



'With grace and humility, glorify the Lord by your life.'

Attendance Policy

This policy applies to St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College part of The Holy Spirit Catholic MAC

This Attendance Policy has been approved and adopted by The Holy Spirit MAC on 12th July 2021

Policy Ratified on: 12th July 2021

Signed by the Chair of the
Education Standards
Committee

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'L. J. ...', written over a horizontal line.

Signed by the Principal

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'R. Thomas', written in a cursive style.

Next Review: July 2022



St Thomas More Catholic Academy and Sixth Form College **Attendance Policy**

St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a school, we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as efficiently and as effectively as possible.

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

St Thomas More School will give a high priority to conveying to Parents/Carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that Parents/Carers have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home-school links and communication systems that can be relied upon whenever there is concern about attendance

If there are problems which affect a student's attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with Parents/Carers and students to resolve these problems as quickly as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the individual to full attendance at all times.

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

Statutory Duty

The Education Act 1997 Section 7 requires parents or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

“By law, all children of compulsory school age must get a proper full-time education. Parents are responsible for making this happen, either by registering the child at school or by making other arrangements which provide an effective education.”

Definition of a parent

A parent means (as set out in section 576 of the Education Act 1996)

- 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

The local authority and school will need to decide who comes within the definition of parent in respect of a particular pupil when using the legal measures, but generally parents include all those with day to day responsibility for a child.

Principles

At St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College we will:-

- Provide incentives and regularly celebrate students with high (95% or above) attendance
- Include information in the school newsletter and on the school website to promote good attendance.
- Identify students with poor attendance prior to transfer from primary schools and monitor their attendance closely at the start of the academic year
- Display attendance rates around the school and recognise improved attendance in assemblies
- Produce weekly and half termly attendance figures for form tutors about their form group
- Provide half termly attendance percentages for all students to stick into their log book
- Keep parents/carers informed about their child's attendance.
- Have systems in place which allow students easy transition back into school after prolonged absences. For example individual student timetables or regular contact with the WAS (WARWICKSHIRE ATTENDANCE SERVICE) /other agencies as appropriate
- Ensure regular evaluation of attendance procedures.
- Complete registers accurately at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session and start of all lessons, using PARS lesson Monitor.
- Act on any school based issues which may affect attendance and punctuality.
- Operate a first day's absence call via the Attendance Officer
- Monitor students' punctuality to school each morning and take appropriate action for persistent latecomers
- Work with the WAS (WARWICKSHIRE ATTENDANCE SERVICE) to support with persistent absence
- Apply interventions for students with attendance issues
- Share with parents/carers the legalities regarding unauthorised holidays

St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College will always endeavour to work with Parents/Carers and students to improve attendance. The WAS (WARWICKSHIRE ATTENDANCE SERVICE) will be involved where attendance is cause for concern which could lead to a Fixed Penalty Notice.

It is important to note, Fixed Penalty Notices are issued to each parent of each absent child, (for example 2 children and 2 parents, means each parent will receive 2 invoices in the amount of £120 each, totalling £240 for both children, this is reduced to £60 per child if paid within 21 days).

Practice

The school will recognise the importance of good practice by:

- Keeping and maintaining registers accurately.
- Entering minutes late and comments
- Maintaining a consistent approach to marking registers
- Regularly analysing attendance data
- Ensuring prompt follow-up action in cases of non-school attendance

- Liaising closely with the WAS (WARWICKSHIRE ATTENDANCE SERVICE) and/or other appropriate agencies

Roles and Responsibilities:

Students

- To attend school on all possible occasions and to bring a note from home explaining cause of absence.
- To arrive on time and appropriately prepared or to bring a note from home explaining lateness.
- To arrive punctually to each lesson.

Parents/Carers

- To ensure that their child attends school on all possible occasions, arrives on time and is equipped to allow them to engage fully with their lessons.
- To contact the school on the first day of their child's absence
- To ensure that a written note of explanation is sent to the school when absence has been unavoidable **on the day** their child returns from the absence.
- To contact the school when any problems occur which may affect their child's attendance and punctuality.
- To inform the school of any ongoing medical issues for their child

Form Tutors

- To accurately record attendance and punctuality in all form periods using Sims.
- Verify absence by requesting a note or a telephone call in the log book.
- To act on any school based issues which may affect attendance punctuality
- To monitor the attendance of students 95% and above and apply interventions as per the school policy set out by the Deputy Head
- To recognise and encourage good attendance and punctuality within the form group in line with the school's behaviour and rewards procedures
- To alert any patterns of absence to the Head of Year

Subject Teachers and Heads of Faculty

- To accurately record attendance and punctuality in all lessons using Sims.
- To inform the Pastoral Team about attendance concerns
- To inform the Head of Faculty/Head of Year if a student fails to attend lessons on a regular basis
- To act on any school based issues which may affect attendance and punctuality
- To recognise and encourage good attendance and punctuality within the Faculty

Heads of Year

- To attend the weekly meeting with the relevant Deputy Head to review attendance for the year group
- To ensure Form tutors follow the attendance procedures and complete any returns acting on a request/needs basis regarding attendance issues
- To collate, review and action attendance/punctuality data on the Year group as appropriate on a half termly basis with the Deputy Head i/c attendance

- To keep up to date lists of 'student concerns' regarding attendance and appropriate interventions
- To contact parents/carers in response to concerns about attendance and punctuality
- To sanction unauthorised absences with a range of responses, in line with the current behaviour policy. These will include: counselling, attendance report, school based targets with the WAS (WARWICKSHIRE ATTENDANCE SERVICE) Service, the withdrawal of privileges, detention, referral to the Deputy Head i/c attendance
- To be aware of the attendance levels of all students in their year group and the attendance of vulnerable groups
- To ensure attendance is an agenda item at Form Tutor meetings
- To apply appropriate interventions for students in their year group who fall in the 87%-89.9% category

Attendance Procedures

Registers are legal documents and must be marked accurately. Any problems must be referred to the Family Support Worker. Accurate registration is essential. There must be a mark for every student, either present / \, absent N, O or late L.

