

# **St Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School**



## **Attendance Policy 2024-2025**

Written: September 2019  
Amended: July 2024  
Review: October 2025

# St Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School

## Attendance Policy

**Covid 19 Para- "**

School will continue to follow all government guidance relating to attendance of pupils.

### **Mission Statement**

"Together with God we reach for the stars"

At St. Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School we believe that attendance and punctuality at school is not only a legal requirement, but is fundamental to the child's development and attainment. Local Authorities, Schools, Parents and the wider community all have a role to play in improving attendance. At St. Thomas of Canterbury RC Primary School we have implemented procedures designed to ensure that all our pupils attend regularly.

### **AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

- To demonstrate a strong attendance ethos.
- To have a clear policy on absence.
- To have effective systems for monitoring attendance.
- Use attendance data to improve school and pupil performance.
- To promote the importance and legal requirements of good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers.
- Early intervention when individual pupil absence gives cause for concern.
- To have support systems in place for vulnerable pupils.
- To reward and celebrate good and improved attendance and punctuality.
- To make best use of additional support for pupils and parents with greatest need.

### **PROCEDURES AND INTERVENTION TECHNIQUES**

**We demonstrate a strong attendance ethos by having:**

- A whole school approach, which reinforces good attendance, teaching and learning to encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve.
- An attendance and behaviour policy, which is easily understood by all and is regularly updated and shared with all stakeholders.
- Appropriate attendance targets.
- Strong leadership on attendance with all staff seeing attendance as a shared responsibility.
- Allocated resources for the attendance officer.
- Half termly reporting of attendance issues to the senior management team and Governors.
- Developed a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils/families.

### **ABSENCE PROCEDURES**

We expect the parent/carer to make contact with school before 9.30am on each day to report that their child will be absent from school. It is the school's decision to classify the absence (authorised or unauthorised). The school has a first day response system in place in which the following happens:

- Every Monday: All Absent pupils receive a visit from the Family Support worker including those who have already reported the absence with the school office. If there is no response at the property a note is posted through the door, asking for contact to be made at school.
- Day One: Telephone the main contacts to establish reason for absence. If we are unable to contact parents via telephone the Attendance Officer will complete a home visit. Absence letter will also be sent home.

- Day Two: Telephone the main contacts to establish reason for absence. If we are unable to contact parents via telephone the Attendance Officer will complete a home visit.
- Day Three: Telephone the main contacts to establish reason for absence. If we are unable to contact parents via telephone the Attendance Officer will complete a home visit.

Following Salford City Council guidelines the school can request the issue of a penalty notice to parents in the following circumstance:

- For unauthorised absence in term time.
- When a child has 10 sessions unauthorised, including any unauthorised sessions recorded due to arriving late for school (1 day = 2 sessions).

## **LEAVE OF EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCE**

**Exceptional circumstances:** All schools can grant a leave of absence for other exceptional circumstances at their discretion. In the case of schools maintained by local authorities and special schools not maintained by local authorities, it must be requested in advance by a parent who the pupil normally lives with. Schools are then expected to consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the school to determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school.

Generally, the DfE does not consider a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation to be an exceptional circumstance

## **FIXED PENALTY NOTICE**

The Education (Penalty Notices) (ENGLAND) (AMENDMENT) Regulations 2024

2024 No. 210

Education Penalty Notices for Non-School attendance

New Legislation comes into force on 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024 regarding the issuing of penalty notices relating to none school attendance.

Schools are required to consider, on a case by case basis, whether to ask the Local Authority to issue a Penalty Notice to a parent when their child's absence is unauthorised.

Working within a Code of Conduct, Salford Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 10-week period;

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence (O coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised holidays (G Coded)
- Persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration (U coded)
- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absences (O, G and U coded)

You may receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance.

Within the new National Framework, there is a national limit to the amount of Fixed Penalty Notices that can be issued to any parent in respect of an individual child, within a three-year period. Each fixed penalty is issued on the basis of per parent/per child – therefore where a child has two parents, two fines may be issued.

The fixed penalty notice amount has increased to the following:

- Penalty Notice One - £160 discounted to £80 if paid within 21 days.

- Penalty Notice Two - £160 with no discount offered.

Should a third absence be taken within the three-year period, a parent may be summonsed to the Magistrates Court for knowingly failing to secure good attendance at school (Section 444 (1A) of Education Act 1996).

***Please note that from 19<sup>th</sup> August 2024, schools are not able to authorise any leave of absence for holidays.***

The local authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child.

If you have concerns about your child's attendance at school or if you are experiencing any difficulties, please contact your school and ask for support.

## **MEDICAL APPOINTMENTS**

Should a child have a medical appointment, it is expected that they return to school to complete the school day.

Appointment cards with times and dates should be shown to school when taking your child out.

If a pupil must attend a medical appointment during the school day, they must be collected from the school office by the parent or another authorised adult, and signed out in the 'signing out' book. No pupil will be allowed to leave the school site without parental confirmation.

