



ST.THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Attendance Policy

Mission Statement

We are a Roman Catholic Community committed to:

- Mutual respect, positive encouragement and participation.
- Recognising the different personal and educational needs of all pupils.
- The delivery of the full national curriculum together with a religious education syllabus approved by the Catholic Church.
- The highest standards of teaching, learning and performance.
- Maintaining a supportive partnership with parents, the parish, and the wider community.
- The professional development of all staff.

Attendance

Regular attendance and punctuality at school is important to secure academic achievement. The law says that all children between the ages of 5 and 17 must receive an education. DfE policy says:

'Parents must ensure their children attend school regularly, arrive at school on time, properly dressed and in a condition to learn.'

Parents/carers are responsible for making sure this happens. Irregular attendance will undermine a child's educational progress. .

It is recommended by the Department for Education and the school that a child's attendance should be above 96% to maximise their full academic potential, this is the expected national and local average.

Good attendance is important because:

- Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and poor attendance.
- Regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically.
- Regular attenders find school routines and school work easier to cope with.

- Regular attenders find learning more satisfying.
- Regular attenders have an easier transfer to secondary school.

Attendance during COVID-19

Attendance at school is mandatory from September 2020 and it is parents' duty to make sure their child of compulsory school age regularly attends. There will, however be circumstances where pupils can't attend due to Coronavirus. Please see government guidance on self-isolation and what to do if your child or a member of your household display symptoms.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-stay-at-home-guidance/stay-at-home-guidance-for-households-with-possible-coronavirus-covid-19-infection>

Children who are withdrawn from school , who do not have symptoms and are not self-isolating will be recorded as an unauthorised absence which may result in a penalty fine.

School timings at this time reflect government guidance and the need for staggered start/end of the day for different year groups and must be adhered to. Arriving at school 10 minutes or more after allocated time will result in a 'late' mark. Arrival at school after the gate is closed will be recorded as an unauthorised absence.

The daily Routine

All pupils are expected to attend school regularly and punctually.

In the morning the school day begins at 8.55am. Pupils may enter the school site from 8.40am.

Pupils go straight to their classroom for registration.

Pupils who arrive late after 9am will receive a late mark in the register which is shown as an 'L'. Pupils arriving after 9.10am will be marked 'U' unauthorised absence. Late children must report to the school reception area on entering the building. This is to ensure that the child's arrival is noted and the register updated accordingly.

The registers are formally closed at 13.15 in the afternoon.

Attendance in school

A child's absence will be recorded as unauthorised if no satisfactory explanation is given for absence or if the school considers the information received from a parent is not an acceptable reason for absence.

Attendance will be monitored regularly and parents will be informed of their child's low attendance level and invited to discuss their child's attendance when:

- A child continues to be absent for more than seven days without explanation.

- A child is absent for seven school days or more with an unsatisfactory explanation.
- A child's attendance drops below 96% for no specific medical or other acceptable reason.

Towards the end of Term 6 attendance figures will be included with the child's annual progress report.

Attendance figures are reported termly to the governors in the Head's Report.

- The school aims to promote, among parents and children, a high level of awareness of the need for regular and prompt attendance.
- A statement defining the school's expectations relating to attendance appears in the school's prospectus.
- The Office Manager will monitor attendance and investigate any unexplained absences.
- If members of staff are concerned about the level of attendance or punctuality of any of the children in their class, they should inform the office manager.
- Parents are advised of the school's expectations during the induction meetings for new children.
- Parents are reminded regularly in newsletters of the importance of good attendance and timekeeping.
- If the school has been informed that the child will arrive late due to a medical/dental appointment then an attendance mark will be given on arrival.
- Where concerns with attendance are highlighted, parents may be requested to attend a meeting with the Head Teacher in order to try to prevent a referral to the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies (AASSA)
- Serious poor school attendance will be referred to the AAP who may visit the child's home to discuss this and to offer support. Further unauthorised absence will result in warning letters from the AAP and may result in the case being referred to the Magistrates Court if the child continues to miss school.

Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

The Head Teacher, on behalf of the governing body, can authorise absence. Absences can be authorised for the following reasons.

Illness

Please telephone the school before 9.30am on the first day of absence so that we know that your child is absent with your knowledge.

This must be followed up with a brief note of explanation when the child returns to school. All notes will be retained on the pupil's personal file.

A telephone call will be made to the home on the first day of absence if parents/carers have not made contact with the school.

Where no communication is received in school – the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Persistent nonspecific illness e.g. poorly/unwell will result in an unauthorised absence if medical evidence cannot be provided.

Medical/Dental Appointments

Please avoid these during the school day if at all possible. However, if an appointment during the school day is unavoidable please send a letter in advance to the school office to authorise absence.

If you have a letter from the hospital/dentist this should be submitted to the office to be copied.

Children should not have the whole day off if they have a medical/dental appointment, they should be collected from the school office in time to travel to the appointment and then return to school immediately following the appointment.

Family Annual Holidays

The Government directive says that no annual holidays can be authorised by the Headteacher unless there are extenuating circumstances (no authorisations for financial reasons will be considered). All requests must be put in writing to the Headteacher in advance. Permission sought after a holiday has been taken will not be granted. The Headteacher may seek the advice of the Attendance Advisory Practitioner before a decision is made. Requests may need to be backed up by relevant documentation. All requests will be replied to in writing by the Headteacher.

If an application for term time holiday is refused and the holiday of 5 days or more is taken, then it will be classed as an unauthorised absence and subject to consideration of a penalty notice being served by the Attendance Advisory Service for Schools and Academies, who monitors school attendance. These penalty notices require the recipient to pay a fine, currently £60 per child, per parent who lives in the household, (this includes step parents and partners), if it is paid within 21 days or £120 per child, per parent who lives in the household, (this includes step parents and partners), if paid within 28 days. Non-payment of these penalty notices will proceed to Magistrates Court.

A child's absence during term time can seriously affect their learning. Not only do they miss the teaching provided on the days they are away, but they are also less prepared for subsequent lessons. We will not provide work for children to complete during their absence.

Unauthorised Absence

Absence (leave) during term time can only be approved in “exceptional circumstances”. The following reasons are examples of absence that will not be authorised:

- Absence of siblings if one child is ill;
- Oversleeping;
- Inadequate clothing/uniform;
- Confusion over school dates;
- Medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reasons;
- Child’s/family birthday;
- Shopping trip.

Incentives and strategies to promote regular attendance and punctuality

Good school attendance is promoted in assemblies.

100% attendance certificates, stickers and pencils are awarded to pupils who achieve this target and at the end of term 2, 4 and 6.

Newsletters regularly promote good school attendance.

Equal Opportunities

The school will consider religious and cultural diversity when using discretion to authorise absence. A child’s absence may be authorised on a day exclusively set aside for religious observance by the relevant religious body. Parents/carers should give at least two weeks’ notice of this.

We believe that every child at St Thomas’s Primary School deserves to have a full education and to develop into a well-rounded individual, this is achieved by regular school attendance.

Policy reviewed: January 2020

Amended in accordance with DFES regulations September 2015

Next review date: January 2021

Author Headteacher