

St Thomas More Catholic Primary,
a Voluntary Academy



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Mission Statement

Jesus said:

“Love one another as I have loved you.”

At St Thomas More’s School our Mission is to allow everyone to love and be loved.

We believe that Love is:

Kindness, justice, tolerance, forgiveness and friendship; it is unconditional and inclusive, allowing each one of us to learn and grow to become the wonderful person God created us to be.

Updated: September 2017

Review : September 2018

Children come to school to learn and good attendance is important if children are to gain as much as possible from their time at school. When children miss lessons it is harder for them to perform to the best of their abilities. Poor attendance and or punctuality can lead to children feeling unsettled at school, it can affect their friendships and reduce their confidence. Poor attendance can quickly develop problems socially as well as academically. Punctuality is also important - children need to be in school on time.

Parents/carers have a legal duty (Education Act 1996, Section 7) to ensure that all children of statutory school age (5-16 years of age) receive a full-time education. The education provided must be suitable to the age, ability, aptitude, and any special education needs that their children may have. It is the parents/carers choice how they decide to provide the education, whether this is at a school or otherwise (i.e., home education).

Procedures

Registration

Morning registration is at 9am. We open the doors to children from 8.50 am giving all children the opportunity to settle into class in a calm and orderly manner. Doors to the children's entrances are closed at 9 am for safety reasons.

Children who arrive at school after 9 am come into school via the main entrance. The "late book" will then be completed with the time of arrival and an explanation for the lateness. Pupil's arriving between 9am and 9.15am will receive an "L" mark.

Registers close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after this time will receive a "U" mark, unless there is a reason for their late arrival, e.g., medical appointment, in which case the absence will be marked accordingly.

If a child is late often, parents will be contacted in order to be kept informed; parents may not otherwise know that their child is late for school if it is the practice that the child comes to school alone, or is brought by someone else.

Punctuality

Stage 1

Parents are informed by phone or letter that their child has been frequently late and may be invited to meet with the Headteacher and/or Attendance Leader. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss any problems that may be contributing to a lack of punctuality.

Stage 2

If lateness does not improve, further meetings may be requested with parents/carers along with Headteacher and/or Attendance Leader and a Governor.

Stage 3

Other agencies may be contacted if appropriate and agreement from parents is gained. An agreement may be drawn up with the parents/carers.

Absence

- Only the school may authorise absence
- Parents are required to telephone school on the first day of absence to explain why their child is not at school.
- The Office staff will record the appropriate symbol in the school register when an explanation is received and accepted by the school
- Where a note/telephone call is not received then office staff (or other appropriate member of staff) will contact parents on the first day of absence
- Where the reason is accepted, the absence will be authorised using the appropriate symbol.
- Acceptable reasons include illness, medical appointments (please show copies of appointment cards/letters), religious observance, bereavement and exceptional circumstances.
- Absences will not be authorised for circumstances such as holidays, day trips, shopping, birthday celebrations.
- Please note that even when a parent/carer provides an explanation of absence the school will decide whether to accept the explanation and authorise the absence
- The Attendance Leader monitors the registers regularly. They will follow up any absence causing concern as a matter of course.
- When attendance is below 92%, then the school will require medical evidence if the reason for persistent absences is illness. This could be for example, a doctor's appointment card or prescribed medication. If no medical evidence is produced, then the school will not authorise the child's absence.

The school will always attempt to resolve any problems relating to attendance as soon as possible. If a pattern of poor attendance is formed or if a child experiences a particularly long period of absence the following procedure will be followed.

Stage 1

Parents will be contacted by letter and may be invited to meet with school staff/Governors.

Stage 2

Multi-Agency Support Team (MAST) will be contacted who will meet with parents. Strategies for improved attendance will be discussed and agreed and an action plan may be written. Other agencies may be involved with permission from parents/carers.

Stage 3

Family Intervention Worker will keep in contact with parents and if necessary send a warning letter to parents.

Stage 4

Family Intervention Worker will issue a penalty warning letter

Stage 5: If a child is absent during the penalty warning period a fine may be issued

Stage 6: If attendance does not improve, parents may receive a court summons

Request for Term-time Leave

Please see "Term-time Leave: Policy For Sheffield Schools"

Children Missing from Education

The SENCO and/or Headteacher are the nominated members of school staff to liaise with the Children and Young People's Directorate Children Missing from Education Team. Pupils who cannot be located will be considered missing. The Children Missing from Education Team will be informed and will pursue the matter in accordance with Local Authority procedures.

Children In Public Care

The SENCO and/or Headteacher are the co-ordinators who liaise with the Children and Young people's Directorate Looked After Children Team. Looked After Children will be set up as an Attendance Group on SIMS and their individual attendance will be checked each half term.

