

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School

Oxford Road Kidlington OX5 1EA



Headteacher: Mrs Julieann Exley



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Attendance Policy

Author / Reviewed by Headteacher & Attendance Officer

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St. Thomas More Catholic Primary School is committed to providing a full and balanced education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all. We work closely with the Oxfordshire County Council Attendance team and this policy has been written following their guidelines.

We will endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Everything we do is based on our core school values of Unity, Humility, Respect, Determination, Fairness.

For a child to reach their full educational achievement, a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all children.

Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance including e.g. newsletters and end of term reports. Of course, all students can become ill or need to miss school for another reason at some point, but our expectation is that all students will achieve at least 97% attendance each year.

School attendance is defined by the Education Act 1996 and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education (DfE). Any student whose attendance falls below 90% in any one year is classed a 'persistent absentee' by the DfE.

This policy works to meet the mandatory requirements laid out in the Working together to improve school attendance – Gov.UK (www.gov.uk)

Each term the school will examine its attendance figures and set attendance/absence targets. These will reflect both national and Oxfordshire attendance targets.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance at regular intervals to ensure that it is achieving its set goals.

This policy will contain within it, the procedures that the school will use to meet its attendance targets.

School Procedures

Any child who is absent from school during the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised (C), unauthorised (O) or as an approved educational activity (V) (such as attendance on an out of school visit).

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It is the responsibility of the member of staff in charge of a class to complete the register and this should be done as soon as possible once the students have arrived. **Registers close at 9am.**

Any parents who have not informed the school as to the child's absence by close of register, will receive a phone call from the Attendance Officer to clarify the reasons. On some occasions, if the parent/carer cannot be contacted and there are concerns regarding safeguarding, the Attendance Officer and the Head Teacher may feel it necessary to make a home visit, in person. This is to establish that a student is safe and may involve a referral to other agencies, if there are significant concerns.

Only the Headteacher can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence must be recorded in the first instance:

Unexplained (N). All (N) codes must be updated weekly after a reason has been sought from parent/carer.

Lateness

Morning registration will take place at the start of school and **after 9am** children will be recorded as late (L).

Absence because of illness

Parents/Carers must inform the school if their child is going to be absent on or before the first day. If the duration of illness is known, then a written explanation by email is acceptable. When a pupil is absent for a short illness, parents/carers must contact the school on each day of absence until the student is well enough to return.

If no contact has been made by parents/carers by the close of registration (9.00am) then a Direct Message or Telephone Call will be made to the nominated number to inform parents/carers that the student is not at school and the pupil will be marked as unauthorised (N).

In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate absence code will be entered retrospectively as (M)

When making medical/dental appointments, every effort must be made to ensure appointments are outside school hours, but we acknowledge that this is not always possible.

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Absence due to prolonged or repeated illness

When a pupil is absent from school for prolonged periods of time due to an ongoing illness, a letter from their doctor is required which states clearly that the pupil is unfit for school. The letter should state the date/dates that the pupil will be absent for and the date when the pupil will be expected to return to school and a brief explanation as to the reason for absence. We will work closely with medical staff and the family to ensure that we offer appropriate support as far as we are able to. In cases where pupils have been absent from school for prolonged periods of time and they are not under the care of a specialist medical team, the responsibility for day-to-day safeguarding remains with the school. Therefore, we carry out home visits from time-to-time.

This has two purposes; firstly, to stay in touch with the family and secondly to physically sight the pupil to be able to record that they are safe in line with safeguarding policies and procedures. Absence over 15 school days will be referred by St Thomas More Catholic Primary School to the County Attendance team as an alternative education may be appropriate if the pupil was eligible.

Frequent and unauthorised absence

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer/Headteacher and where relevant Designated Safeguarding Lead, to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. CPOMS will be used to document specific individuals.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve any concerns with parent/s.

Where incidents of poor attendance and/or lateness are identified through monitoring parents/carers will be notified in writing that this is a cause for concern. If this continues, the school will invite parents/carers in to discuss causes and ways forward.

If attendance does not improve, then an Early Help Assessment (EHA) will be offered. This process identifies all the support that the family currently have access to and brings all agencies together in a team around the family (TAF). The EHA is managed by the school with support from the LCSS team (Locality and Community Support Service) at Oxfordshire County Council.

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Return from prolonged absence

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to other pupils. This will be managed by the Deputy Head/SENCO as appropriate.

Promoting Attendance

The school will use opportunities as they arise to remind parents/carers that it is their responsibility to ensure that their children receive their education. Attendance is regularly highlighted in the school newsletter. Percentage attendance is included in each school report that is sent to parents/carers. Attendance is a regular whole school focus, with an attendance board in the school hall and at the end of each term there is a prize for improved attendance in each year group.

Leave of Absence

The Headteacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Parents/Carers should seek permission from the Headteacher prior to the leave of absence period in question. An absence request form is available from the school office.

The Headteacher under exceptional circumstances will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted. The percentage attendance of the pupil in the current year and also previous attendance patterns will be considered when making this decision.

What does the law say?

The legal requirements regarding register and admission roll keeping can be found on the DfE website. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance>

The guidance summarises the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance and explains how they apply to local authorities, head teachers, school staff, governing bodies, pupils and parents.

These requirements are contained in:

The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4) & (6) and 458(4) & (5)

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The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016

The Oxfordshire County Attendance Team

If unauthorised absence impacts on a pupil's right to learn, and or if leave is taken during term time without the Head Teachers permission, a Penalty Notice may be issued to each parent for each child, starting at £80 rising to £120 each. Repeated unauthorised absence may result in parental prosecution at Oxford Magistrates Court under the Education Act 1996. All pupils who leave our school will be tracked to their new school. Any pupil not tracked to a new school will be referred to OCC and St Thomas More School Governing Body.

Policy Monitoring and Review

In the Headteacher's reports to the Governors, the following information will be included;
School overall attendance % Class overall attendance % School persistent absence %
Individual persistent absences %

Individual pupils on Reintegration Timetables (only permissible for 6 weeks maximum with parental consent)

All pupils removed from roll, reason for removal and school action undertaken, Data analysis of persistent absentees to identify patterns by pupil characteristics.

Implementation of the policy will take place after consultation with the Governors. This policy will be reviewed every year by the Head teacher, Attendance Officer and Governing Body.

Those people responsible for attendance matters in this school are:

Ms E Langston, Attendance Officer

Mrs J Exley, Headteacher

Mrs L Machin, Deputy Head Teacher

Mrs R Pye, Governor with responsibility for attendance

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Other policies

- KCSiE
- Teaching & Learning Policy
- Inclusion & SEND
- Behaviour Policy