



**St Thomas's**  
CE Primary School

# Attendance Policy

**Date of Sign Off:** November 2025  
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Part of



**The Sycamore  
Church of England  
Trust**

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# Introduction

1.1 At St Thomas's we expect all pupils to:

- Attend every school day
- Attend school punctually
- Attend school prepared for the day

1.2 We believe that attending school, on time, is key to enabling children to make the most of the opportunities we offer to prepare them for their future.

1.3 We will work in partnership with our families to identify the reasons for poor attendance, supporting them in addressing any barriers to attendance for their child.

1.4 Promoting good attendance is a matter for the whole school community. This policy sets out our expectations and our approach. Our approach is in line with the Department for Education's guidance (February 2024) Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)

1.5 This policy takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Equalities Act 2010 and the 1996 Education Act.

1.6 Our approach to securing good attendance is based on the principle of support first. In line with Ofsted's research, our approach can be summarised as 'Listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate.'

1.7 Every pupil should be able to learn in an enjoyable and safe environment and be protected from harm. Attending school regularly promotes the welfare and safety of children whilst they are not in the care of their parents/carers.

1.8 In the case of specific illnesses that require pupils to be kept off school, parents should follow public health advice to ensure the wellbeing of the whole school community. These illnesses are Chickenpox, Diarrhoea and Vomiting, Impetigo, Measles, Mumps, Scabies, Scarlet Fever and Whooping Cough – see 'How long should you keep your child off school – checklist poster'.

1.9 This policy will be applied consistently and fairly. In applying this policy, we will take into account the needs of individual pupils.

1.10 This policy is supported by other school policies and procedures e.g., admissions, safeguarding and child protection, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive practice.

## Expectations

2.1 It is our responsibility to maintain a culture that promotes good attendance which is supported by consistently applied systems.

2.2 Our dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance is Mr Van Hecke (Headteacher).

2.3 Other staff in school who support attendance on a day-to-day basis is Mrs Begum (Parent Support Advisor)

2.4 Staff who can provide support on attendance is Mrs Begum.

2.5 Parents/ carers must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs they may have, by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.6 We are committed to working with parents to promote positive attendance. We expect all our **parents** to:

- Maintain effective routines at home to support good attendance
- Contact the school as soon as possible if your child is absent to let us know the reason for the absence and the expected date of return. This should be followed up with a written note as soon as possible
- Avoid unnecessary absences. For example, pre-planned medical/ dental appointments should take place outside of school hours.
- Inform us of any change in circumstances that may impact on your child's attendance.
- Support us by being involved in your child's education, acknowledging the value of education and the importance of children receiving the same messages from home and school
- Work with us to address any barriers to attendance for your child including attending all meetings requested to discuss attendance issues. 2.6.1

We expect all our **pupils** to:

- Be aware of when they should attend school
- Attend all lessons on time and be ready to learn
- Speak to a member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- Communicate with parents/ carers to encourage a written explanation to be shared with school to explain any absence that has happened or is foreseen
- Follow the school procedure if they arrive late

## Daily Routines

3.1 At St Thomas's our SLT and Mrs Begum meet and greet our pupils at the main school gate. This begins at 8.45am each day.

3.2 Attendance registers are taken at the start of each morning session of each school day and once during each afternoon session.

3.3 Our school day begins at 8.45am. The morning register will open and be taken at 8.50am. Any pupil arriving after 8.55am is required to report to the main school office to sign in and provide a reason for lateness.

3.4 If arrival is before 9.30am then the pupil will be recorded as late (Late **before** the close of register).

3.5 The school register will officially close at 9.30am. Any pupil arriving on or after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning session (Late **after** the close of register).

3.6 Parents will be contacted to discuss any patterns of late arrival. Repeated arrival after the close of registration will result in further action being taken to support improved attendance

3.7 Our afternoon session begins at 12.45pm for KS1 and 1.15pm for KS2 with a register taken at these times for each key stage.