## **MANAGING ABSENCES**

If there are any attendance concerns it is the responsibility of the parent / carer to inform the school. This enables the school to work in partnership with the parent/carers by identifying what the issues are and devising a joint action plan to implement interventions that can improve the situation. Through reviewing the plan on a regular basis and through listening to the views of all parties, it is anticipated that there will be improvements and good working relationships established based on honesty and trust.

## **PERSISTENT ABSENCE**

Pupils are categorised as being 'Persistently Absent' if they accumulate 10%, or more absences. For children whose attendance falls into the 'persistent absence' category, parents/carers will be contacted as detailed in the Attendance Policy and/or they will be invited into school.

During this meeting:

- An action plan will be compiled with input from the parent/carers, school and pupil.
- Targets will be agreed and reviewed until that child is no longer in the persistent absence category.
- There would be a focus on links between attendance and attainment.
- A school / parent contract will be offered if it is deemed appropriate

If the parent fails to attend the meeting or there is no significant improvement in attendance, then the absence issue shall be escalated to the Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

Below is a table which sets out current thresholds for Persistent absence and can be referred to as a means of determining the amount of sessions missed to meet these criteria:

TERMS	PERSISTENT ABSENCE 10%	NUMBER OF DAYS OFF
SEPTEMBER TO OCTOBER	7 OR MORE SESSIONS	3.5 DAYS
SEPTEMBER TO CHRISTMAS	14 OR MORE SESSIONS	7 DAYS
SEPTEMBER TO FEBRUARY	20 OR MORE SESSIONS	10 DAYS
SEPTEMBER TO EASTER	25 OR MORE SESSIONS	12.5 DAYS
SEPTEMBER TO MAY	31 OR MORE SESSIONS	15.5. DAYS

**Parents/Carers are expected to:**

- Offer a reason for any period of absence, preferably before the absence or on the first day of absence
- Ensure school have correct and up to date contact numbers and addresses of parents/carers
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time, in school uniform, with the right equipment and in a condition to learn. A reason should be offered for any lateness
- Work closely with the school and Family Support Worker to resolve any problems that may impede a child's attendance
- Take family holidays during school holiday periods and be aware that requests for holidays during term time will be refused except in special /exceptional circumstances which is determined by the headteacher.
- Be aware of curriculum requirements and be especially vigilant with regards to attendance during important academic dates such as SATS.
- Support their child and recognise their successes and achievements

**DEFINITIONS****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 and the parent has followed the procedures as set out in this policy. Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents do not have this authority and consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

**UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE**

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

**PUNCTUALITY**

Punctuality is vital to the educational process. If your child misses the start of the day, they can miss work and do not spend time with their class teacher missing vital information and news for the day. This can significantly reduce achievement, regardless of academic ability. Pupils arriving late also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and can in turn, encourage absence. The government have introduced new powers for the local authority to issue Penalty Notices in cases where parents do not take responsibility for ensuring their child arrives at school on time. Parents must take responsibility for getting children to school on time. The start of the day is at 8.55am. Children arriving after this time will be recorded late and must enter school through the main entrance, where their parent/carer will have to sign at Reception. Children must be accompanied to the office by an adult if late. It is unfair to expect children to report their late arrival for themselves. An arrival after 9.30am will be marked as an unauthorised absence. Persistent latecomers will be referred to the Education Welfare Officer this can also result in a penalty notice.

**MONITORING**

The Head Teacher in discussion with the Attendance Officer will identify progress on Attendance by including the item on staff meetings, senior management meetings, and Governing Body meetings agendas. This will enable follow-ups and show whether the policy is really effective. The Head Teacher will ensure that the policy is high profile throughout the year and especially at the beginning of a new school year through parents meetings and assemblies.

Any concerns around Attendance and Punctuality will be recorded on the schools CPOMS system (Child Protection Online Monitoring System).

**SANCTIONS**

A child arriving late to school in years 1 -6 will be expected to make up the minutes lost learning time at lunch time. Late mark slips will be issued to all students arriving late.

Where Attendance has fallen into the amber category, warning letters will be sent informing parents that their child's attendance has fallen below 97%.

All children whose attendance has fallen below 90% will be contacted by the family support worker, to arrange strategies to improve attendance. This may be in the form of panel meetings, attendance plans or where no improvement has been made, a formal process involving the local authority Education Welfare Officer and possible fines.

## **AWARDS**

Class Trophies and a chocolate gift for each child is awarded weekly for the highest attendance. Children with 100% attendance in the term will be entered into a raffle to earn the opportunity to win the prizes available, e.g football shirts, range of vouchers for shops, cinema and restaurants, along with many other prizes.

Termly certificates and chocolate prizes for all pupils with 100% attendance.

Punctuality will be rewarded with each child arriving in school on time with an entry into the electronic spinning wheel. The winner will receive a chocolate for the day.

## **EVALUATION**

The Head Teacher and Attendance Officer will use data from monitoring and feedback from staff, governors, parents and the Education Welfare Officer, to review and update the policy once every school year. A termly report to Governors will be made.

Headteacher: Mr David Deane

Attendance Officer: Ms Amanda Coffey

Governor: Mrs Jane Whelan

Contact: [StthomasofCanterbury.rcprimaryschool@salford.gov.uk](mailto:StthomasofCanterbury.rcprimaryschool@salford.gov.uk)

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