

St. Theresa's  
Catholic Primary School



**ST. THERESA'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

# **Attendance and Punctuality Policy**

“We learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God”



Validation grid

<b>Title</b>	Attendance and Punctuality Policy
<b>Author</b>	Barbara Costa
<b>Associate Author</b>	
<b>Target Audience</b>	All staff, parents, Governors
<b>Stake holders consulted</b>	All staff
<b>Curriculum / non curricular</b>	Non curricular
<b>Associated Policies / Documents</b>	Inclusion Policy, Health and Safety Policy, Online Safety Policy, Data Protection Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Behaviour Policy, Educational Visits Policy, Staff Code of Conduct, Staff Handbook, Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, Whistleblowing Policy, Home School Agreement
<b>New Policy or Review of existing policy.</b>	Review
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Signed..... Barbara Costa

Signed..... Seamus McKenna

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## **Statement of Intent**

At St. Theresa's School we feel that it is important that all parents and children know that the school values good attendance and punctuality. Regular school attendance and good time keeping ensure that children have full access to the National Curriculum and all areas of school life.

Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school. Any absence affects the pattern of a child's schooling and regular absence will seriously affect their learning.

**Ensuring a child's regular attendance is a parental responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law and may result in prosecution.**

We are committed to:

- Following 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 him / her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-*

*(a) to age, ability and aptitude and*

*(b) to any special educational needs he/ she may have*

*Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.*

- Demonstrating to pupils, parents and staff that the school values good attendance
- Raising the educational achievement of all pupils in the school
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment of all
- Implementing our policies in accordance with the Equality Act 2010
- Early intervention and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils
- Consistency in the implementation of rewards and sanctions to promote good attendance.

## **1. Legal Framework**

This policy has due regard to legislation, including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 1996
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (As amended)
- Children (Performances and Activities) (England) Regulations 2014
- Children and Young Persons Act 1963
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (2020)
- Children Missing Education (2016)

This policy also has regard to non-statutory DfE guidance, including, but not limited to, the following:

- 'DfE School Attendance (2020)
- DfE Improving School Attendance (2020)

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Complaints Policy
- Home School Agreement

## **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

- ✓ The school will ensure that absence procedures are understood by pupils, parents and carers.
- ✓ The Governing Body has overall responsibility for the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures at St. Theresa's School.
- ✓ The Governing Body has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including but not limited to ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.
- ✓ The Governing Body has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's complaints policy.
- ✓ The Headteacher will be responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of St. Theresa's.
- ✓ Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- ✓ Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- ✓ Parents and carers will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.
- ✓ Parents and carers will be expected to promote good attendance behaviour and ensure that pupils attend school every day.
- ✓ Parents are responsible for:
  - Providing accurate and up to date contact details
  - Providing the school with more than one emergency contact number (someone who is able to come to the school in an emergency if needed)
  - Updating the school if their details change
- ✓ Pupils are expected to attend school every day and KS2 pupils are expected to sign the Home School Agreement at the beginning of each school year, to agree to keep their attendance at, or above, 96% percent throughout the year.

## **3. Definitions**

St. Theresa's defines "**absence**" as either:

- Arrival at school after the attendance register has closed (the attendance register is taken twice daily, once in the morning and once after lunch)
- Not attending school for any reason.

St. Theresa's defines an "**authorised**" absence as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.

- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.
- Other absences the Executive Headteacher has authorised.

St. Theresa's defines an "**unauthorised**" absence as:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Absences which have never been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the attendance register has closed without a satisfactory explanation.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.
- Absences due to routine medical or dental appointments.
- Working/oversleeping

St. Theresa's defines "**persistent absenteeism**" as:

- Missing 10 per cent (10%) or more of schooling across the school year **for whatever reason** (authorized and unauthorised)

#### **4. Staff Training**

The school recognises that early intervention can prevent poor attendance. As such, teachers will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils as part of their induction and refresher training.

Teachers and support staff will receive training on this policy as part of their induction.

#### **5. Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence**

The school will follow the escalation process in *Paragraph 21: Monitoring and Review*

#### **6. Absence Procedures**

- At the beginning of each year a letter will be sent home reminding parents of the starting and finishing times of the school day (Appendix I).
- At the beginning of each year an information leaflet will be sent home reminding parents of their legal duties regarding school attendance and including information about authorised and unauthorised absence (Appendix II).
- Parents will be informed about other relevant information i.e. holiday dates, INSET dates in good time.
- Parents must contact the school as soon as possible (by 8.30am at the latest) on the first day of their child's absence.

