

ATTENDANCE AND ABSENCE GUIDELINES FOR PARENTS SEPTEMBER 2024



ST THOMAS
CE (VC) PRIMARY SCHOOL

Good, consistent attendance is essential for your child's success at school.

When Should Your Child Stay Home?

Your child should only miss school if they:

- Are too ill to leave the house.
- Have been sick or had diarrhoea in the last 48 hours.
- Have an infectious disease (e.g., chickenpox, mumps, or measles).
- Have an injury that limits movement.
- Have a hospital or emergency appointment (see appointment notes below).

Reporting Absences

If your child is ill, please call the school each day they are absent. If you know in advance that your child will be missing school, inform us as early as possible.

Appointments

- We encourage parents to book routine appointments (e.g., dental, medical, optician) outside of school hours.
- For hospital or emergency appointments during school hours, please pick up your child beforehand and return them afterward if possible.
- We cannot authorize more than half a day for medical appointments unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- Please provide any relevant documentation and notify us of planned absences as early as possible.

Attendance Goal

Our goal is for all students to achieve at least **95% attendance**. A child with 10 or more days of absence in a school year (including holidays, illness, and appointments) will not meet this target.

Our Attendance Team monitors attendance daily and collaborates with parents of students whose attendance or punctuality is concerning. Students with attendance below 90% are reviewed regularly, as this is considered "persistent absenteeism," while attendance below 50% is deemed severe persistent absenteeism.

Defining Good Attendance

'Good' attendance is defined as 95% or higher. For some students with medical or SEND needs, good attendance may be lower, and we will take their circumstances into account to ensure clarity on what constitutes 'good' attendance. When barriers to attendance are identified, supportive partnerships are essential, and our school community will work collaboratively with families to enhance attendance.

Absence Protocol: What Happens If My Child Is Absent?

Explained Absence

- **Attendance Code:** *The appropriate attendance code will be recorded within five working days after the absence reason is confirmed.*
- **Ongoing Contact:** The school will maintain communication with the family. A home visit will be conducted after three days of absence, or sooner if the pupil is vulnerable or has attendance concerns.
- **Unsuccessful Welfare Checks:** If welfare checks are unsuccessful, the unexplained absence protocol will be initiated.

Unexplained Absence Procedure

- **Day 1:** On the first day of an unexplained absence, the school will contact the parent. If no emergency contacts can be reached, a home visit will be conducted.
- **Absence Clarification:** The school will determine whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised and update the attendance code within five working days or upon the pupil's return.
- **Ongoing Absence:** If the absence remains unexplained, the school will maintain daily contact and conduct welfare checks. If the issue persists, external agencies may be involved.
- **No Contact Protocol:** If no contact is made during home visits, the case will be escalated to external services.
- **External Services Involvement:** Agencies already involved with the pupil or family will be notified of the unexplained absence.
- **Support:** The school will provide support to the pupil and/or family to help improve attendance.
- **Referral to Partners:** If necessary, the school will refer the pupil to external partners for additional support.

How will we support families and keep them informed of pupil attendance?

Note: St Thomas CE (VC) Primary School will exercise discretion regarding attendance markers for pupils with SEND, medical needs, or exceptional circumstances.

In the first half term of the academic year, attendance may drop below the established parameters for some pupils. In such cases, the school will make reasonable judgments and may not contact parents immediately; instead, attendance will be monitored closely

First Day of Absence:	Parents should call the school to inform them of the reason for their child's absence. If no contact is made by a specified time, the school will contact the parents.
Absences reaches 2-7 days	If attendance has been a previous concern, or we are very early in the school year and therefore at risk of not reaching attendance targets, an informal chat will be arranged to offer support if required
Absence reaches 8 days (equivalent to 95.5% attendance at the end of the school year):	The school will communicate the child's attendance figures to the parents and offer support if needed.
Absence reaches 10 days (equivalent to 94.9% attendance at the end of the school year):	The school will discuss the attendance with the parents to determine whether support is required and whether a school attendance meeting is appropriate.
Absence reaches 13 days (equivalent to 93% attendance at the end of the school year):	Parents will be invited to meet with one of the school's Attendance team. An attendance target will be set, and external services may be invited to provide support, if appropriate.
Absence reaches 17 days (equivalent to 91% attendance at the end of the school year):	Parents will be invited into the school for a meeting. An Early Help referral will be offered, and parents may be asked to agree to an attendance contract to work together to improve their child's attendance.
Absence reaches 19 days (equivalent to 90% attendance at the end of the school year):	The pupil is now classed as a persistent absentee. The following actions may be taken: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A meeting with parents and professionals (if appropriate) • Implementation of an action plan or attendance contract • Issuing of a warning letter • A notice to improve or other legal interventions • Issuance of a fixed penalty notice
Attendance less 90%	Parent contract will be in place
Attendance less 50%	Individual action plan will be in place