



# St Theresa's Catholic Primary School Attendance and Punctuality Policy

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Key Staff with designated responsibilities for Attendance		
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### Overview

At St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, we seek to ensure that all our pupils seize opportunities and realise their potential. Good attendance and punctuality are vital if our children are to make expected progress; consequently, the school has high expectations of pupil attendance and punctuality.

At St Theresa's we take a whole-school approach to securing good attendance and recognise the impact that our efforts in other areas – such as the curriculum, behaviour standards, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support, and the effective use of resources such as pupil premium – can have on improving pupil attendance. To maintain attendance levels, we work closely with parents and have efficient and effective communication procedures.

When parents choose to register their child at St Theresa's Catholic Primary School, they accept legal responsibility to ensure their child attends school regularly and punctually. This means that pupils are expected to attend every day that the school is open, except in a limited number of allowable circumstances- such as illness or authorised absences granted in advance by the school.

### At St Theresa's we are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling high attendance and its benefits.
- Ensuring equality and fairness for all.
- Ensuring this attendance policy is clear and easily understood by staff, pupils and parents.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Building strong relationships with families to overcome barriers to attendance.
- Working collaboratively with other schools in the area, as well as other agencies.

- Ensuring parents follow the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996, which states that the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause them to receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude, and to any SEND they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.
- Regularly monitoring and analysing attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require more support.

### Legal Framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- The Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Working together to improve school attendance (2022)
- Keeping children safe in education (2025)
- Children missing education (2016)

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Complaints Procedures Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

### Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body has overall responsibility for:

- Monitoring the implementation of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Promoting the importance of good attendance through the school's ethos and policies.
- Working with the SLT to set goals for attendance and providing support and challenge around delivery against those goals.
- Regularly reviewing attendance data.

- Ensuring that this policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- Handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's Complaints Procedures Policy.
- Ensuring there is a Children Missing Education Policy in place and that this is regularly reviewed and updated.

The headteacher is responsible for:

- The day-to-day implementation and management of this policy and all relevant procedures across the school.
- Appointing a member of the SLT to the Attendance Lead role.
- Ensuring all parents are aware of the school's attendance expectations and procedures.
- Ensuring that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence

The Attendance Lead is responsible for:

- The overall strategic approach to attendance in school.
- Developing a clear vision for improving attendance.
- Monitoring attendance and the impact of interventions.
- Analysing attendance data and identifying areas of intervention and improvement.
- Communicating with pupils and parents regarding attendance.
- Following up on incidents of persistent poor attendance.
- Informing the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers.

Staff are responsible for:

- Following this policy and ensuring pupils do so too.
- Ensuring this policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- Modelling good attendance behaviour.
- Using their professional judgement and knowledge of individual pupils to inform decisions as to whether any welfare concerns should be escalated.
- Where designated, taking the attendance register at the relevant times during the school day.

Parents are responsible for:

- The attendance of their children at school.

- Promoting good attendance with their children.
- Providing accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number.
- Updating the school if their details change.

Pupils are responsible for:

- Attending their lessons and any agreed activities when at school.
- Arriving punctually to lessons when at school.

### Our Aims

1. To improve and maintain the overall percentage attendance by establishing clear guidelines and incentives in school. These will be communicated by assemblies, parent information via Parent App/website and our tracking systems, parent meetings and communication.
2. To ensure attendance remains of the highest priority for pupils, parents, staff and governors. All staff share responsibility for promoting good attendance and punctuality as part of the school ethos and curriculum.
3. To maintain a framework which defines clear roles and responsibilities with regard to attendance.
4. To provide support and advice to parents/ children. The need for good attendance is highlighted in lessons and assemblies. Parents are informed about any issues that arise and regular register reviews are carried out to monitor attendance patterns. Good habits are outlined specifically and further encouraged from EYFS onwards.
5. To have a systematic approach to data collection and analysis. We have a standard method of recording across the whole school to ensure rigour and consistency. The school enlists the use of an Education Welfare Officer who works alongside the Attendance Lead and Administration staff. Governors are presented with attendance data at termly meetings.
6. To further develop positive and consistent communication between home and school. We do this by initiating first day response contact, using standardised letters, providing additional information for parents and encouraging their co-operation. The Pastoral Lead and the EWO will conduct home visits and support

as necessary. Where families are vulnerable and need support with attendance as part of a wider picture of need, school may offer an Early Help Assessment or consult with social care and /or other external agencies.

