



St. Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School



Attendance Policy

Date Agreed:	March 2025	Review Date:	March 2026
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Headteacher:	Mrs E Poulteney	Chair of Local Governing Body:	Mr Thompson
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The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to attendance in our school is:

Mrs E. Poulteney

admin@stthomasofcanterbury.thurrock.sch.uk

01375 375826

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Mrs J. Edwards

attendance@stthomasofcanterbury.thurrock.sch.uk

01375 375826

The name and contact details of the school staff members parents should contact for more individual support with attendance

Mrs S Coppin (EYFS and Year 1), Mrs N Smith (Year 2, 3 and 4) and Miss McAnally (Year 5 and 6)

admin@stthomasofcanterbury.thurrock.sch.uk

01375 375826



SCHOOL MISSION STATEMENT



**At St Thomas' we are learning to follow Jesus,
showing respect and consideration for ourselves
and others.**

**We all have the opportunity to learn and work to
the best of our ability in a safe and loving
environment.**

Statement of Intent

At St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, Christ is at the heart of what we teach and everything we do. We want our pupils to be curious about the world in which they live and strive to make it a better place. Our pupils leave St Thomas' with values that enable them to make a positive and vital contribution to society, resilient to the challenges they may face and inclusive of those they meet. When we ask them about their dreams and aspirations, we want them to reflect that being a good person with a strong moral compass is the most important gift you can give yourself.

St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. We understand that barriers to attendance are complex, and that some pupils find it harder than others to attend school; therefore, we will continue to prioritise cultivating a safe and supportive environment at school, as well as strong and trusting relationships with pupils and parents. We take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance, and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas - such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium - can have on improving pupil attendance.

At St Thomas Of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. All staff are concerned for the children's welfare and happiness and everyone plays a part in promoting regular attendance among the pupils. Good attendance tracking is a key part of our ongoing commitment to safeguarding our pupils and as such this policy should be considered alongside our Child Protection and Safeguarding policy. The Department for Education (DfE) states that the pupils with the highest attainment at the end of key stage 2 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

At St Thomas' we are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this Attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.
- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Ensuring our Attendance policy is clear and easily understood by all staff, parents and pupils.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

Legislation and Guidance

The DfE has produced guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities: Working together to improve school attendance. Our Attendance Policy reflects the key principles of that guidance.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance>

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- [Updated] DfE (2024) 'Working together to improve school attendance'
- [Updated] DfE (2024) 'Keeping children safe in education (KCSIE) 2024'
- [Updated] DfE (2024) 'Children missing education'
- [Updated] DfE (2024) 'Providing remote education'
- DfE (2024) 'Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- SEND Policy

School Attendance and the Law

By law all children of compulsory school age must receive an appropriate full-time education (Education Act 1996). Parents have a legal duty to ensure their child attends school regularly at the school at which they are registered.

Parents may be recognised differently under education law, than under family law. Section 576 of the Education Act 1996 states that a 'parent', in relation to a child or young person, includes any person

who is not a parent (from which can be inferred 'biological parent') but who has parental responsibility, or who has care of the child.

A person typically has care of a child or young person if they are the person with whom the child lives, either full or part time and who looks after the child, irrespective of what their biological or legal relationship is with the child.

Where a pupil reaches the national threshold of 10 sessions of unauthorised absence in a rolling period of 10 school weeks, the school will consider whether a penalty notice is appropriate. Each case will be considered individually to determine whether a penalty notice or another tool or legal intervention should be used to improve attendance.

A fixed penalty notice will be applied for in line with the LA's code of conduct and the DfE's 'Working together to improve school attendance' guidance.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absences will be charged at £160, reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. A penalty notice of £120 may also be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. This will be reduced to £60 if paid within 21 days.

Parents will only get up to two fines for the same child in a three-year period. Once this limit has been reached, other action such as a parenting order or prosecution will be considered.

Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

Parents who are prosecuted and attend court because their child has not been attending school may be fined up to £2,500. Unauthorised absence may result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. This may include issuing each parent with a Penalty Notice or referring the matter to the Magistrates Court whereby each parent may receive a fine up to £2500 and/or up to 3 months in prison. If a parent is found guilty in court, they will receive a criminal conviction.

Thurrock School Attendance and Absence Information:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/school-attendance-and-absence/penalty-notices>

Thurrock Code of Conduct for issuing Penalty Notices for school absence:

<https://www.thurrock.gov.uk/sites/default/files/assets/documents/unauthorised-absence-penalty-code-2024-v01.pdf>

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 were amended in September 2024. All references to family holidays and extended leave have been removed. The amendments specify that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are "exceptional circumstances" and they no longer have any discretion to authorise up to ten days of absence each academic year.

It is a rule of this school that a leave of absence shall not be granted in term time unless there are reasons considered to be exceptional by the headteacher, irrespective of the child's overall

attendance. Only the headteacher or his/her designate (not the local authority) may authorise such a request and all applications for a leave of absence must be made in writing on the prescribed form provided by the school. Where a parent removes a child when the application for leave was refused or where no application was made to the school, the issue of a penalty notice may be requested by this school in accordance with the Thurrock Code of Conduct.

A Penalty Notice may be issued where there have been at least 10 consecutive sessions (a session is half a day) of unauthorised absence for the purpose of a holiday.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The governing board has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Arranging attendance training for all relevant staff that is appropriate to their role.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.
- Sharing effective practice on attendance management and improvement across schools.
- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Having regard to 'Keeping children safe in education' when making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The Headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the attendance officer role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

Parents are responsible for:

- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.
- The attendance of their children at school.
- Promoting good attendance with their children.

Definitions

The following definitions apply for the purposes of this policy:

Absence:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Not attending school for any reason

Authorised absence:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time, for which the school has granted leave
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave
- An absence due to a family emergency

Unauthorised absence:

- Parents keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Arrival at school after the register has closed
- Absence due to shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Absence due to day trips and holidays in term-time which have not been agreed
- Leaving school for no reason during the day

Persistent absenteeism (PA) and Severe Absenteeism (SA):

A pupil is defined by the Government as a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more of schooling across the school year for any reason; this can be authorised or unauthorised absence. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to any pupil's education and we need the full support and co-operation of parents to resolve this.

A pupil who has missed 50% or more schooling is defined by the Government as 'severely absent'. Pupils within this cohort may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners.

Promoting Regular Attendance

At St Thomas of Canterbury Primary School, we believe in developing good patterns of attendance and set high expectations for the attendance and punctuality for all our pupils from the outset. It is a central part of our school's vision, ethos and day to day life. We recognise the connections between attendance, attainment, safeguarding and wellbeing.

The name and contact details of the senior leader responsible for the strategic approach to

attendance in our school is:

Mrs E. Poulteney

admin@stthomasofcanterbury.thurrock.sch.uk

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is the responsibility of parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- Report to parents/carers annually on their child's attendance with the annual school report.
- Report to parents/carers regularly on their child's attendance at Parents' evenings.
- Celebrate excellent attendance by announcing the highest weekly class attendance for KS1 and KS2 in Assembly.
- Contact parents/carers should their child's attendance fall below 96% or where attendance is of concern.

Attendance expectations

The school has high expectations for pupils' attendance and punctuality, and ensures that these expectations are communicated regularly to parents and pupils.

Pupils will be expected to attend school punctually every day they are required to be at school, for the full day.

