

4th October 2021

Dear Parent / Carer,

Attendance and Punctuality

At St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy we place great importance on 100% attendance as research proves pupils who attend regularly will achieve higher academic results and benefit from experiencing better relationships with staff and other pupils. Following the long periods away from the classroom during the pandemic, it is more important than ever that our students are in school on time every day.

St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy has an aspirational attendance target of 100% for all pupils. We accept there may be times when 100% is not possible due to exceptional circumstances or illness, but St Thomas More does however aim to see as many individual pupils as possible achieve full attendance and excellent punctuality.

At times of absence or difficulty, support and guidance is always available from school and your first points of call are your child's Form Tutor and the pastoral managers.

To enable us to effectively monitor school attendance we have adopted a banding system and each child's attendance will be colour coded as follows:

- 100% - **Purple**: This is excellent attendance and your child will be rewarded for maintaining this level of attendance
- 99.9% - 95.1% - **Green**: This is good attendance and your child will be rewarded for maintaining this level of attendance through the rewards system
- 95%-90.1% - **Amber**: Attendance at this level is becoming a concern and may trigger an intervention
- Below 90% - **Red**: Attendance at this level is a serious concern and may trigger a referral to specialist services for intensive intervention and/or the Local Authority for statutory action

You will be regularly informed of which band your child is in via your child's progress report. The best outcomes are achieved when home and school work together with strong lines of communication therefore it is expected of all parents / carers to engage positively with support if any concerns are raised.

Leave of Absence (including term-time holidays)

Leave of absence is not a parental right and every effort should be made to avoid holidays during term time. St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy acknowledges that all absence results in lost learning and directly affects a child's education. As such, **applications for leave of absence in term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances**. The law stipulates that the cost of a holiday is not reasonable grounds for claiming exceptional circumstance.



Applications should be made in writing using the Leave of Absence Request Form with a minimum notice of 1 month. This is available to download from the school's website. Each request will be assessed individually and you will be informed in writing whether your request has been accepted or refused. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised.

In cases of unauthorised leave of absence the school may request that a penalty notice be issued or a prosecution to be considered by the Local Authority.

A penalty notice is a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days and £120 if paid after this time but within 28 days. Non-payment of a Penalty Notice may trigger a prosecution referral under the provisions of Section 444, 1996 Education Act.

We appreciate your support in this matter and remind you that there are 13 weeks of school holidays in each academic year for you to enjoy your family breaks. Term dates are given out a year in advance so that arrangements can be made.

Punctuality

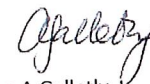
It is essential that your child's school day gets off to a good start. All pupils are expected to be on site prior to the registration period ready to enter form rooms or assembly. Registration is taken promptly at 8:50am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as late within the register and will receive a detention at break time the same day. Excellent punctuality is important as arriving late may:

- Cause unnecessary disruption for your child, other pupils and staff
- Result in your child being anxious or unsettled instead of being ready to learn
- Lead to staff visiting your home or inviting you to a meeting in school to discuss concerns and draw up an improvement action plan
- Result in a referral to the Local Authority and legal action being taken against you

If you have difficulties with getting your child to school on time, please contact the Pastoral Managers, Mrs Keating and Mr Ryan.

Your co-operation in supporting the attendance and punctuality expectations is very much appreciated and if you would like to discuss any of these matters in more detail please do not hesitate to contact us on enquiries@st-thomasmore.derbyshire.sch.uk or via the school office on 01298 23167.

Yours sincerely,



Mrs A Galletly
Deputy Headteacher