



Archdiocese of  
Birmingham

# St Thomas More Catholic Academy



## Attendance Policy

Date of Policy:	September 2016
Member of Staff Responsible:	Mrs J Stubbs
SLT: Principal:	Mr M Rayner
Chair of the Academy Representatives: Nominated Academy Representative:	Mrs C Knight
Date of Policy Review:	September 2017
<i>Publish:</i>	<i>Website</i>



All Saints Catholic Collegiate

In accordance with our Mission statement, at St Thomas More we strive to secure a shared vision for all associated with our school community. Fundamentally, we aspire to maintain a safe, happy and caring environment where '*excellent relationships between pupils, staff parents/ carers, support a caring community.*'

**St Thomas More Catholic Academy Mission Statement is:**

- A Catholic Christian Community with a mission to promote the truths and moral values taught by the Catholic Church.
- In fulfilling our mission, we will all do our best to ensure that:
- Christ is at the centre of our daily lives through prayer, work and worship.
- The Gospel values of love, justice, peace and forgiveness are seen in all that we do.
- Each member of our community is known and loved.
- Everyone in the School has the opportunity to develop their talents to the full.
- All students achieve their academic potential.
- We carry out our duty of service to others, both within, and outside our community
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**All Saints Catholic Collegiate Mission Statement**

*Christ is at the heart of our community, where everyone is known and loved.*

*In fulfilling our mission we are a school of prayer.*

*We live as a community of love, peace and reconciliation, valuing everyone's dignity as a child of God to promote and celebrate the growth and achievement of the whole person.*

## AIMS

St Thomas More is committed to developing and maintaining an effective whole school strategy with regards to attendance and punctuality. The DfE School Attendance guidelines state that *“Central to raising standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is an assumption so widely understood that it is insufficiently stated – pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.”* St Thomas More is committed to supporting the excellent attendance of all students.

The school aims to:

- Maintain a high level of attendance.
- Reduce to a minimum the number of authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Reduce to a minimum the number of students who are persistently absent.
- Ensure attendance procedures are effectively and consistently applied.
- Ensure safeguarding procedures are effectively and consistently applied.

St Thomas More works in partnership with parents/carers in promoting and encouraging 100 percent attendance and punctuality for all our students. We ensure that staff receive professional development to maintain knowledge of registration, attendance and punctuality procedures as well as school attendance and punctuality levels.

### **Good attendance is essential to success in school:**

90% attendance = ½ day missed every week

1 school year at 90% attendance = 4 whole weeks of lessons missed.

90% attendance over 5 years of secondary school = ½ a school year missed.

It is suggested that 17 missed school days a year = one GCSE grade drop in achievement. This can be applied to GCSE, AS and A Level.

Attendance	95%	90%	85%	80%
Numbers of days of lost learning	9.5	19	28.5	38
Number of lessons lost	47.5	95	142.5	190
Number of lessons lost for a six day period	57	114	171	228

**Is 95 % attendance good? This means pupils will have missed 10 school days in a year. Over 5 years this means 50 days, which is almost a full school term.**

### **Holidays in Term Time**

Amendments to the 2006 regulations from the Department for Education (which come into effect from September 2013) remove references to family holidays and extended leave. “Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances”.

Please note “exceptional circumstances” do NOT include a situation where parents choose to take pupils out of school to fit in with their work related holiday dates. Please refer to the DfE “Amendments to School Attendance Regulations” for further details. If you believe that your circumstances meet the exceptional criteria, please put your request in writing to the Head Teacher at least one month in advance of the date. Parents who take pupils on an unauthorised holiday in term time will be issued with a fixed penalty notice by the Local Authority.

### **First Day absence**

The school has invested in the “TruancyCall” system. Each morning any pupils absent will receive an automated phone call requesting parents/carers to provide a reason for the absence. Text messages/emails may also be sent from the Attendance Officer.

If parents are unable to return a call for whatever reason, a written explanation for the absence is necessary upon a pupil’s return to school. There is a facility for parents to be able to leave a message stating their son/daughter’s reason for absence.

### **Other Absences**

If any absence, whether covered by a note or not, is considered as an unauthorised absence by a member of staff, HOY should be informed. Parents will also be informed by a Head of Year of our concern.

In any case of suspected truancy, parents will be informed of the school’s concern at the earliest possible opportunity.

In cases of truancy or when serious concern about absence arises within school, the Education Welfare Service will be contacted by the school. This facility is also available for parents to use themselves.

Wherever possible, medical appointments should be made outside school hours or in school holidays. Where this is not possible, pupils should ensure they are only absent for part of the day i.e. if the appointment is in the morning, they should attend school in the afternoon and vice versa.

## **GUIDELINES**

### **The school will:**

- Accurately record the attendance of all students using Sims during morning registration and at the beginning of every lesson.
- Make first day contact to the parent/carer of all students (vulnerable/PA students will be prioritised) and take action on problems/issues notified to us.
- Arrange to meet with parents/carers if it is appropriate or necessary to do so.
- Ensure attendance is monitored for students attending offsite provision.
- Promote strategies for maintaining good attendance.
- Evaluate attendance patterns for different groups of learners and respond appropriately.
- Ensure that all staff understand their role in ensuring good attendance and punctuality for a successful education
- Ensure that students with poor attendance and/or punctuality are challenged and students with good attendance and/or punctuality are rewarded.
- Ensure that regular liaison takes place between the Head of Year, Attendance Officer, Education Welfare Officers and Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for Pastoral care regarding attendance and punctuality

- Set targets for whole school and individual attendance and punctuality.
- Where appropriate, ensure that effective reintegration programmes are implemented following a sustained period of absence from school due to illness or injury, alternative education off site or fixed term exclusion

#### **Parents will:**

- Contact the school on their child's first day of absence and follow up with a note on the day of their return.
- Encourage their children to arrive on time (no later than 9am) and attend regularly.
- Inform the school of any issues that may affect their child's attendance.
- Contact offsite providers on their child's first day of absence.