The times of the start and close of the school day for all pupils at St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School are:

Gates open: 8.40 am

Registration closes: 9.00 am

End of the school day: 3.15 pm

How we manage lateness:

- The school day starts at 8.40am when children can begin to come into school
- Registers are taken at 8.55am and your child will receive a late mark 'L' if they are not in by that time
- Children arriving after 8.55am will be met by our School Attendance Officer at the gate. After 9.00am children are required to come into school via the school office accompanied by a parent or carer. The parent/carers will be required to provide a reason for their lateness which is recorded.
- At 9.15am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the Regulations, if your child arrives after that time, they will receive a mark that shows them to be on site - U code (Late after register closes), but this will not count as a present mark, and it will mean they have an unauthorised absence
- The school may contact parents/carers regarding lateness
- The afternoon register will be marked at 1:00pm (EYFS), 1:15pm (KS1), 1:30 LKS2 and 1:45 (UKS2). Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they are not present

Unauthorised lateness could result in the school referring to the Local Authority for sanctions and/or legal proceedings. If your child has a persistent late record, you will be asked to meet with the Assistant Headteachers but you can approach us at any time if you are having difficulties getting your child to school on time. We expect parents and staff to encourage good punctuality by being good role models to our children and celebrate good punctuality.

Absence procedures

The name and contact details of the school staff member pupils and parents should contact about attendance on a day-to-day basis is:

Mrs J. Edwards

attendance@stthomasofcanterbury.thurrock.sch.uk

01375 375826

We monitor all absence, and the reasons that are given, thoroughly.

If a child is absent from school the parent must follow these procedures:

- Parents will be required to contact the school office via telephone before 9:00am on the first day of their child's absence - they will be expected to provide an explanation for the absence and an estimation of how long the absence will last, e.g. one school day. The school has an answerphone available to leave a message if nobody is available to take your call.
- Contact the school on every further day of absence, again before 9.00am.
- Ensure that your child returns to school as soon as possible and you provide any medical evidence, if requested, to support the absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Contact the parent by telephone call as soon as is practicable on the first day that they do not attend school, if we have not heard from you however it is your responsibility to contact us.
- If we are unable to make contact with parents by telephone, we will telephone emergency contact numbers, sent letters home and a home visit may be made in the interests of safeguarding.
- A referral will be made to the Local Authority if no contact has been made with parents by the 10th day of absence (or sooner if deemed appropriate), at which point your child will be considered "missing from education."

The school will always follow up any absences in order to:

- Ascertain the reason for the absence.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is being taken.
- Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
- Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the school census system.

The school will not request medical evidence in most circumstances where a pupil is absent due to illness; however, the school reserves the right to request supporting evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the authenticity of the illness.

If absence continues we will:

- Write to you if your child's attendance is below 96%, or where punctuality is a concern.
- Invite you into school to discuss the situation with a member of staff if absences persist.
- Create a personalised action/support plan to other agencies or services if appropriate.
- Refer the matter to the Local Authority for relevant sanctions if attendance deteriorates following the above actions.

Lateness

Poor punctuality is not acceptable and can contribute to further absence. Good time-keeping is a vital life skill which will help children as they progress through their school life and out into the wider

world.

Pupils who arrive late disrupt lessons and, if a child misses the start of the day, they can feel unsettled and embarrassed, miss vital work and important messages from their class teacher.

Attendance register

The school uses Arbor to keep attendance registers to ensure they are as accurate as possible and can be easily analysed and shared with the appropriate authorities.

Teachers will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether pupils are:

- Present.
- Absent.
- Attending an approved educational visit.
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

The school will use the national attendance codes to ensure attendance and absence are monitored and recorded in a consistent way. The following codes will be used:

- # = planned whole school closure
- / = Present in the morning
- \ = Present in the afternoon
- L = Late arrival before the register has closed
- C = Leave of absence granted by the school for exceptional circumstances
- S = Study leave
- C1 = Leave of absence for participating in a regulated performance or employment abroad
- C2 = Leave of absence for part-time pupils
- E = Suspended or permanently excluded but no alternative provision made
- J1 = Leave of absence for job or education interviews
- I = Illness
- M = Medical or dental appointments
- K = Attending provision arranged by the LA
- R = Religious observance
- B = Off-site education activity
- G = Unauthorised holiday
- O = Unauthorised absence
- U = Arrived after registration closed
- N = Reason not yet provided
- X = Not required to be in school
- T = Traveller absence
- Q = Absent due to a lack of access arrangements or due to the pupil having to attend a school that does not qualify for travel arrangements and is more than walking distance from where they live.
- V = Educational visit or trip
- P = Participating in a supervised sporting activity, with supervision being physically provided by an appropriately trained and knowledgeable person
- D = Dual registered - at another educational establishment
- W = Attending work experience
- Y1 = Absent due to their regular transport not being available

- Y2 = Absent due to travel disruption
- Y3 = Absent due to part of the school premises being closed
- Y4 = Absent due to the school site being closed
- Y5 = Absent due to being in criminal justice detention
- Y6 = Absent due to public health guidance or law, despite the pupil being well enough to attend
- Y7 = Absent due to any other unavoidable cause, the nature of which must be documented by the school.
- Z = Pupil not on admission register

When the school has planned in advance to be fully or partially closed, the code '#' will be used for the relevant pupils who are absent. This code will also be used to record year groups who are not due to attend because the school has set different term dates for different years, e.g. induction days.

Authorising parental absence requests

Leave of absence

The school will only grant a pupil a leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. At St Thomas of Canterbury, 'exceptional circumstances' will be interpreted as:

... being of unique and significant emotional, educational or spiritual value to the child which outweighs the loss of teaching time (as determined by the headteacher). The fundamental principles for defining 'exceptional' are events that are "rare, significant, unavoidable and short". By 'unavoidable' we mean an event that could not reasonably be scheduled at another time, outside of school term time.

In order to have requests for a leave of absence considered, the school expects parents to **contact the headteacher in writing at least two weeks prior to the proposed start date of the leave of absence**, providing the reason for the proposed absence and the dates during which the absence would be expected to occur.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account. Where the absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the length of time that the pupil can be away from school. The school is not likely to grant leaves of absence for the purposes of family holidays.

If leave of absence is authorised, the school will not provide work for children to do during their absence.

If term-time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may result in sanctions, such as a penalty notice. The school cannot grant leaves of absence retrospectively; therefore, any absences that were not approved by the school in advance will be marked as unauthorised.

Illness and healthcare appointments

Parents will be expected to make medical or dental appointments outside of school hours wherever possible. Where this is not possible, parents will be expected to obtain approval for their child's absence to attend such appointments as far in advance as is practicable. Parents will be responsible for ensuring their child misses only the amount of time necessary to attend the appointment.

Performances and activities, including paid work

Any requests for pupils engaging in performances or activities which require them to be absent from

school, must be put in writing to the headteacher **at least two weeks in advance**.

Religious observance

Parents will be expected to request absence for religious observance **at least two weeks advance**. The school will only accept requests from parents for absence on grounds of religious observance for days that are exclusively set apart for religious observance by the relevant religious body. The school will define this as a day where the pupil's parents would be expected by an established religious body to stay away from their employment to mark the occasion. The school may seek advice from the religious body in question where there is doubt over the request.

Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

Where a pupil's parent belongs to a community covered by this code and is travelling for occupational purposes, the parent will be expected to request a leave of absence for their child **at least two weeks in advance**. Absences will not be granted for pupils from these communities under this code for reasons other than travel for occupational purposes.

SEND- and health-related absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHC plans or IHPs that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate.

Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed.

If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence.

The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through the Common Assessment Framework.
- Using an internal or external specialist.

- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or on-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

Leave during lunch times

Parents may be permitted to take their child away from the school premises during lunch times with permission from the headteacher - it is at the headteacher's discretion as to whether a pupil will be allowed to leave the premises. The headteacher reserves the right to withdraw their permission at any time - this may occur, for example, where there are attendance concerns. Any decision to withdraw permission will be in writing, explaining the reasons for the headteacher's decision. If permission is withdrawn, parents will not be entitled to appeal the decision.