7. To further develop the system of rewards. Each class is made aware of the overall class attendance weekly, and children receive rewards for good/improved attendance.
  
8. To promote effective partnerships with the EWO (Education Welfare Officer) and other outside agencies. We do this by having weekly meetings between the EWO, Attendance Lead and administration staff to analyse attendance data and make decisions on the appropriate action.

### SEND and Health Related Absences

The school recognises that pupils with SEND and/or health conditions, including mental health issues, may face greater barriers to attendance than their peers, and will incorporate robust procedures to support pupils who find attending school difficult.

In line with the SEND Policy and Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy, the school will ensure that reasonable adjustments are made for disabled pupils to reduce barriers to attendance, in line with any EHCP's or Health Care Plans that have been implemented. The school will secure additional support from external partners to help bolster attendance where appropriate. Where the school has concerns that a pupil's non-attendance may be related to mental health issues, parents will be contacted to discuss the issue and whether there are any contributory factors to their child's lack of attendance. Where staff have a mental health concern about a pupil that is also a safeguarding concern, they will inform the DSL and the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy will be followed. All pupils will be supported with their mental health in accordance with the school's Mental Health and Well Being Policy. If a pupil is unable to attend school for long periods of time due to their health, the school will:

- Inform the LA if a pupil is likely to be away from the school for more than 15 school days.
- Provide the LA with information about the pupil's needs, capabilities and programme of work.
- Help the pupil reintegrate at school when they return.
- Make sure the pupil is kept informed about school events and clubs.
- Encourage the pupil to stay in contact with other pupils during their absence. The school will incorporate an action plan to help any pupils with SEND and/or health issues cope with the stress and anxiety that attending school may cause them. Such

plans will be regularly monitored and reviewed until the pupil is attending school as normal and there has been signs of significant improvement.

To support the attendance of pupils with SEND and/or health issues, the school will consider:

- Holding termly meetings to evaluate any implemented reasonable adjustments.
- Incorporating a pastoral support plan.
- Carrying out strengths and difficulties questionnaire.
- Identifying pupils' unmet needs through an Early Help Assessment.
- Using an internal or external specialist.
- Enabling a pupil to have a reduced timetable – in consultation with external professionals and the LA.
- Ensuring a pupil can have somewhere quiet to spend lunch and breaktimes.
- Implementing a system whereby pupils can request to leave a classroom if they feel they need time out.
- Temporary late starts or early finishes.
- Phased returns to school where there has been a long absence.
- Small group work or one-to-one lessons.
- Tailored support to meet their individual needs.

### Missing Pupils

Pupils will not be permitted to leave the school building/premises during the school day unless they have permission from the school and parents have informed the school in advance. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing whilst at school:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the headteacher immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the headteacher.
- The following areas will be systematically searched:
  - All classrooms
  - All toilets
  - Pastoral Rooms
  - Playgrounds
  - The school grounds
  - School Offices and
  - Store rooms

- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the secure school premises and will take a mobile phone with them so they can be contacted.
- If the pupil has not been found after 10 minutes, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.
- The school will attempt to contact parents using the emergency contact numbers provided.
- If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, and the emergency contacts list has been exhausted, the police will be contacted.
- If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is a looked-after child, or has any SEND, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.
- When the pupil has been located, members of staff will care for and talk to the pupil to ensure they are safe and well.
- Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located. The headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure that pupils understand they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary. Appropriate sanctions will be issued in line with the school's policy. The headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred and policy and procedures will be reviewed as necessary.

