



# ST THOMAS A BECKET R C PRIMARY SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY

**DATE OF LAST REVIEW:** **NOVEMBER 2020**

**AGREED BY GOVERNORS:** **NOVEMBER 2020**

**SHARED WITH ALL STAFF:** **DECEMBER 2020**

**FREQUENCY OF REVIEW:** **ANNUALLY**

**DATE OF NEXT REVIEW:** **DECEMBER 2021**

## OUR MISSION STATEMENT

St Thomas a Becket School is a primary school of the Roman Catholic diocese of Southwark.

The aim of the school is to offer excellence of education in accordance with the teaching of the church and to value and develop each child's potential in a community in which every member is fully respected.

We try to ensure that this is done by:

- praying together
- valuing the experiences of each member of the community
- being a caring, forgiving community
- living and working and playing together
- by encouraging the children to achieve the best of their ability

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## 1. ATTENDANCE

At St Thomas a Becket School we place a high priority on good attendance and punctuality. Good attendance and punctuality will ensure that your child has every opportunity to achieve to the best of their ability.

Every child should come to school every day. They should only be absent for an unavoidable reason.

If a child is absent without a good reason it is against the law and parents can be prosecuted by the LA and may be fined.

The school has to keep a register of attendance by law and has to classify and record every half day absence as either authorised or unauthorised. The school will ask about the reason for the absence.

An authorised absence is a morning or afternoon away from school for a good reason, e.g. illness or other unavoidable reason.

An unauthorised absence is when the school does not consider that the reason is unavoidable and for which no permission by the school has been given. This includes keeping children off school for trivial reasons, truancy, absences that have not been properly explained and children who arrive at school too late to get the register. It also includes a doctor or dentist appointment (which could be made outside school hours non urgent ones), getting up late, going shopping, having a haircut etc. Even when a note is sent to school, the school still has to decide if the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Some children need more encouragement than others to attend school regularly. It is never in your child's best interest to cover up absences or give

into pressure to excuse them from school. This makes the child think that attendance in school does not matter and may lead to more problems later.

If there are any difficulties parents are encouraged to discuss them with the head teacher so that we can work together to resolve the matter.

If attendance problems cannot be resolved through the school then the child will be referred to Greenwich Attendance and Advisory Service. S/he will try to resolve these difficulties by working with the parent. If all attempts to improve attendance fail then these officers can use court proceedings to prosecute parents / carers or seek an education supervision order on the child.

Parents / Carers may wish to contact the Attendance Officer themselves to ask for advice. These officers are independent of the school. They can be contacted by telephoning 020 8921 8510.

## 2. REASON FOR ABSENCE

If a child is unfit for school the parent should contact the school on the first day of absence, in person or by telephone, preferably by 9am. When a child returns to school s/he must bring a written note signed by a parent, for this absence. The school will not authorize an absence unless the parent has contacted the school.

All leaves of absence must be discussed with the school each time. Leave of absence may be granted in an emergency or for a medical appointment which must be on school time. Written explanations should always be provided for these other reasons.

### **3. HOLIDAYS**

All holiday leave during the term time is at the discretion of the Headteacher but you must make a request by writing to the Headteacher beforehand. Holiday leave for up to ten school days per year may be granted providing the child's attendance is otherwise satisfactory. Holiday leave is not an entitlement. Leave may be refused where children have already missed lots of lessons or during Key Stage 1 and 2 SAT's times.

Requests for holidays beyond 10 days a year will only be granted in exceptional circumstances. If there is a long leave of absence the school cannot guarantee that the child will remain on the school register.

### **4. LATENESS**

Children must attend on time to be given a mark for each half day session. Parents should ensure that children are in the playground ready to line up when the bell goes. Arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the session without a good reason may be counted as an unauthorised absence. Children who are late will be asked to remain in the school lobby until the end of assembly. If a child is late they may miss the start of a lesson and often find it difficult to complete the work for that session. Late arrivals also disrupt the whole class.

### **5. REPORTING ON ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE**

The school has a legal duty to report its absence figures to the Department of Education and Employment each year, to publish its absence figures to parent/carers and to promote good attendance. Parents will receive

attendance information on your child's report. They may also receive information if the child's attendance is a cause for concern.

This policy follows recent DfE guidance and advice.

**The school asks parents to give their child the best start in life by making sure that s/he attends regularly and is on time.**