

Thornden School

**Building a Culture of Attendance: Inclusive Support for Every
Learner (2025–2026)**



BELONG CARE ASPIRE SUCCEED

Attendance - Our Vision through our Values

At Thornden School, we believe attendance is just a statistic—it is a reflection of how our students experience school. We are committed to creating a culture where every child *wants* to come to school because they feel they *belong*, they know we *care*, they are encouraged to *aspire*, and they are supported to *succeed*. These values are not just aspirational—they guide our practice.

- **Belong** – Students are more likely to attend when they feel seen, known, and valued. From their first day, we ensure that all pupils feel part of our school community. Our tutor programme, student leadership opportunities, enrichment offer and mentoring through Thornden Champions all help build relationships that anchor students to school life. We understand that those who do not attend often feel disconnected—our job is to rebuild that connection.
- **Care** – We recognise that behind every attendance issue is a story. For some, it may be anxiety, SEND needs, or a complex home situation. Our pastoral and inclusion teams work proactively to understand and respond with compassion. We use early check-ins, CPOMS logs, HOY conversations, and the Thornden Hub to offer timely and layered support. We do not wait for a pattern of absence to emerge before stepping in—we act early, showing families that we are partners in their child’s journey.
- **Aspire** – We set high expectations for every student because we believe in their potential. Attendance is monitored because it is a gateway to opportunity. We build aspiration through curriculum content, with our whole-school emphasis on adaptive teaching, high participation, and stretch-and-support strategies ensures students feel capable and successful in every lesson. Our curriculum builds aspiration through personal development, careers education, and texts that challenge stereotypes and widen horizons and by making explicit links between attendance and life chances. From Year 7 to Year 11, our message is clear: if you are in school, you are in a position to grow, lead, and shape your future. Attendance is not just about being present; it’s about being ready to grow.
- **Succeed** – Our aim is for every child to succeed—not just academically, but socially, emotionally, and personally. We use a robust tiered system of support, rooted in evidence-based interventions and structured around regular reviews. Success is not defined by perfection, but by progress. Our goal is long-term: sustainable, supported success for every learner. Whether a student is facing medical absence, mental health challenges, or SEND-related barriers, our systems are designed to guide them forward. We celebrate every improvement, however small, and continue to build personalised support for those who need it most.

Attendance is not just about being present—it is about feeling present, known, and supported.

By embedding our values into every stage of our attendance journey,

By embedding attendance in every aspect of school life—from the curriculum to wellbeing, pastoral care to teaching practice—we ensure that our values of *Belong, Care, Aspire, and Succeed* are not just spoken, but lived and that we are working hard to close the gaps between our most vulnerable students and their peers with a renewed focus on SEND, disadvantaged and those with mental health-related absences.

Attendance Support and Intervention Pathway – Thornden School

BELONG – Tier 0: Creating Connection Before Concern

Tier 0 is the foundation of our attendance strategy. It ensures that every student feels a genuine sense of belonging *before* attendance becomes a concern. Through inclusive teaching, the Thornden Tutor Reading Programme, personal development lessons, and our wide-ranging enrichment offer, students are surrounded by opportunities to connect, succeed, and be seen. Belonging starts with relationships—with tutors, peers, and the wider school community. When students feel they belong, they are far more likely to attend, engage, and thrive.

