

Golborne St Thomas' C of E Junior and Infant School

Attendance and Punctuality Policy

A journey in faith, arriving with hope.

St. Thomas' School vision:

To ensure the children are highly valued by all members of the school community.

St. Thomas' creates a culture of high aspirations by making the school the heart of the community. We aim to develop a culture of curiosity and creativity by unleashing our children's God-given potential to make a difference in our locality and beyond.

Our parents, staff and governors see and understand the individual talents of each pupil and the opportunities provided. We openly celebrate and reward children's successes and achievements.

To inspire all children through a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum enabling every child to succeed.

We create an ethos where everyone is an explorer and an active participant. Children are challenged and encouraged to thrive in all areas. Our aim is to nurture talent and ensure children are equipped to live life in all its fullness.

Children experience a wide range of high quality lessons and enrichment activities daily. We recognise that children are naturally curious; therefore, child-led learning is developed through their questions.

To nurture children's wellbeing to ensure healthy mind, body and spirit.

At St. Thomas' values are at the heart of all we do. We provide a safe, supportive environment which empowers children to grow and develop their self-worth, self-esteem and self-respect. Our unique learners are resilient and are willing to take big risks to make big leaps.

Values are actively promoted, modelled, and celebrated by all. Our inspiring curriculum and pastoral care teaches children the importance of healthy lifestyles: physically, mentally and spiritually.

Attendance and Punctuality

Rationale

If Learners are to get the greatest benefit from their education in school it is important that they have good attendance and arrive punctually. As learners grow and prepare for their next stages of education and employment they need to see good attendance and punctuality as important qualities that are valued by others and employers. We will do all that we can to encourage good attendance and punctuality. Where learners are not conforming to our high expectations for attendance and punctuality we will put into place effective strategies to bring about improvement.

Objectives

- To ensure that all learners attend school well.
- To ensure that all learners are punctual.
- To have the support of parents in ensuring that their children attend school well and that they arrive on time.
- To keep good records of attendance through the school registers and to take prompt action to follow up absences.
- To investigate and act immediately where truancy is suspected or confirmed.
- To work effectively with the LA and other agencies to follow up attendance issues promptly and effectively.
- To monitor closely pupils with attendance and punctuality issues and to work with parents and where appropriate other agencies to bring about improvement.
- To monitor the attendance of individuals and groups, including social and ethnic groups, pupils from backgrounds of social disadvantage and those with protected characteristics as identified in the 2010 Single Equalities Act.
- To monitor the attendance of pupils who are identified as 'at risk' in line with our policies for child protection and safeguarding.

Procedures

In accordance with Wigan Local Authority (LA), a letter outlining the triggers and procedure for the issuing of non-attendance penalty notices is sent to all parents and carers at the start of the academic year. Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity. Only the Headteacher or member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence. If there is no known reason for the absence at registration then the absence must be recorded in the first instance as unauthorised.

Education Penalty Notice Warning for Non-School Attendance

Under the Education Act 1996, parents and carers have a duty to make sure their children regularly attend school. If parents or carers fail to do this, they can be prosecuted.

Working within a Code of Conduct the Local Authority can issue a penalty notice to parents or carers if a child has missed a number of sessions without permission from the school.

If your child falls within one or more of these categories within a 12 week period

- 10 sessions (5 days) of unauthorised absence with under 90% attendance
- 20 sessions (10 days) of unauthorised absence
- persistently arrives late for school after the close of registration

You could receive a Penalty Notice of £60 which will increase to £120 if not paid within 21 days. The Penalty Notice will need to be paid in full before 28 days of the notice being served. Failure to pay a penalty notice may result in prosecution (a separate penalty notice may be issued to each parent for each child).

In law, an offence is committed if a parent fails to secure a child's regular attendance at school. Wigan Council Attendance Service, in conjunction with schools, will use these powers as an early deterrent to prevent patterns of unauthorised absence developing.

You may also receive a Penalty Notice for the offence of failing to secure regular school attendance under the following circumstances:

- Your child is stopped on a truancy sweep
- You fail to ensure that your child is not in a public place during the first 5 days of a fixed term or permanent exclusion.

The Local Authority and schools are committed to providing the best possible future for your child.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or guardian. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence, or if a parent is asked to provide medical evidence. Only the school can make an absence authorised. Parents do not have this authority. Consequently not all absences supported by parents will be classified as authorised.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the school and without good reason, even with the support of a parent.

Lateness

All children need to be in school on time. Doors open at 8.40am and morning registration takes place at 8.50am. After 8.50am when the doors close, children will be classed as late. Registers remain open for 30 minutes, after which any arrivals will be classed as unauthorised absence (unless the child has attended a medical appointment).

Absence Process

When a child is absent from school we expect parents/ carers to inform school immediately either by phone, text, email or in person. We also expect the parent/ carer to keep school updated regarding progress towards returning to school. If a child has a medical appointment school need to see evidence of this. We expect all routine appointments to be made outside of school hours.

Where a child has not arrived at school and we have had no notification of the absence, school will contact the parent/ carer as soon as possible to find out the reason for the absence. If school are unable to find out the reason for the absence it will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where the school have concerns over attendance and punctuality, an unexplained absence may trigger a welfare check from school staff, Startwell, social care, the police or the school attendance officer.

Leave of Absence, including holidays.

In accordance with DFE regulations school is unable to grant leave of absence for holidays unless there are exceptional circumstances.

All requests for leave of absence must be in writing, and in advance of the absence.

We expect all parents/ carers to inform us that holidays are being taken, even though they will not be authorised. Where alternative reasons have been given to try to cover up a holiday and evidence appears to contradict this, the absence will be classed as unauthorised.

Repeated Absence

Where a pupil has a low attendance rate, parents/ carers will be called into school to discuss the problem and explore solutions. An attendance contract will be introduced.

If attendance rates do not improve an Early Help will be set up to support the family to improve attendance rates. Additional agencies may also be involved in this process.

If attendance rates still do not improve than the school will trigger the Educational Penalty Notice procedure, and where necessary may consider taking legal action.

Promoting Good Attendance

All children are encouraged to be in school every day. Good and outstanding attendance are celebrated.

Date of policy: January 2023

To be reviewed: January 2024