

SAINT THOMAS MORE CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL



SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY September 2025

Principles

- Regular school attendance is the key to enabling children and young people to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.
- Promoting excellent attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.
- This Policy should not be seen in isolation but is a strand that underpins all other policies related to the wellbeing of children including safeguarding, behaviour, bullying, and support for children with medical needs.
- All children should be in school, on time, every day that school is open unless the reason for absence is unavoidable

School Responsibilities

- We will promote positive behaviour and attendance through its use of curriculum and learning materials and will recognise good attendance appropriately.
- We will work with parents to resolve problems which may affect a child's attendance and will involve representatives of other agencies that work with the school such as the School Nurse or representatives of the Local Support Team such as Education Welfare Workers where required in order to ensure all children can benefit from consistently good punctuality and attendance. We will use the Early Help Assessment process to support this.
- We will be proactive in encouraging attendance for all pupils through ensuring parents and pupils receive information on the importance of good attendance and punctuality and will react swiftly to intervene to improve attendance of individual children should this become a concern.

Parents' or Carers' Responsibilities

- Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children of compulsory school age attend school regularly.
- Inform school straight away if your child cannot attend and give the reason.
- Try to make medical, dental or other appointments outside the school day.
- Ensure the school is aware of any circumstances at home that may be likely to affect their attendance.
- Encourage good routines at home which promote a healthy lifestyle including enough sleep.
- Talk to your child about school and let the school know if your child is worried about any issues such as difficulties with homework or friendship problems.
- Do not book holidays in term time – this will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances.
- Seek advice from your G.P. if you are not sure how long to keep your child off school with an illness.
- Ensure school has all your up to date contact details.
- Encourage your child to enjoy school and make the most of all the opportunities available to them.

The importance of good attendance and its link to attainment

The Department for Education has published research into the effect that missing time from school can have on chances of succeeding in tests and exams. The research is based on data from all schools in England going back several years. The results are very clear – missing even small amounts of time from school can have a significant effect on achievement.

For example, at the end of the 2012/13 academic year 94% of pupils who were present all the time achieved 5+ GCSE A* - C or equivalent. Where attendance dropped to between 85 and 90% only 75% of pupils achieved these results. This equates to an absence of around 1 week per year during Years 10 and 11 and clearly illustrates the impact of attendance on attainment.

The same pattern is also seen at primary school level, where pupils missing up to just 14 days of school in key stage 2 (normally age 11) are a quarter less likely to achieve level 5 or above in reading, writing or maths tests than those with no absence.

Admissions register

School keeps an admission register which records the date that each child joined the school and their personal details including those of their parents and of their previous school. All schools must keep a record of attendance register entries for at least 3 years and inform their local authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admission register.

A pupil can lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 where they;

- Have been taken out of school by their parents and are being educated outside the school system e.g. home education (see below on home educated children);
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered;
- Have a medical condition certified by the school medical officer that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school;
- Are in custody for a period of more than four months due to a final court order and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning to the school at the end of that period; or,
- Have been permanently excluded.

Elective Home Education

If school receives written notification from parents that they wish to home educate their child then we will inform the Local Authority via Entrust at enquiries@entrust-ed.co.uk of the decision to remove the child's name from the admissions register. Whilst school will not seek to prevent parents from choosing to electively home educate their child, neither will they seek to encourage them to do this – particularly as a way of avoiding exclusion or due to a poor attendance record.

Attendance targets

The school has adopted the following attendance targets for the 2024/25 academic year:

1. To maintain a whole school attendance level of 96%
2. To ensure that the level of unauthorised absence stays below DfE national averages
3. To ensure the rate of persistent absence stays below the DfE national average

Definition of persistent absence

Persistent absentees are defined as those pupils missing around 10% or more of possible sessions.

What the school expects/will do

- Parents are expected to call school as soon as they are aware that their child will be absent.
- A reason must be given for absence: school will then determine if this is authorised or not.
- Registers will close at 9.00am in the morning and at 1.10pm (KS2) 1.30pm (KS1) in the afternoon.
- Attendance is reported to governors on a termly basis.
- Staff should alert Mrs. Tonks and/or Mrs. Hewitt if they have concerns over absence or reasons for absence.
- Children should be encouraged to come to school with minor coughs and colds. Where illness is more serious, then of course, it is sensible and wise to keep children at home. However, they should return to school as soon as they are fit enough to do so.
- The Local Authority will be informed of the absence of any child without school's permission, and school may involve the EWO and take due regard of safeguarding procedures where absence of a particular child presents a cause for concern.
- If a child is not in school and a parent/carer has not called in, Mrs. Tonks will telephone one of the parents initially. If there is no reply, she will try again within half an hour. If there is still no answer, she will inform the Headteacher/Deputy Headteacher and try to contact another family member. If we still have no information on a child's whereabouts, it is up to the Headteacher's discretion as to what further action is taken. This may involve a visit to the home, or a call to the police if there is concern in regard to a child protection issue.
- Pupils are entitled to miss time from school for medical or dental appointments: proof of an appointment should be given to the office staff. However, such appointments should be made for outside of school where possible.
- If parents wish to apply for absence during term time, then the relevant form should be completed. These are available from the school office.
- School will now inform the Local authority where absences for holiday purposes are for 1 day or more. Due to changes in legislation, parents who take unauthorised absence will receive a FPN.
- Mrs. Tonks can be contacted via email at office2@st-thomasmore.staffs.sch.uk or by phone on 01922 666335.
- The school follows the Local Authority Fixed Penalty Protocol as a parental measure to improve pupil attendance in accordance with the Department of Education School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures Statutory Guidance January 2015

Legal Framework

- The Education Act 1996 ;
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 and amendments 2010, 2011 and 2013
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999;
- The Education Act 2002; and The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011. ;
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- The Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003;
- The Education Act 2005;
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006;

- The Education (Parenting Contracts and Parenting Orders) (England) Regulations 2007;
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 and amendments; and
- The Education and Skills Act 2008.
- The Equality Act 2010

Appendices

- Staffordshire Local Authority Code of Conduct for Issuing Penalty Notices
- Department for Education Guidance – Working Together to Improve School Attendance

Date of Next Review: September 2026