

ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

Policy on Pupil Daily Attendance

Learn, love and respect through Jesus

This policy should be read in conjunction with our other policies

1 Introduction

- 1.1 At St Thomas' we expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We do all we can to encourage the children to attend. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is development of positive attitudes towards school. To this end, we strive to make our school a happy and rewarding experience for all children. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.
- 1.2 Under the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995, the governing body are responsible for making sure the school keeps an attendance register that records which pupils are present at the start of both the morning and the afternoon sessions of the school day. This register indicates whether an absence was authorised or unauthorised.

2 Definitions

2.1 Authorised absence

- An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell, the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence.
- Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents and carers do not have this authority. Consequently, not all absences supported by parents and carers will be classified as authorised. For example, if a parent takes a child out of school to go shopping during school hours, this will not mean it is an authorised absence.

2.2 Unauthorised absence

- An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of both the school and a parent.
- Therefore, the absence is unauthorised if a child is away from school without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

3 If a child is absent

- 3.1 Registration takes place at 8.50 each morning. If a child is absent and the teacher is unaware as to the reason a question mark will be placed against the child's name requiring urgent follow-up investigation by the office staff. If the child subsequently arrives at school a 'late' mark (L) will be entered. After 9.10 children arriving late will be recorded as unauthorised (U), unless there are extenuating circumstances. If Persistent lateness will be reported to the headteacher who will follow up further with a letter to parents. If the situation continues then a referral may be made to the School Attendance Improvement Officer.

- 3.2 When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent or guardian to explain the absence.
- 3.3 A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence and, when possible, a copy of an appointment card (or stamped appointment card after a visit), e.g. if a child has a medical/dental appointment.
- 3.4 If there is any doubt about the whereabouts of a child, the class teacher should take immediate action by notifying the school office. The school will then endeavour to contact the parent or guardian, in order to check on the safety of the child.
- 3.5 If the school is unable to contact the parent or guardian (or any other contacts provided – of which the school will hold at least two) to establish a reason for absence by 10.30am, then the police will be contacted to request a Welfare Call in order to establish that the child is safe.**

4 Requests for leave of absence

- 4.1 Since September 2013, following government guidelines, schools are only permitted in 'exceptional circumstances' to authorise any absence from school. Applications for any such absence to be considered should be submitted at least 10 days before the event. Examples of such circumstance would be a wedding or funeral of a close family member where absence may be authorised for the day of the event itself.

5 Long-term absence

- 5.1 When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school will do all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their school work.
- 5.2 If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school will contact the support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

6 Repeated unauthorised absences

- 6.1 The school will contact the parent or guardian of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents or guardians will be asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school will then contact the LA support services, who may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.
- 6.2 The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.
- 6.3 If a pupil fails to attend school regularly or is repeatedly withdrawn for unauthorised holidays then this will result in a referral to the Attendance Improvement Officer (AIO) who may decide that a fixed term penalty notice is appropriate. This would be issued by the AIO who would also take any further legal actions that may be required including prosecution.

7 Rewards for good attendance

- 7.1 All the children who have 100 per cent attendance at the end of the school year may receive an excellence certificate for attendance, awarded at the last assembly of the year.

8 Attendance targets

- 8.1 The school sets attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the senior staff and governors at the annual target-setting meeting. The targets are challenging yet realistic,

and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school considers carefully the attendance figures for other similar schools when setting its own targets.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1 It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and this will be reported on in the termly report from the headteacher to governors. The governors will examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.
- 9.2 The school will keep accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.
- 9.3 The rates of attendance will be reported in the Head teacher's report to governors.
- 9.4 Class teachers will be responsible for monitoring attendance in their class and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they will contact the school office immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who will contact the parents or guardians.
- 9.5 This policy will be reviewed by the governing body every two years, or earlier if considered necessary.

This policy was reviewed and ratified by *Committee A* of the *Governing Body* at their meeting on 11 **March 2019**