visit.
11. Attendance monitoring letters will be sent if a pupil's attendance falls below the school target and does not improve within a fixed period of time. AWA protocol will be followed if attendance continues to decline. A monitoring period will be established and, if there are no improvements, a final written warning is issued to the parents if there is no improvement after an additional fixed period, a fixed-penalty notice is issued.