#### **Students will:**

- Attend regularly.
- Arrive on time.
- Inform staff of any reason that may affect their attendance.
- Produce an absence note on their return to school.

#### **Attendance procedures**

On the first day of absence, parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the school of their child's absence by contacting the school. When the student returns to school after absence parents/carers must provide a signed, written reason for their child's absence either in the student planner or as a separate letter.

If an acceptable reason for absence is given and accepted by the school the absence may be marked as 'authorised'. The school are under no obligation to accept the reason given for absence when there is doubt of its validity.

Where appropriate, students regularly identifying poor health as a reason for absence will be asked to produce a medical certificate from their GP.

No student in year 7-11 is permitted to leave the school site during the school day, including break times and lunch times, without prior permission.

Upon return to school following an absence, form tutors are to check the student planner for an absence note and amend the 'N' report accordingly.

The Attendance Officer and Head of Year/Head of Key Stage will review and monitor all students whose attendance falls below 90%. (Government guidelines declare any child with attendance of 90% or below as persistently absent.) Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be spoken to in the first instance by their form tutor, followed by a letter of concern sent by the HOY/HOKS should the concern continue.

If absence persists without response, improvement or if there are other issues with persistent patterns of poor attendance (e.g. attendance percentage is below 85%) a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Officer. The EWO will contact the parents/carers directly making them aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance and that penalty notices may be issued and / or court proceedings pursued. Attendance at compulsory parent/student meetings will be expected.

If absence deteriorates to 90% in respect of any student this will be reviewed along with the EWO who will advise as to whether the school should continue to authorise the absence. Contact will be made with parents/carers. The Attendance Officer, HOY/HOKS and AH will be involved at this stage.

If after a period of 5 school days, continuous absence with no reason and no contact from parents/carers the EWO will be informed and an informal visit may take place.

If after a period of 10 school days where no reason has been provided for absence, this will be recorded as code O 'unauthorised absence' in the school register. The EWO will be informed and will conduct a formal visit.

### **Punctuality Procedures**

Students should arrive to school by 9am ready to start morning registration at 9:05 am.

If a student is going to be late to school parents/carers have a responsibility to inform the school of their child's lateness by telephone.

Persistent issues with poor punctuality (arriving after the register has closed) will be referred to the EWO by the Head of Year. The EWO will contact the parents/carers directly making them aware of the legal requirements regarding school attendance and that penalty notices may be issued and / or court proceedings pursued. Meetings with parents will be expected.

## **PROCEDURES**

### **Attendance Officer:**

The Attendance Officer will make first day contact by phone with the parent/carer of absent students. They will alert the Head of Year, Head of Key Stage, EWO and/or Assistant Headteacher to sudden/gradual changes in attendance that cannot be accounted for.

### **Form Tutors:**

Form tutors will record accurately the attendance/absence of students in their form and alert the Head of Year and/or Attendance Officer of any attendance issues. Form Tutors will monitor the attendance of their form and will ensure that it is displayed in the form room. They will set individual attendance targets and ensure that they are recorded in the Student Planner. Each term they will oversee the distribution of attendance certificates and will follow the guidelines for the safeguarding of students as displayed in all registers.

### **Subject Teachers:**

Subject Teachers will register their teaching groups at the beginning of every lesson and alert the Attendance Officer to any unexplained absence. The Attendance Officer will follow up concerns and alert parents/carers as appropriate.

### **Head of Year/Head of Key Stage:**

Heads of Year / Heads of Key Stage will monitor the attendance of students in their year group and alert the Attendance Officer/EWO/Assistant Headteacher of any concerns. They will inform parents/carers by standard letter if their attendance continues to fall below the school attendance target of 96%. Where appropriate, parents will be invited to attend a meeting. Heads of Year / Heads of Key Stage will regularly meet with the EWO to discuss issues arising. Heads of Year / Heads of Key Stage will also oversee the distribution of attendance certificates each half term and attendance trophies each week.

### **SLT with responsibility for attendance:**

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will meet weekly with the EWO and Attendance Officer to discuss issues arising and agree priorities. In consultation with EWO and Heads of Year / Heads of Key Stage, attendance clinics will be arranged for targeted students and phased return to school for relevant students with prolonged absence will be arranged.

**Education Welfare officer:**

The EWO will liaise with key staff and offer guidance and support as appropriate. They will lead action on students who are 'Persistently Absent' and/or whose attendance falls below 90%. With the Academy, the EWO will arrange/attend attendance clinics for targeted students. They will advise/support the Attendance Officer with data returns to the LA/DfE and will meet regularly with the Heads of Year/Heads of Key Stage/Assistant Headteacher to discuss issues arising (including safeguarding).