Area	Our Practice	How it Supports Attendance
High-Quality Adaptive Teaching	The <i>Thornden DNA</i> promotes structured, high-participation teaching in every classroom. Staff use adaptive strategies, targeted questioning, and scaffolding to ensure every learner is engaged.	Students who feel successful in lessons are more likely to attend. Adaptive teaching reduces academic anxiety and prevents disengagement—particularly for SEND and disadvantaged students.
Thornden Tutor Reading Programme	Every year group participates in carefully chosen shared texts (e.g. <i>The Bone Sparrow</i> , <i>Ghost Boys</i> , <i>Trash</i>) which highlight empathy, identity, resilience, and inclusion.	Builds emotional connection and discussion around key themes of justice, belonging, and aspiration. The routine of tutor reading enhances structure and enjoyment in school life.
Curriculum Audits for Access and Representation	Annual audits of <i>SMSC</i> , <i>British Values</i> , and <i>Diversity & Inclusion</i> ensure our curriculum is inclusive, culturally responsive, and reflects the identities and needs of our learners.	Students see themselves reflected in what they learn and how they learn it. Feeling seen and valued strengthens their connection to school and their willingness to engage.
Personal Development Programme	Every student receives timetabled PD lessons and weekly tutor sessions on mental health, wellbeing, RSE, careers, and life skills.	Teaches students how to manage stress, build confidence, and access support. PD lessons often link directly to attendance themes: motivation, relationships, anxiety.
Enrichment & Belonging	Students are offered broad access to enrichment (sports, trips, arts, leadership), with barriers actively reduced for disadvantaged students (e.g., funding, equipment).	Builds community, increases motivation to attend, and gives every student a reason to be in school beyond the academic day.
Tutor and Mentoring Systems	Tutors monitor attendance patterns, complete check-ins, and build relationships. The <i>Thornden</i>	Relationships are central to early intervention. Tutors and mentors spot the

Area	Our Practice	How it Supports Attendance
	<i>Champions</i> mentor disadvantaged and vulnerable students.	signs of attendance concerns before patterns become entrenched.
Interventions and Support	The Wellbeing Den and HOY offer daily support for students with anxiety, EBSA, or emotional needs. Space for calming, check-ins, and reintegration. Thornden Hub ensure a range of interventions are offered.	Offers safety and structure for those with high anxiety or school-based avoidance, reducing the need for full absence. Our Thornden Hub of experts ensure that referrals triaged quickly and appropriately and ensure collaborative and joined up working.

This universal offer is not an afterthought—it is our foundation.

It ensures our most vulnerable students receive built-in support *before* they hit 90% or less. It reduces the need for escalation and increases the sense of shared purpose between home and school.

CARE – Tier 1: Compassionate Early Intervention

Our approach to attendance begins with care. Tier 1 represents our earliest opportunity to notice, connect, and support—because small patterns often signal larger stories. When a student begins to miss sessions, we do not wait for a crisis; we act with compassion and intent. Whether it is a missed registration or a series of unexplained absences, each step—daily contact, initial letters, and wellbeing check-ins—is grounded in our commitment to understanding the individual behind the data. We recognise that absence is often linked to emotional, social, or practical challenges. That’s why we ensure every Letter 2 trigger includes a pastoral response—not simply a notification. Tutors, Heads of Year, and the Wellbeing Team check in with students to listen, reassure, and intervene if needed. This relational approach helps families feel supported rather than judged, and ensures students know that their presence matters. At Thornden, we act early because we care deeply - early action prevents escalation and reinforces the message: *you are noticed, and you are not alone.*

<u>Tier</u>	<u>Trigger</u>	<u>Action</u>	<u>Lead</u>
1.1	1–2 missed sessions (unexplained)	Daily absence text/email to parents/carers	Attendance
1.2	10 missed sessions (half term)	Letter 1 sent home	Attendance
1.3	15 missed sessions (total)	Letter 2 sent home and Tutor / HOY / Wellbeing Check In	Attendance

ASPIRE – Tier 2: Ambition Through Support and Personalisation

At Tier 2, we remain relentlessly aspirational for every student. Persistent absence—particularly at the point of 20 or 30 missed sessions—does not diminish our belief in a child’s potential. Instead, it signals the need for a personalised and ambitious plan that removes barriers and restores confidence. The Personalised Attendance Support Plan (PASP) process enables us to take a holistic view of each student’s needs, strengths, and aspirations. Whether through changes to classroom routines, targeted

mentoring, or wellbeing check-ins, our aim is to create the conditions for re-engagement—not just with attendance, but with success in school life. Every strategy trialled at this stage reflects our belief that students can thrive when the right scaffolds are in place. We do not lower expectations; we reframe the path. By ensuring that interventions are bespoke and rooted in a deep understanding of the student’s context, we continue to raise the bar—empowering students to move forward confidently, attend more consistently, and access the full curriculum and enrichment opportunities that support their long-term goals.

