



As a school we (staff and pupils) have been working hard over the past few years towards our goal of a calm and orderly school and classrooms, where everyone can best learn. As part of this we have developed a set of *School and Classroom Procedures* that we have undertaken to work within as far as is possible.

We would be very pleased if you could help support your children and the school in creating the best learning environment that we can, so have put together some points that may help you to do this.

1. Help us with dress code

As far as possible, please support your child to ensure that school dress code is adhered to. If you have any issues at all with providing this, please contact the school and we can help with any items at all that you need. We also hold a Dress Code Swap at Parents' Evenings and other times. See the School Dress Code policy on the website.

2. Help us with communication

We now use email rather than paper notes. Please make sure you sign and return promptly any letters from the school that have a reply slip attached. Please let us know straight away if your email address, phone number or home address changes. You can add more than one if both parents would like to receive school communications.

Your child's Guidance teacher, or Principal Teacher of Pupil Support (PTPS), is your first point of contact if you need to speak to the school about any issues regarding your child's education or welfare and you can phone the school to make an appointment (01847893822) or email them.

Mrs B Sinclair bettine.sinclair@highland.gov.uk

Mr P McKeesick peter.mckeesick@highland.gov.uk

Mr E McElroy ewan.mcelroy@highland.gov.uk

Mr G Blyth gordon.blyth@highland.gov.uk

We send information out from school in the following ways:

An email sent home

A text sent home

THS Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/ThursoHigh>

School Website <https://thursohighschool.org.uk/>

Letters home in school bag if paper copy required – always notified by email/text

Information specifically to pupils by Year Group Information Google Classroom

In summary - your ways to contact the school:

Your child's Guidance teacher (PTPS) as above is your first point of contact

For general enquiries or messages use the school generic email

thurso.high@highland.gov.uk

In emergency by telephone to Reception 01847893822
By private messaging the school Facebook page

3. Help us with recording absence and taking attendance and punctuality seriously

Children who are genuinely unwell should obviously stay at home. Please always report absence, either by email thurso.high@highland.gov.uk or by phone 01847893822 before 8.40am if possible.

If a child does not attend school and we do not receive a phone call from you to explain why by 10am, we will contact you by text to ask that you let us know why your child is not in school. Where contact cannot be established, on the third day we are obliged to contact social services and/or the and to make a home visit; if the child cannot be found we will contact the police who will treat it as a missing persons alert.

It is always helpful if it is possible, to have advance notice of pre-arranged absence such as hospital appointments, etc.

If your child is unavoidably absent through longer term illness, they can access schoolwork through Google Classroom and you can liaise with their Guidance teacher so the school can support in any way that they can.

Otherwise, even with colds and sniffles, it's important that children arrive at school on time every day, because having to catch up with classwork and homework can be stressful and interfere with learning. A-C percentage attainment at National 5 is 74.4% if a child's attendance is 93.5%; a drop to just below 88% attendance means this attainment is just 26.7%. Put more simply, approximately one day off every three weeks means a child has a reasonable chance of passing National 5 exams in S4. If this absence increases to two days off every three weeks then they have only a 1 in 4 chance of passing National 5 exams.

Our aim is that all pupils (unless they have medical or other known reasons) should have attendance above 90%.

Sometimes students want to stay home from school because of problems with classmates, assessments, or even teachers. This can result in real symptoms, like headaches or stomach aches. If you think there's a problem at school, talk with your child — and then if needed with the school — to find out more about what's causing the anxiety. We can then work together to try and resolve this.

Punctuality is also very important and taken seriously in school. Three occasions of being late to class or to Registration may mean a detention and it is helpful if parents can reinforce this with their children.

2. Support Homework Expectations

Homework reinforces and extends classroom learning and helps children practise important study skills. It also helps them develop a sense of responsibility and a work ethic that will benefit them beyond the classroom. All pupils across the school should get homework from most subjects.

In addition to making sure your child knows that you see homework as a priority, you can help by creating an effective study environment. Any well-lit, comfortable, and quiet workspace with the necessary supplies will do. Avoiding distractions (like a TV or PlayStation in the background; think about cognitive load!) and setting up a start and end time also help.

While your child does homework, be available to support, offer guidance, answer questions, and cast an eye over the completed work. Encourage your child to take time and care over their work and set it out neatly using eraser and ruler if required. Resist the urge to provide the correct answers or complete the assignments yourself. Learning from mistakes is part of the process and you don't want to take this away from your child. Homework is not a test but provides valuable feedback to the teacher as well as extra practice for the child. If your child is really struggling with a piece of work, make sure that they speak to their teacher about this and get help.

