

# St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

## Attendance Policy

### Principles

- Regular and full time attendance is essential if children and young people are to benefit fully from their school life.
- It is important that children learn the importance of being punctual as part of their preparation for adult life.
- It is the parent's responsibility to contact the school on the first day of absence.
- The school and parents should work together in order to achieve high standards of attendance and punctuality.

### The school will

- Give attendance and punctuality a high priority
- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored, using a computer based registration system and following up absences promptly
- Communicate effectively with other agencies
- Meet the legal requirements with particular reference to authorised and unauthorised absences
- Ensure that all staff comply with the school policy
- Ensure that information is available for Governors and parents
- Ensure good liaison when a child changes schools
- Develop incentives for good attendance and punctuality
- Share good practice with other schools
- Have procedures in place to help children settle after a long absence

### Strategies

- All new parents are informed about the policy and information on attendance is in the school prospectus
- Information is given regularly on the school newsletter
- Individual parents are approached when there is a concern about their child's attendance or punctuality
- Reward classes and individuals for good attendance
- Maintain up to date records within the SIMS system
- Liaise with the AAP during regular monitoring visits to identify attendance concerns

We expect parents to

- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address
- Notify the school when their child is unable to attend, with a reason on the first day of absence
- Contact the school if the absence is to continue
- In cases of prolonged absence keep the school informed so that work can be sent home if necessary
- Provide the school with evidence of any medical appointments
- Ensure that their child is punctual each day
- Inform the school if their child is going to be late and the reason for this
- Understand the importance of good attendance and punctuality

## Procedures

- **Classes are registered twice daily through the SIMS system**
- **Absences are checked daily and codes recorded**

## Lateness

The school discourages late arrival to school, arriving late can seriously disrupt learning. If a child is persistently late a letter will be sent home. If there is no improvement parents will be required to attend a meeting at school.

Children may arrive in school after 8.40am the first bell rings at 8.45am after which they may go to their classrooms. A second bell rings at 8.55am after which children who are not in class should go to the office to register as late. Children who arrive after this may be marked as having an unauthorised absence if no valid reason is given.

**During COVID-19, school registration may differ depending on staggered start times. However, the majority of year group staggered start times will work within the usual timeframes.**

## Absence

Parents should ring in and leave a message on the absence line before 10am if their child is absent leaving the child's name, class and reason for absence. On their return to school a note should be made in their contact book. Absences for sickness, death of a close family member, attendance at examinations, participations in sporting events will be authorised. Absence is authorised by the Headteacher if they are not satisfied of the reason it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Absences for the following will be marked as unauthorised, because a parent is ill, a sibling is ill, a parent cannot get a child to school, shopping trips, birthday treats, family work patterns, refusal of a child to attend.

Each child's absence record will be noted and recorded and the child's annual reports.

The school will report percentages of authorised and unauthorised absences to the Governors and DFE.

The school will take into account children who are self-isolating and following Government guidelines with regards to reporting. The school will consider how, for example, anxiety due to the Coronavirus outbreak may affect children and families and provide support and sanctions appropriately.

### **Requests for Leave of absence**

In accordance with Government guidelines holidays in term time are no longer permitted. Absences from school can only be authorised in 'exceptional circumstances'. Requests for leave in exceptional circumstances must be made in writing and will be passed to the Governing Body for consideration.

Time off taken in term time without the authority of the Headteacher will be marked as unauthorised and parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice by the Attendance Advisory Service. (Currently an FPN is £60 per child per parent £120 per adult if not paid within 42 days of issue followed by an automatic referral to Magistrates court if not paid).

**Review Date:** September 2020

**Next Review Date:** September 2022