Truancy

Truancy will be considered as any absence of part, or all, of one or more days from school, during which the school has not been notified of the cause behind such absence.

All staff will be actively engaged in supporting the regular attendance of pupils, and understand the importance of continuity in each pupil's learning.

Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at the school office and sign back in again on their return via the school office.

The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider **applying for** a penalty notice.
- A penalty notice will be **applied for** where there is overt truancy, inappropriate parentally-condoned absence, excessive holidays in term-time and persistent late arrival at school. The DSL will be involved where an instance of truancy may be linked to a safeguarding concern. Any safeguarding concerns will be dealt with in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

Missing children

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
 - All classrooms
 - All toilets
 - Changing rooms

- The library
- Any outbuildings
- The school grounds
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises, and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate disciplinary procedures will be followed in accordance with the Behaviour Policy.

The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred. A written report will be produced, and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome where necessary.

Local Authority School Attendance Support Team (Thurrock SAST)

Local Authority School Attendance Support Team (Thurrock SAST) work strategically by offering support to schools, families, and other professionals to reduce persistent absence and improve overall attendance.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to address any attendance concerns. Parents should proactively engage with the support offered, aiming to resolve any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may consider more formal support and/or refer the child to the Local Authority. If attendance does not improve, legal action may be taken in the form of a Penalty Notice, prosecution in the Magistrates Court or the application of an Education Supervision Order, designed to strengthen parental responsibilities and ensure improved attendance.

Attendance Management Process

Our attendance management processes will begin when attendance falls below 96%. The process below is not rigid and is intended to offer a guide on what steps could be taken to work with families to improve attendance before consideration is given to referring to the Local Authority for statutory action. Where appropriate, additional steps will be taken to work with pupils in school to identify the barriers to attendance and to offer support. There will be a period of agreed time between each stage for the intervention to be effective.

When following this process, casework should include all 'parents'. For the purpose of this guidance, a parent means:

- all natural parents, whether they are married or not;

- any person who has parental responsibility for a child or young person; and,
- any person who has care of a child or young person (i.e. lives with and looks after the child).

STAGE	DETAILS
<p>Stage 1 - Letter to parent.</p> <p>Bring to their attention that their child's attendance has fallen below 96% (or schools individual attendance target if higher).</p>	<p>Letter 1 is an opportunity to invite the parent to contact the school to discuss any barriers to their child's full attendance at school.</p> <p>If there is a positive response from a parent, and barriers to attendance are identified schools should seek support to remove the barriers at the earliest opportunity.</p>
<p>Stage 2 - Letter to parent.</p> <p>Highlight that attendance has not improved/deteriorated further since the stage 1 letter.</p> <p>Letter to include invite to a pre-arranged meeting in school.</p>	<p>The purpose of this meeting is to discuss barriers to attendance, to identify what support the family may require, and if applicable, to complete a CAF to seek additional support.</p> <p>If the school are aware of other universal services already working with the family, consideration should be given to arranging a Team Around the Family meeting (TAF) to ensure a joined-up approach.</p> <p>Letter to include the requirement of the parent to provide medical evidence to support all future absences due to illness.</p> <p>The meeting should be minuted and the actions of the pupil, parent and school to be clearly recorded and a review date set. Parents to be provided with a copy.</p> <p>If a CAF is offered but consent is not obtained this is to be recorded.</p> <p>If the parent fails to attend the meeting this should be acknowledged and recorded.</p> <p>The school should consider the age of the child, and whether it is appropriate to speak with them separately, in school to gain their views. Any actions agreed should be conveyed to the Parent, unless not considered appropriate.</p>
<p>Review of Stage 2 meeting.</p>	<p>This meeting should be arranged at the stage 2 meeting to review the attendance and actions agreed. Minutes should be taken and shared with the parent.</p> <p>It will depend on the attendance and/or engagement with support offered as to whether a further review meeting is set, or whether the matter proceeds through the escalation process to Stage 3.</p>
<p>Stage 3 – Notice to Improve Letter to parent.</p>	<p>This meeting should include the Senior Attendance Champion.</p>