### Working with Parents to Improve Attendance

The school will work to cultivate strong, respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement. Open and honest communication will be maintained with pupils and their families about the expectations of school life, attendance and performance so that they understand what to expect and what is expected of them. The school will liaise with other agencies working with pupils and their families to support attendance, e.g. social services. The school will ensure that there are two sets of emergency contact details for each pupil wherever possible to ensure the school has additional options for getting in touch with adults responsible for a pupil where the pupil is absent without notification or authorisation. The school will ensure that parents are aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and to facilitate their child's legal right to a full-time education – parents will be made aware that this means their child must attend school every day that it is open, save for in certain circumstances, e.g. sickness or absences that have been authorised by the headteacher in advance. The school will regularly inform parents about their child's levels of attendance, absence and punctuality, and will ensure that parents are aware of the benefits that regular attendance at school can have for their child educationally, socially and developmentally. If a pattern of absence becomes problematic, the attendance officer will work collaboratively with the pupil and their parents to improve attendance by addressing the specific barriers that prevent the pupil from being able to attend school regularly. The school will always take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for pupil absence and will approach families to offer support rather than immediately reach for punitive approaches. Where these barriers are related to the pupil's experience in school, e.g. bullying, the Attendance

Lead will work with the headteacher and any relevant school staff, e.g. the DSL and SENCO, to address this. Where the barriers are outside of the school's control, e.g. they are related to issues within the pupil's family, the Attendance Lead will liaise with any relevant external agencies or authorities, e.g. children's social care or the LA, and will encourage parents to access support that they may need.

### PA (Persistent Absences)

There are various groups of pupils who may be vulnerable to high absence and PA, such as:

- Children in need
- Children we Look After
- Young carers
- Pupils who are eligible for free school meals
- Pupils with English as an additional language
- Pupils with SEND
- Pupils who have faced bullying and/or discrimination

The school will use a number of methods to help support pupils at risk of PA to attend school.

These include:

- Offering catch-up support to build confidence and bridge gaps.
- Meeting with pupils and parents to discuss patterns of absence, barriers to attendance, and any other problems they may be having.
- Establishing plans to remove barriers and provide additional support.
- Leading weekly check-ins to review progress and the impact of support.
- Making regular contact with families to discuss progress.
- Assessing whether an EHCP or Health Care Plan may be appropriate.
- Considering what support for re-engagement might be needed, including for vulnerable groups.
- Informing and working with the Local Authority services as appropriate to offer family support and encourage engagement.

Where a pupil at risk of PA is also at increased risk of harm, the school will work in conjunction with all relevant authorities, e.g. social services, to support the pupil in line with the school's duty of care. The school will also bear in mind that the continuation of severe PA following intervention may in itself constitute neglect and will escalate any concerns in line with the Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy.

## Legal Intervention

The school will allow sufficient time for attendance interventions and engagement strategies to improve pupils' attendance; however, where engagement strategies to improve attendance have not had the desired effect after one term, the Attendance Lead will initiate:

- Holding a formal meeting with parents and the Education Welfare Officer.
- Working with the LA to put a parenting contract or an education supervision order in place.
- Engaging children's social care where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Where the above measures are not effective, the headteacher will issue a fixed penalty notice in line with the LA's code of conduct. Where attendance still does not improve following a fixed penalty notice, the school will work with the LA to take forward attendance prosecution as a last resort.

## Monitoring and Analysing Absence

The Attendance Lead will monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address habitual absence at the first signs. The school will collect data regarding punctuality, truancy, and authorised and unauthorised absence, for:

- The school cohort as a whole.
- Individual year groups.
- Individual pupils.
- Demographic groups, e.g., pupils from different ethnic groups or economic backgrounds.
- Other groups of pupils, e.g., pupils with SEND, CLA and pupils eligible for FSM.

## Pupils at Risk of PA

The Attendance Lead will conduct a thorough analysis of the above data on a half-termly, termly and full-year basis to identify patterns and trends. This will include identifying, for each group:

- Patterns in uses of certain codes.
- Particular days of poor attendance.
- Historic trends of attendance and absence.
- Barriers to attendance.

The Attendance Lead will also be responsible for monitoring how attendance data changes in response to implemented interventions. The governing body will regularly review

attendance data, including examinations of recent and historic trends, and will support the SLT in setting goals and prioritising areas of focus for attendance support based on this data. The school will also benchmark its attendance data against local, regional and national level data to identify areas of success and areas for improvement and will share practice which has been shown to be effective with other schools.