3.8 Our normal school day ends at 3.10pm.

## Reporting Absence

4.1 If a child is absent from school, parents should contact the school office (0161 764 7565) on the first day of absence providing a reason for the absence and the expected date of return.

4.2 If the absence continues, parents should contact the school office **each day of absence** to identify the reason for absence and the expected date of return.

4.3 Where absence is recorded as unexplained, a reason for the absence must be obtained, in writing, by no later than 5 school days after the session.

4.4 If a child is absent, and we have had no contact from the parent to provide a reason for the absence, we will:

- Activate first day calling procedures after the register is closed at 9.30am.
- If there remains no contact then a further telephone call will be made later that morning to the parent and, if no response, a call will be made to the pupil's other emergency contacts
- If we cannot contact a parent and are concerned about the pupil, then a home visit may be carried out by Mrs Begum. If the family is supported by a social worker, then the social worker will be informed of the absence.

4.5 If we have concerns around a pupil's safety, we may also visit the home of the pupil or request a welfare check to be made by the police.

4.6 We will telephone home if a pupil leaves school without permission.

## Requesting Leave of Absence

5.1 A leave of absence will only be granted (authorised) under exceptional circumstances. In making our decision we will take into account the specific circumstances and context behind the request. If a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the length of the time the pupil can be away from school. Requests for a leave of absence should be made in writing to the head teacher giving as much notice as possible.

Examples of any exceptional circumstances where leave may be granted during term time are as follows:

- If a parent is service personnel and is returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that coincides with school holidays.
- Where an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
- The death or terminal illness of a close relative, only if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional;
- Out of school programmes such as music, arts or sport operating at a high standard of achievement. Documentary evidence of this event will be required.
- Religious observance – The Education Act 1996 S444(3) (c), states "on any day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which his/her parent belongs". If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

- To attend a wedding or funeral of a close relative if the Headteacher is satisfied that the circumstances are truly exceptional; Leave should only be authorised for this purpose when a Headteacher is satisfied that there is a persuasive reason for holding the wedding during term time and there WILL be an onus on parents to show clear evidence that this absence is absolutely an exceptional circumstance. In difficult family situations the Headteacher may use his/her discretion in granting leave and each case should be addressed on its individual merits, considering the overall welfare of the child.
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Evidence will be required in each case.

Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the above, the Headteacher agrees to consult with the governing body prior to any authorisation being given to the parent.

If a request meets the above exceptional circumstances but falls within the following times, the Headteacher must be convinced that absence from school is the only option:

- 1) The first half term of any academic year (applies to all pupils).
- 2) Year six transition day (for pupils in year six).
- 3) Year six SATs week (for pupils in year six).

When considering exceptional term time leave requests, the following factors may help to reach a decision:

- Time of the academic year when the leave has been requested
- Duration of the absence – number of school days being missed
- The child's current attendance and punctuality rate
- Exceptional term time leave requested/taken in previous academic years for a similar purpose
- Whether parent/carers have considered limiting the amount of time the child would be absent from school e.g. wrapping around school holiday
- Have alternative care arrangements been considered by the parent/carer to limit the time away from school
- Impact on any interventions, assessments or referrals being undertaken with the child or family e.g. family support, social care assessments, CAMHS, SEN
- The impact that the absence will have on the child.
- Whether it falls within any key stage national tests or exams;

#### **Examples of circumstances NOT considered as exceptional:**

- Holidays abroad for the purpose of visiting a sick relative, excepting where that person is seriously ill. Medical evidence may be requested.
- Holidays taken in term time due to lower cost/parental work commitments.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Generally, a need or desire for a holiday or other absence for the purpose of leisure and recreation will not constitute an exceptional circumstance.

# Managing Attendance

6.1 We will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance on half termly basis, highlighting any amount of time missed and the impact on learning.