If students arrive late for school, they enter school via the main school entrance where a Learning Mentor will meet them. Students are required to provide a reason/note for their lateness. This is recorded on Sims.

- Unless the lateness to school is legitimate (e.g. school bus late, accident, medical appointment etc.) students will receive a **15 minute detention** to be completed at lunch time (12.40pm) on the same day
- A text will be sent to Parents/Carers
- If the student fails to attend, a C4 after school detention will be set and parents will be notified.

All lesson registers should be completed within the first 10 minutes of the start of lessons. Messages are sent to teachers to remind them to complete a register via the Family Support Worker where necessary.

Absence Procedures

St Thomas More Catholic Academy & Sixth Form College operates a system of:

- **First Day Absence** Texts are sent out to all absence student with no reason yet given, calling parents/carers where no notification of absence has been received before 11.30am by the Family Support Worker.
- **Monitoring** absence which lasts for longer than one day, particularly when:
 - The illness is minor and we would expect the child to return to school.
 - The child is at risk of becoming persistently absent (below 90%).
 - An attendance target has been set.

- **A welfare check** is carried out when a child is absent for three days with a reason being given.
- **Attendance Targets** are set for students who:
 - Any student who is persistently absent or close to persistent absence.
 - Students identified by heads of year who are concerned that attendance has declined.
 - As an incentive to support students in improving their attendance.
- **Where attendance targets** are not met we would:
 - Call a meeting with parents to look at ways of improving attendance. This would lead to actions being put into place and their effectiveness would be closely monitored for the next two weeks.
 - A Warwickshire Attendance Service (WAS) referral is made when our work with families has not been effective. This can lead to an early help referral being made. In some cases, it can also lead to legal action, particularly if early help has been ineffective.
- A **Child missing in education** referral is triggered when
 - There has been missing from school for 10 days or more and no reason has been given for the absence.
 - When a student is to come onto roll but fails to attend and does not provide a valid reason.
 - A child who is on the school role but is not in receipt of their educational entitlement.

Elective Home Education

Where a parent or carer expresses their intention to remove a child from school to home educate the school would set up a meeting with the family. This would be to ensure that parents and carers have carefully considered what is in the best interest of the child. This is particularly important when the child has special educational needs or has a social worker. The meeting would take place prior to any decision being made and other professionals working with the family would be invited to attend.

If a parent wants to readmit their child later then the normal system of in year admissions would apply.

Leave of Absence

The Government issued new regulations in September 2013 regarding Leave of Absence; The Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) Regulations 2006 as amended by Education (Pupil Regulations) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

- Head teachers **shall not** grant **any** Leave of Absence during term time **unless they consider** there are **exceptional** circumstances relating to the application.
- Parents do not have any entitlement to take their children on holiday during term time. Any application for leave must establish that there are **exceptional circumstances** and the Principal must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the granting of leave.

- Principal will determine how many school days a child may be absent from school if the leave is granted.
- The school can only consider applications for Leave of Absence which are made by the resident parent. i.e. the parent with whom the child normally resides.
- Applications for Leave of Absence must be made in advance and failure to do so will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice.
- Applications for Leave of Absence which are made in advance and refused will result in the absence being recorded as “unauthorised”. This may result in legal action against the parent, by way of a Fixed Penalty Notice, if the child is absent from school during that period.
- All matters of unauthorised absence relating to a Leave of Absence will be referred to the Warwickshire Attendance Service of Warwickshire County Council.
- The Warwickshire Attendance Service have the authority to consider issuing Fixed Penalty Notices for Leave of Absence in line with the Warwickshire County Council’s Non-School Attendance and Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. (A copy of which can be found at <https://www.warwickshire.gov.uk/pupilnonattendance>).
- If a Fixed Penalty Notice is issued and is not paid within the timeframe set out in that Notice, the matter will be referred to Warwickshire County Council’s Legal Services to consider instigating criminal prosecution proceedings under S444 of Education Act 1996.

Each application for a Leave of Absence will be considered on a case by case basis and on its own merits.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Attendance targets including persistent absence targets will be set in consultation with the Warwickshire Attendance Service. When evaluating success the school will consider whether or not:

- Attendance is above National average.
- Persistent absence is below 10%
- Punctuality is good and persistent lateness is addressed.
- First Call procedures establish reason for absence by 9:30am
- Parental response to absence has improved.
- Re-integration plans have been successful.
- The school has been successful in raising the profile of attendance within both the school, governing body and the local community.
- Students are fully aware of the importance of punctuality and regular attendance and the attendance procedures operating within school.
- Monitoring and target setting lead to improvement in student's attendance. Rewards are used to build better attendance and punctuality habits.
- The importance of good attendance is promoted in assemblies, tutor groups and PSHE.