<p>Letter to include invite to a pre-arranged meeting in school.</p>	<p>Schools are encouraged to use the Notice to Improve template shared with all schools. This letter template has been provided by the DfE.</p> <p>The purpose of this meeting is to offer the parent/s a further opportunity to discuss the barriers to their child's attendance, and where applicable, for support to be offered. The parent should be notified that if they do not engage with the support offered and/or attendance deteriorates further during the notice to improve period, the matter will be referred to the Local Authority to consider statutory action.</p> <p>The targets set should be recorded, they should be SMART and the parent should be given a copy. A review date should be agreed at this meeting.</p> <p>If the parent fails to attend the meeting this should be acknowledged and recorded.</p> <p>The school should consider the age of the child, and whether it is appropriate to speak with them separately, in school to gain their views. Any actions agreed should be conveyed to the Parent, unless not considered appropriate.</p>
<p>Review of stage 3 meeting.</p>	<p>This meeting should be arranged at the stage 3 meeting to review the attendance and engagement with support offered. Minutes should be taken and shared with the parent.</p> <p>It will depend on engagement and the attendance as to whether a further review meeting is set, or whether the matter proceeds through the escalation process to Stage 4.</p>
<p>Stage 4 – Referral to Local Authority and Letter to Parent</p>	<p>If attendance has not improved during the notice to improve period, and the support offered has had little impact and/or not been engaged with, statutory action should be considered.</p> <p>Application to be made for a Penalty Notice to be issued OR referral made for Prosecution.</p> <p>If the referral is made for prosecution, letter to be sent to parent notifying them of this.</p>

Penalty Notices

Penalty notices are an alternative to prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act and enable parents to discharge their potential liability for conviction for that offence by paying a penalty. Penalty notices should only be requested when it is believed that to do so will prevent any further deterioration in a pupil's attendance or discourage such absence in the future. Their primary use is not to punish parents.

In respect of irregular attendance; with effect from September 2024 in accordance with the DfE guidance schools will be expected to have engaged with families to identify the barriers to attendance and have offered a number of supportive measures before considering any statutory action.

It remains a matter for the headteacher whether to authorise absence or not and, in the case of unauthorised leave of absence (term time holiday,) whether the absence is considered to be due to exceptional circumstances.

In the event that a penalty notice is not paid the local authority will prosecute for the offence to which the notice applies, save for in very limited circumstances when the notice may be withdrawn. For this reason, when requesting a penalty notice, schools and academies must ensure that there is sufficient evidence for a prosecution under, at the very least, Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996.

Deletion from Roll

For any pupil leaving St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School, other than at the end of year 6, parents/carers are required to inform the school in writing with the following information:

- child's name
- class
- current address
- date of leaving
- new home address
- name of new school
- address of new school

This information is essential to ensure that we know the whereabouts and appropriately safeguard all of our pupils, even those who leave us.

It is crucial that parents keep school updated with current addresses and contact details for key family members in case of emergency.

Under Pupil Regulations 2024, all schools are now legally required to notify their Local Authority of every new entry to the admission register within five days of the pupil being enrolled. In addition to this, every deletion from the school register must also be notified to the Local Authority, as soon as the ground for deletion has been met in relation to that pupil, and in any event no later than the time at which the pupil's name is deleted from the register. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at a standard transition point - when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by that school.

Absence data

We use data to monitor, identify and support individual pupils or groups of pupils when their attendance needs to improve. Persistently absent pupils are tracked and monitored carefully. We also

combine this with academic tracking as increased absence affects attainment.

We share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

Monitoring and review

Attendance and punctuality will be monitored throughout the year. The school's attendance target is 96%

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher.

Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders.