### Training of Staff

Staff are aware through induction and safeguarding training of the importance of early intervention in relation to attendance issues. They are also aware that poor attendance can be an indicator of wider issues and possibly safeguarding concerns. All staff complete Safeguarding Children Awareness training yearly as well as reading Keeping Children Safe in Education and attending briefings as necessary. Staff are aware that they need to follow Safeguarding policy and procedures should a concern arise.

### Absence Notifications

Parents and Carers are responsible for informing school if their child is unable to attend school with an explanation for the absence.

School can be contacted in the following ways:

- By telephone – 01744 678652. There is a facility to leave a message if the call is not answered. Please state the child's name, class and reason for absence.
- By school email- sttheresa@sthelens.org.uk

### School Day and Protocols

- Staff will open the gates at 8:25am
- Staff will close the gates at 8.40am
- Any child arriving late, after the gates have closed will need to enter via the main office. Parent/carers are to inform the office staff of their arrival and complete the details required on the Entry Sign in system.
- The electronic register is taken at 8.35am
- Registers close at 9:05am
- If we have not received notification of a child's absence a telephone call is made to parents/carers.
- By 9:35am, if there is still no contact, the Attendance Lead will be informed. Action will be taken as deemed appropriate, e.g. The Education Welfare Officer will be advised and/or a home visit may be carried out.
- The Education Welfare Officer will report back to the Attendance Lead following contact/home visit.
- The school day finishes at 3.00pm.

## Family Holidays

The Government takes a firm stance against parents who take their children out of school for a family holiday. Holidays during term time are not encouraged or supported by school. All requests should be put in writing, at least two weeks in advance, to the Headteacher and will be considered on an individual basis. However, current guidance and our policy is not to authorise family holidays during term-time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Fixed Penalty Notices may be issued to each parent of a child in respect of a child being taken on holiday in term time. The school term dates are shared with parents well in advance, usually over a year in advance, and are available to view on the school website. A paper copy of term dates can also be provided by the school office free of charge upon request. Pupils have 13 weeks leave from school each year and holidays should be planned and taken then, not outside of this time. Pupils who miss school in term time due to family holidays, are at increased risk of falling behind academically and not meeting age related expectations at the end of the school year.

## Unauthorised Absence

Absence is considered to be unauthorised when:

- Parents allow children to stay off school unnecessarily
- Children play truant
- Reasons for absences have not been satisfactorily explained
- Children who arrive at school after registration without an acceptable reason,
- Children are taken on holiday in term time.

## Children Missing in Education (CME)

St Theresa's RC Primary School follow the 'Local Authority Children Missing in Education' policy and procedures. The school's Designated Safeguarding Officer and Headteacher are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of all pupils who fall into the category of 'Children Missing in Education in partnership with the school's Local Authority Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

During the first 10 days of absence, where a child has ceased to attend school without a valid reason, the school will take appropriate action to try to locate the child and establish whether they are on roll at another school.

Actions to trace should include:

- Initial action to contact parents/carers (phone call, 'first day calling', text, email)
- Checking possible whereabouts with staff and other pupils

- If any siblings at another school, check with that school
- Visit to last known address
- Writing to parents (at last known address or new address if known)
- Making contact with relevant agencies (social care etc)

If the child is not found, and/or not on roll at another school, within 10 days: St Theresa's will follow the school's 'Children Missing in Education Procedure' and inform the relevant services (social care) of our concerns.

### Fixed Penalty Notices

St Theresa's RC Primary School has adopted the use of Fixed Penalty Notices and complies with St Helens Local Authority code of conduct which governs the use of these.

The school may request a Fixed Penalty Notice to be issued if a pupil has 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence recorded within a 10-week period or if there are 10 sessions recorded as the pupil arriving late after the register has closed within a 10-week period.

Under the provisions of sections 444a and 444b of the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority may, in cases of unauthorised absence, issue a penalty notice to the parent(s) or carer(s) responsible. Under these provisions the penalty is £60 if paid within 21 days of the receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days, but within 28 days of receipt. Penalty notices are issued to each parent/carer for each child.

This policy will be reviewed annually by the headteacher/attendance Lead. Any changes made to this policy will be communicated to all relevant stakeholders. The Headteacher will be responsible for liaising with and disseminating information to the Governing Body.



Appendix 2

What happens when attendance falls below 90%?