Accept the invite to be a Google Guardian to help you support your child with deadlines.

3. Send Your Child to School Ready to Learn

A nutritious breakfast fuels up everyone and gets them ready for the day ahead. In general, people who eat breakfast have more energy and do better in their day. Pupils who eat breakfast are also less likely to be absent.

You can help boost your child's attention span, concentration, and memory by providing breakfast foods that are rich in whole grains, fibre and protein, as well as low in added sugar. If your child is running late some mornings give them a banana or a sandwich to eat on the run rather than not having anything. Our canteen is also open in the mornings although some bus arrival times may mean this is not an option for everyone.

If your child really cannot face eating first thing then try to ensure they have access to food at break time (10.30am) as it is a long time until lunch (1.15pm).

Everyone also needs the right amount of sleep to be alert and ready to learn all day. Most teenagers need 9 to 10 hours of sleep a night. Homework, sports, after-school activities, phones, PlayStation, X-box, as well as hectic family schedules, can contribute to kids not getting enough sleep. Try to stick to a 'school night' bedtime and a 'no screens' policy after a certain time also.

Lack of sleep can cause irritable or hyperactive behaviour and might make it hard for children to pay attention in class.

4. Teach Organisational Skills

No one is born with great organisational skills — they need to be learned and practised.

Talk to your child about keeping his or her desk (or bedroom space) tidy so books, jotters and worksheets that come home don't get lost. Teach your child how to use a calendar or wall planner to help stay organised. It's also helpful to make a to-do list to help prioritise and get things done.

For example:

- *Remember to pack my bag night before*
- *Check if I need PE kit for tomorrow.*
- *Do I need my reading book tomorrow?*
- *Check I have pens/pencils/ruler, etc.*
- *Remember to charge my Chromebook at night.*

Pupils won't get a replacement Chromebook to use should their own be uncharged (or left at home) so they need to take this responsibility to avoid missing out on learning.

5. Support your child with effective Study Techniques

Assessment is part of school life and aim to prepare pupils to do their best in school tests and then in SQA exams by actively teaching them study skills.

Have a look through the document *Study skills and habits for effective learning - guide for parents Sept 2022* and talk to your children at assessment times about techniques such as retrieval practice, flash cards, study timetables, etc.

Introducing your child to effective study techniques now will pay off with good learning habits throughout life and allow your child to be prepared for assessment and therefore less likely to find these times stressful.

Assessments and revision materials should be available on Google Classroom for each subject so ask your child to check this regularly. Pupils can access flashcards to make up for themselves from the school library. All pupils will be taught study techniques in PSE from S1.

Remember that taking a break after a 45-minute study period is an important way to help children process and remember information.

6. Know the Disciplinary and Merit Policies

It's important for your child to know what's expected of them at school and that you'll support the school's consequences when expectations aren't met. It's easiest for pupils when school expectations match the ones at home, so both environments are seen as safe and caring places that work together as a team.

Our school and classroom procedures cover expectations, and consequences for not meeting the expectations, for things like moving around the school, behaviour, dress code, the use of mobile phones and acceptable language. Check through *THS Whole School and Classroom Procedures for pupils and parents - updated May 2025* so that you can support your child.

Pupils whose conduct is over and above the expected, whether for behaviour or a piece of work, can earn merits. These are awarded for our school values: Teamwork, Respect, Attainment, Commitment and Kindness (TRACK).

See *Thurso High School Merit Policy information for parents May 2025* for more information.

7. Get Involved

Children do better in school when parents are involved in their academic lives. Attending Parents' Evenings is a very good way to be informed about your child's progress. The evenings are a chance to start or continue conversations with your child's teacher and discuss strategies to help your child do his or her best in class. Meeting with the teacher also lets your child know that what goes on in school will be shared at home.

Parents can also get involved by:

- Joining the Fundraising Committee.
- Attending Parent Council meetings.
- Volunteering as a minibuss driver (license requirements).
- Attending school events such as 'Battle of the Bands'.
- Attending Parents' Information Evenings.

Much research exists about the importance of parent involvement in education and overwhelmingly indicates that parent involvement not only positively affects pupil achievement, but it also contributes to higher quality education and better performance of schools overall. But parents can get busy and forget to ask the simple questions, which can influence children's success at school.

Make time to talk with your child every day, so he or she knows that what goes on at school is important to you. When children know parents are interested in their academic lives, they'll take school seriously as well.

Besides during family meals, good times to talk include car trips, walking the dog, preparing meals, or standing in the queue at the supermarket.