



Attendance Policy

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Author/Owner	Teaching & Learning Committee		

1. Philosophy

St Thomas Primary School is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all pupils. We believe that if pupils are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all pupils. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our school to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a crucial factor to a productive and successful school career. Our school will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all our pupils.

Our school will give a high priority to conveying to parents and pupils the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems that affect a pupil's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents and pupils to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the pupil to full attendance at all times.

2. Objectives

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the school

3. Statutory Duty of Schools

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. Any entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

4. Attendance Targets

The school is set attendance targets each year. These are agreed by the Headteacher and governors, the Education Welfare Officer (EWO) and the LA. The targets are challenging yet realistic, and based on attendance figures achieved in previous years. The school expects the EWO to liaise with the Headteacher each term if there are any attendance issues.

5. Principles

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will work towards ensuring that all pupils feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if a pupil is absent they will be missed. We will consult with all members of the school community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they receive training on registration regulations and the law relating to attendance.

Regular information will be sent to parents and pupils informing them of attendance rates and related issues. Promote positive staff attitudes to pupils returning after absence will ensure regular evaluation of attendance policy and procedures by senior managers and the school governors.

Attendance will be an important feature of the School Improvement Plan, if appropriate.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

6. Definitions

6.1 Authorised absence

An absence is recorded as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason (eg, being unwell) and the school has received notification from a parent or carer.

Only the school can make an absence authorised. Not all absences supported by parents will be recorded as authorised, eg shopping trips during school hours.

6.2 Unauthorised absence

An absence is recorded as unauthorised when a child is away from school without good reason and without the permission of the school.

7. Procedures

It is essential that everyone involved in promoting attendance is clear about the important role that must be carried out in order to raise standards. Responsibility to promote attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community.

7.1 If a child is absent (First Day Contact)

When a child is absent unexpectedly, the class teacher records the absence in the register. A teaching assistant or the administrator endeavours to contact a parent/carer. If no contact can be made and we cannot establish the whereabouts and/or safety of a child, the police and/or Social Services may be contacted.

When the child returns to school, a note should be brought from a parent/carer or or a telephone call received to explain the absence.

A note may be sent to the school prior to the day of absence, e.g. if a child has a medical appointment.

7.2 Requests for leave of absence

We believe that children need to be in school for all sessions, so that they can make the most progress possible. However, we do understand that there are circumstances under which a parent may legitimately request leave of absence for a child to attend.

Parents may have up to 10 days leave of absence a year but this is at the discretion of the school and is normally granted as long as the child's overall attendance is above 93% and the request does not fall at key times in the school calendar. In exceptional circumstances a request for absence may be considered if it would benefit the child.

We expect parents to contact the school at least a month in advance, but normally this request will be granted.

7.3 Long-term absence

When children have an illness that means they will be away from school for over five days, the school does all it can to send material home, so that they can keep up with their schoolwork.

If the absence is likely to continue for an extended period, or be a repetitive absence, the school contacts support services, so that arrangements can be made for the child to be given some tuition outside school.

7.4 Repeated unauthorised absences

The school contacts the parent/carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence. If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the parents/carers are asked to visit the school and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the school then contacts the LA support services, which may visit the home and seek to ensure that the parents or guardians understand the seriousness of the situation.

The governors, supported by the LA, reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any parents or guardians who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their children to school on a regular basis.

8. Monitoring and review

8.1 Governing Body

It is the responsibility of the governors to monitor overall attendance, and they will request an annual report from the headteacher. The governing body also has the responsibility for this policy, and for seeing that it is carried out. The governors therefore examine closely the information provided to them, and seek to ensure that our attendance figures are as high as they should be.

8.2 School

The school keeps accurate attendance records on file for a minimum period of three years.

8.3 Class Teachers

Class teachers are responsible for monitoring attendance in their class, using attendance reports provided half-termly by the School Administrator, and for following up absences in the appropriate way. If there is concern about a child's absence, they contact the headteacher or administrator immediately. If there is a longer-term general worry about the attendance of a particular child, this will be reported to the headteacher, who contacts the parents/carers.

9. Document History

Nov11	7.2 Threshold for 'Authorised Absence' increased from 90% to 93% 8.4 Reference to School Profile removed
Nov10	Revised & Approved by Personnel Committee, 10 th November 2010
v2	Approved by Personnel Committee, 15th May 2008
v1.1	Reformatted and revisions proposed by Clerk (11th May 2008)
v1	Legacy policy dated September 2003, last reviewed 25th January 2007