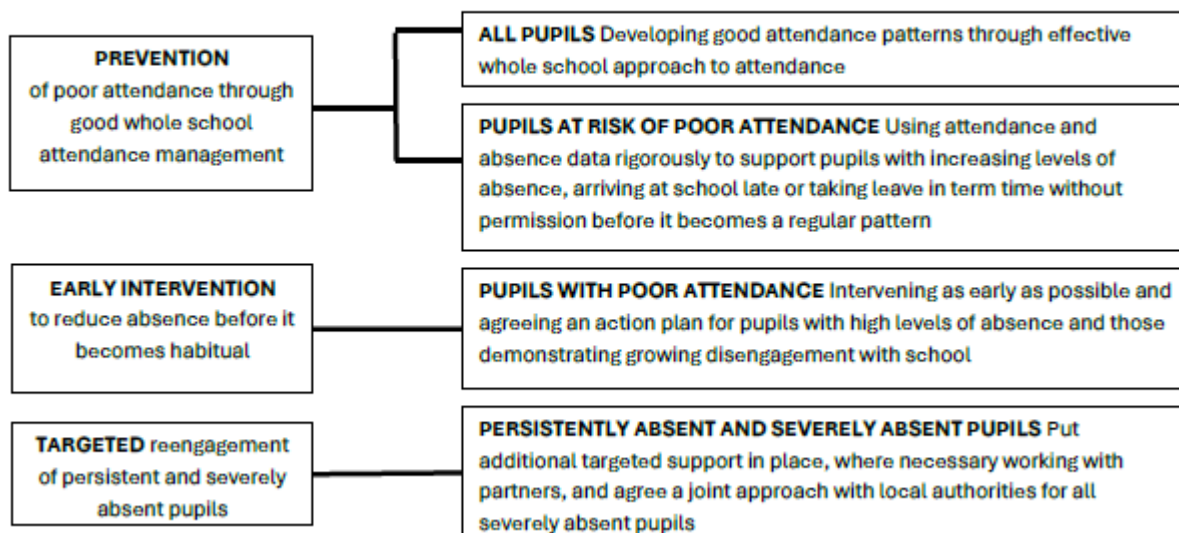
6.2 We value and recognise the importance of good attendance. We use the following to promote and celebrate good attendance:

- Weekly assembly celebrations.
- Regular attendance updates to parents.
- Mrs Begum is the named contact in school for supporting parents with any issues regarding attendance. We promote communication between parents and school and the effectiveness of letting us know early on about issues.
- Any improvement with families we work with are acknowledged and celebrated.

6.3 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who have consistently high attendance, those who have shown improvements in their attendance and to identify pupils who may be vulnerable (see 6.4 below). We will also analyse specific groups, classes, year groups to inform our strategy in promoting good attendance.

6.4 Our approach to attendance management is based on prevention, early intervention and targeted support. We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils who are at risk of poor attendance, have poor attendance or are identified as being either persistently absent or severely absent.

6.5 Our strategy for using data to target our work on attendance, including reducing persistent absence (pupils who are absent for 10% or more sessions) and severe absence (pupils who are absent for 50% or more sessions) is based on the table below:





0 – 4 days missed across the school year	98 – 100% attendance	<b>PREVENTION</b> Whole school approach/ celebrating good attendance
5 – 9 days missed across the school year	95– 97.9% attendance	<b>PREVENTION</b> Pupils at risk of poor attendance
10– 19 days missed across the school year	90.1 –94.9% attendance	<b>EARLY INTERVENTION</b> Pupils with poor attendance
20 or more days missed across the school year	90% or below attendance	<b>PERSISTENTLY ABSENT</b> 10% or more absence <b>SEVERELY ABSENT</b> 50% or more absence

6.6 We will regularly analyse attendance data to identify pupils or cohorts of pupils that need support. We will focus staff efforts on developing targets actions for those cases.

6.7 If we have concerns about a pupil's attendance and/ or their punctuality then we will work in partnership with parents to support improvements. This may involve a meeting in school to support the family in identifying, and addressing, the barriers to attending school and/ or attending school on time.