- All teachers will complete the attendance registers online by 8.50am.
- A phone call will be made – by the office staff - to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence on the first day that they do not attend school. If the parent does not answer, the next emergency contact will be called. The office staff will record the reason for the absence, the time of the phone call, the parent/carer spoken to and the name of the member of staff making the call. At this point, after a discussion with the Headteacher, the school may inform the police. This is our 1<sup>st</sup> response procedure.
- Following the 1<sup>st</sup> response procedure, the office staff will enter the correct absence codes into the class online registers.
- On a child's return to school following an absence without a given reason, a letter should be sent from the school requesting a written explanation (see Appendix III).
- In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to meet with the Barnet Educational Welfare Officer (EWO).
- The school will inform the Local Authority if any pupil has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more.

### **Looked After Children (LAC)**

In the case of a LAC being absent, the virtual school will be informed.

### **Pupils on Child Protection (CP) Plan**

If a pupil with a CP plan has an unauthorised absence, the social worker will be informed that day.

## **7. Parental Involvement**

- The school will build respectful relationships with parents and families to ensure their trust and engagement.
- The school will communicate openly and honestly with pupils and their families about their 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. if a pupil has a social worker.
- Parents will be expected to:
  - Treat staff with respect.
  - Actively support the work of the school.
  - Call staff for help when they need it.
  - Communicate with the school about possible circumstances which may affect their child's attendance or require support.

## **8. Attendance Register**

The class teacher will take the attendance register every morning and afternoon using the online G2 Integris Attendance system.

They will record whether pupils are present.

A member of the office staff will use the national attendance codes to complete all absence codes.

## **9. Student Contact Information (Parents' Responsibility)**

Parents are responsible for providing accurate and up-to-date contact details. Parents are responsible for updating the school if their details change. The school will update these records on a yearly basis.

## **10. Educational Welfare Officer**

- If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to the EWO
- If the situation cannot be resolved and attendance does not improve, the EWO has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices to parents

## **11. Lateness**

- ❖ Punctuality is of the utmost importance and lateness will not be tolerated.
- ❖ The school gate opens at 8.30am.
- ❖ Reception to Y6 classroom doors open at 8.40am and the school day starts at 8:50am. Pupils should be in their classroom at this time.
- ❖ Registers are marked by 8:50am. Pupils will receive a late mark if they are not in their classroom by this time.
- ❖ The attendance register closes at 9:30am. Pupils will receive a mark of absence if they do not attend school before this time.
- ❖ Attendance after the register closes will receive a mark to show that they are on site, but will count as an absent mark.
- ❖ If no satisfactory reason is given for a pupil's late arrival to school (after 9.30am) this absence will be unauthorised.
- ❖ If a pupil has six unauthorised absences due to arriving after the attendance register closes at 9.30am, in any four week period, parents may be issued with a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN).

## **12. Term-Time leave**

At St. Theresa's, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents/carers to observe the school holidays as prescribed.

In accordance with the law, the Headteacher is unable to authorise family holidays during term-time.



Leave during term time will only be authorised in exceptional circumstances, for example, bereavement or serious illness. Parents of all children must apply in advance for leave of term time absence in writing (Appendix IV).

Any leave of absence is at the discretion of the Headteacher.

Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.

Below is a *non-exhaustive* list of examples where requests for leave will not be granted:

- Immediately before and during assessment periods.
- When a pupil's attendance record shows any unauthorised absence.
- Extended leave to attend a family wedding/funeral/birthday.
- Where a pupil's authorised absence record is already above 10% for any reason.

If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and the parents may be issued with a FPN.

### **13. Missing Children**

Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they are on a school trip or accompanied by an adult who has been given permission to do so.

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.
- All available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises as directed by the Headteacher.
- Available staff will begin a search of the area immediately outside of the school premises taking with them a mobile phone for contact.
- If the pupil has not been found after the school premises (and area immediately surrounding the school) has been searched, the pupil's parents will be notified.
- The police will then be contacted.
- Parents and other relevant agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.
- The Headteacher will carry out a full investigation and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.
- A written report will be produced and policies and procedures will be reviewed in accordance with the outcome.