Tier	Trigger	Support Action	Lead
2.1	20 missed sessions or pattern of concern	HOY parent call; request medical evidence if applicable	HOY
2.2	30+ missed sessions	Letter 3 – Invite for a Personalised Attendance Support Plan meeting with family based on student profile. Focus is on in-house interventions at this point such as Thornden Hub Referral. Also, IARF if attendance below 50%	See below

Student Profile	Meeting Attendees
SEND Register	HOY, SENCo, AHT Inclusion
Non-SEND	HOY, Safeguarding & Pastoral Support Manager, Deputy Head (Attendance)

At this stage, reduced timetables and external referrals are not offered until these measures are trialled and reviewed.

SUCCESS – Tier 3: Removing Barriers So Students Can Thrive

At Tier 3, our focus is on helping students succeed through tailored, often intensive, support. When attendance has not improved after earlier interventions, we review each case with care, ensuring the next steps are both proportionate and purposeful. This may include a short-term reduced timetable, subject adjustments, or referral to external services such as CAMHS, Medical Services, or Inclusion Support. Where attendance remains significantly low, we consider legal pathways as a last resort—but only once all support options have been explored. Every action at Tier 3 is underpinned by our belief that success looks different for every child. Our aim is not compliance for its own sake, but meaningful re-engagement in education. With the right scaffolds in place and the right professionals involved, we work to build a pathway back to attendance, achievement, and long-term success.

Tier	Trigger	Escalation Action	Lead
3.1	No improvement after 4 weeks of PASP support	PASP reviewed; consider escalation	Same group as Stage 2 depending on student profile <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SEND Student HOY, SENCO, AHT Inclusion Non-SEND Student: HOY, SPSM, DHT Attendance
3.2	Next-level support offered if appropriate (Parents engaging)	Reduced timetable offer (short-term, reviewed fortnightly) Risk Assessment to be completed Request for medical evidence	
3.3	Continued non-attendance or unauthorised absence or parents not engaging	Either: Thornden to organise alternative provision for the student Or Referral to: ISS Hampshire, Medical, CAMHS	

Alignment with DfE Guidance

1. High Expectations & Clear Processes

We have a three-stage attendance pathway, communicated in policy and consistently followed—meeting the requirement for clear, shared expectations

Attendance is part of the behaviour and attitudes judgment, and absence data are regularly monitored and used to shape targeted action

2. Accurate Recording & Follow-up

Daily registers and automated logs ensure accurate data (Stage 1).

All actions—from Absence letters to PASP meetings—are recorded in CPOMS with clear tagging, fulfilling the need for a legal, auditable trail

3. Early Identification & Support

Prompt follow-up: missed sessions trigger letters, calls, internal support—all consistent with ‘listen, understand, empathy’ principles gov.uk.

4. Layered Support & Inclusion

Internal interventions (tutor changes, Hub referrals, well-being support) address root causes early, following DfE advice to remove barriers before formal escalation

SEND students receive consistent, tailored support involving SENCo and AHT Inclusion—meeting the emphasis on accommodating specific needs

5. Formalisation & Legal Processes

PASP documentation signed by student, parent, and school—and uploaded to CPOMS—meets the “school attendance contracts” expectation.

Reduced timetable includes a parent letter and formal risk assessment (Stage 3).

Further escalation (penalty notices, LA referral) follows DfE guidance on legal intervention when support fails.

6. Multi-Agency and Holistic Approach

Medical or ISS/HUB referrals are considered after 4 weeks, aligning with expectations to collaborate with external partners for persistent absence
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7. Governance & Continuous Improvement

The process includes regular reviews (PASP review after 4 weeks), data analysis, and is overseen by Deputy Head for Attendance—satisfying the requirement for ongoing evaluation and leadership involvement
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