6.8 We recognise that poor attendance can be an indication of difficulties and trauma in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and/or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help us to identify any additional support that may be needed. It is expected that the child and their family work collaboratively with us to identify the most appropriate support.

6.9 We recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs, those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

6.10 We will hold regular meetings with the parents of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) consider to be vulnerable to discuss attendance at, and engagement with, school. This will include pupils who are classed as being persistently absent (10% or more absence), those who are severely absent (50% or more absence), those with patterns of absence and pupils who show an unexpected or unexplained dip in attendance.



6.11 Working with parents, we will identify pupils who need support from wider partners and will make the necessary referrals as quickly as possible. With parental consent, this may include exploring Early Help support through the completion of the 'Story So Far' assessment.

6.12 We will support pupils back into school following a lengthy or unavoidable period of absence to build confidence and bridge gaps.

6.13 If we have any concerns about the welfare and wellbeing of a pupil then, in line with our safeguarding policy and procedures, we will make any necessary referrals.

6.14 If we have been unable to contact the family, and have not seen the pupil, then we will inform the Local Authority so that joint enquiries can be made to establish the whereabouts of the child through Children Missing Education procedures

## **Voluntary Support, Formal Support and Statutory Action**

7.1 We will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. These may include:

- A recognised whole school approach that celebrates achievement in school
- Reward systems for positive behaviours
- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Discussion with the Virtual School where the child is looked after and/or has a social worker
- Working with attendance professionals, internal and/ or external to the school
- Attendance panels
- Attendance support plans
- Attendance report cards
- Attendance Contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- Personal, social and health education
- Anxiety-based school avoidance resources
- Trauma-informed approaches
- Early help referral options
- Family learning
- Reward systems
- Time limited part-time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion resources
- Reintegration support packages

7.2 Support offered to families, both internally and externally, will be child-centred, trauma informed and inclusive; planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

7.3 Our approach to attendance management is based on the principles of prevention, early intervention and targeted support. At all stages we aim to work in partnership with parents/ carers to address any barriers to attendance and/ or punctuality together. Where support is not successful, or is not engaged with, the law protects pupils' right to an education and provides a range of legal interventions to formalise attendance improvement efforts, and where all other avenues have been exhausted, enforce it through prosecuting parents.

7.4 We will work with Bury local authority to use the full range of legal interventions available to us to protect our pupils' right to an education. These are:

- Attendance contracts
- Education supervision orders
- Attendance prosecution
- Parenting orders
- Fixed penalty notices (see section 8)

7.5 Decisions on which intervention to take will be made on a case-by-case basis after considering the individual circumstances of the family.

## Fixed Penalty Notices

8.1 School and the local authority will have regard to our safeguarding duties as set out in the statutory guidance Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025.

8.2 Fixed penalty notices will be served on parents as an alternative to prosecution where parents have failed to ensure that their child regularly attends the school. Fixed penalty notices will be used where the pupil's absence has not been authorised by the school, and the absence constitutes an offence. Fixed penalty notices can be issued to each parent liable for the attendance offence/s, which should usually be the parent or parents with day-to-day responsibility for the pupil's attendance.

8.3 We will only use a fixed penalty notice, in line with the Working Together to Improve School Attendance National Framework (February 2024), where support to secure regular attendance has not been successful. Fixed penalty notices will be issued for unauthorised holiday in term time.

8.4 Fixed penalty notices can be issued where parents allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first 5 days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion. The parents must have been notified by the school at the time of the exclusion the days that the child must not be present in a public place.

**Note:** This policy meets the requirements of the department for education's Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024) and referenced the statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties governing school attendance:

- Part 6 of The Education Act 1996
- Part 3 of The Education Act 2002
- Part 7 of The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 (and 2024 amendment)

This policy should be read alongside Keeping Children Safe in Education 2025, our school's child protection and safeguarding policy and our school's behaviour policy