Monitoring Attendance

Daily: Unexplained absences are noted by the office staff. Office staff will try to contact parents on the first day of unexplained absence. Our immediate aim is to check on the whereabouts and safety and health of the child, we also wish to do everything we can to promote good attendance. Safeguarding of children is a high priority and when children are absent from school, school need to ascertain that children are safe. Staff may contact MAST to request a home visit.

Weekly: Attendance records are sent to MAST for any children who are on the concerns list.

Every Half-term: The Attendance Leader conducts an in-house attendance sweep and any child whose attendance is below 95% may receive a letter informing them of their attendance. Punctuality is also checked at this time and again letters may be sent out. Families may be invited to attend a meeting in school to discuss attendance/punctuality further. At the half termly ECM meeting, children with low attendance are discussed and actions identified. Any children whose attendance is below 90% are classed as persistent absentees. These group of children will be monitored closely and appropriate referrals may be made to the Local Authority. **Termly** A termly attendance return is completed and a copy

sent to the Local Authority. Attendance is reported on in the Termly *Headteacher's Report to Governors*.

Annually: An attendance target is set for the school at the beginning of the year and is reviewed at the end of the year.

Rewards and Strategies

Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
100% Prize Draws	100% Prize Draws	100% Prize Draws	100% Prize Draws	100% Prize Draws	100% Prize Draws
100% Newsletter Honour Roll	100% Newsletter Honour Roll	100% Newsletter Honour Roll	100% Newsletter Honour Roll	100% Newsletter Honour Roll	100% Newsletter Honour Roll
Early bird week	Early Bird Week	Early Bird week	Early Bird Week	Early Bird week	Early Bird Week
Best Punctuality class treat	Best Punctuality class treat	Best Punctuality class treat	Best Punctuality class treat	Best Punctuality class treat	Best Punctuality class treat
Half termly 100% Certificates		Half termly 100% Certificates		Half termly 100% Certificates	
Also weekly: The year group who have the best attendance each week will receive an extra playtime. The class winners will be announced in our weekly newsletter				End of Year 100% Celebration NB. Children must have 100% attendance throughout the academic year, and have no more than 3 lates to receive this prize	

Patterns we look for when monitoring attendance:

- Is there a variation between age groups
- Are there problems at certain times e.g. when the High School is on holiday?
- Are our absence figures a result of:
- A lot of children having a little absence, or,
- A few children having a lot?

- Is there a pattern to the days of absence e.g. is it usually a Tuesday or Friday? Can these be explained to avoid certain lessons?

While children attend St Thomas More, all staff have a duty of care towards them. This attendance policy is aimed at: - Maintaining a good standard of both punctuality and attendance. - Ensuring we are aware of why children are off school and that they are safe. - Promoting a responsible attitude to school life and personal working habits.

Children collected late at home time

It is crucial that children are collected on time at the end of the school day. Parents are asked to contact school if they are going to be late. Late 'pick ups' are noted on a daily basis. The child's name will be written down along with the time they are collected and a reason why they are late being collected. These are monitored on a half termly basis by the HT and/or Attendance Leader and if there is a concern, parents are contacted by letter. The letter will inform the parents of the number of times over the period of the half term that their child has been collected late at the end of the school. We may invite parents into school to discuss this matter and we will try where possible to support them in finding appropriate after-school care. If necessary, individual cases will be discussed with MAST. It is made clear to parents that if children are continually collected late and/or we are unable to locate parents then we may contact Social Care Services.

See "Uncollected Children" Policy in safeguarding policy file.

Roles and Responsibilities

Headteacher and Attendance Leader

- Liaise with LA and school office staff to produce and evaluate attendance statistics
- Liaise with MAST to support families/children where attendance is a concern
- Follow up any cause for concern
- Report to Governors on attendance percentages once per term
- Receive and un/authorise Term Time Leave requests

Governors

- Receive attendance monitoring reports
- Support the school policy

Class Teachers

- Accurately complete the attendance registers at appropriate times
- Pass on to the HT or Attendance Leader any individual causes for concern
- Promote good attendance and punctuality within the classroom and school by modelling good attendance and punctuality

Office Staff

- Register any pupils who arrive late
- Make first day contact to check on absent pupils
- Maintain the SIMS system
- Pass to the HT or Attendance Leader any cause for concern

MAST

- Support school development policies and whole school strategies for improving attendance
- Offer support to analyse school data and identify targets
- Work with families where there are complex issues, which might prevent good attendance
- Advise on and instigate prosecution procedures as appropriate
- Initiate appropriate action from other agencies where necessary.

Parents

- Ensure their child/children arrive on time for school
- Ensure their child/children attend school
- Provide the school with reasons for absence
- Complete 'Request for Term Time leave' forms as appropriate & in conjunction with the Term Time leave policy
- Collect a medical pass from the School Office for medical appointments during school time

Reviewed and updated September 2017.