The Headteacher will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupils understand that they must not leave the premises and sanctions will be issued, if deemed necessary.

The Headteacher, in partnership with the Site Manager will take all the necessary steps to ensure the school is secure at all times in order to prevent any opportunity for pupils to leave the building unaccompanied.

#### **14. Religious Observances**

Parents must apply for leave of absence in the usual way if absence is required for days of religious observance.

#### **15. Appointments**

As far as possible, parents will attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.

Where this is not possible, an appointment card (or evidence of text confirmation) will be given to the school office.

If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, they will be signed out at the school office by the parent.

Pupils will attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.

#### **16. Modelling, Sport and Acting Performances/activities**

All pupils engaging in performances/activities which require them to be absent from school are required to obtain a licence from Barnet Local Authority. If your child is involved in such an activity and will require to be absent from school, please see the Headteacher.

#### **17. Young Carers**

The school understands the difficulties that face young carers.

The school will endeavour to identify young carers at the earliest opportunity from enrolment at the school and throughout their time at the school.

The school takes a caring and flexible approach to the needs of young carers and each pupil will be examined on a case-by-case basis, involving other agencies if appropriate.

#### **18. School Refusers**

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with irregular attendance are best sorted

out between the school, the parents and the child. If a parent thinks their child is reluctant to attend school then we will work with the family to understand the root problem. The school can use outside agencies (e.g. EWO) to help with this.

## **19. End of the School Day**

Children should always be clear about who is collecting them from school. All Y2-Y6 children should be collected from the playground at the end of the school day at 3.30pm by parents/carers; the children will be escorted to the playground by their class teacher. Reception and Y1 children should be collected from their classroom gates at 3.30pm. Parents are asked to telephone the school if they are going to be late collecting their child so that the child does not get anxious.

Children not collected on time are brought back into school and asked to wait in the hall. If your child is still not collected by 3.45pm, and you have not contacted the school to advise us, the office will endeavour to contact you at home and at work. If this is unsuccessful, your child will be looked after by Little Angels after school club, a charge may apply for this. A decision may then be taken to contact either the duty social worker or the police.

## **20. Pupils who travel to and/or from school independently**

If children travel to and/or from school independently, parents should complete a 'permission to travel alone' form (Appendix V) and keep the school updated of any changes. Pupils who are independent travellers are prioritised in the first response procedure. Any changes to normal pick up arrangements should be made in advance. Please only call the school office with changes of pick up arrangements in an emergency. Parents of pupils who travel independently, whose children are not attending school (due to illness for example) must contact the school by 9.00am with the reason. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting parents/carers at home or work to ask where the child is. If it is not possible to contact parents/carers, the next emergency contact will be phoned. If there is still no response, the matter will be referred to the local police. This is to ensure the safety of the child.

## **21. Monitoring and Review**

- St. Theresa's attendance target is set annually.
- The school monitors attendance and punctuality half termly.
- The EWO monitors the school attendance termly.
- Details of our absence levels can be found in our weekly school newsletter which is also available on the school website.
- If a pupil's attendance falls below 96% the school sends a letter home raising concerns that the pupil's attendance has fallen below the expected standard.
- If after the following 6 weeks, the pupil's attendance is still below 96%, the school sends a letter home explaining that the pupil's attendance is being monitored and no further absences will be authorised unless accompanied by GP notes etc.

- If the pupil's attendance continues to fall below 96%, or is below 90%, they are referred to the EWO who will contact the family explaining that their child's attendance is being monitored, and where necessary a meeting will be arranged.
- A monitoring period of 4-6 weeks and an attendance target is usually set.
- If there are no improvements after the monitoring period the parents may be prosecuted and issued with a FPN.
- If the school has reason to believe that absences are causing a safeguarding concern, a referral will be made to Barnet Children's Services.
- At the end of each academic year the names of the children with 100% are published in the school newsletter.
- At the end of each academic year, the class with the highest attendance are rewarded with a non-uniform day.

## Appendix I



### St. Theresa's Catholic School School opening times and punctuality Information

#### **Breakfast Club (for children in Reception to Year 6)**

- Breakfast club opens at 7.45am
- Breakfast club closes at 8.30am and breakfast will not be served after this time.

#### **Start of the day**

- The school gates will open at 8.30am.
- The school gates are locked at 8.50am
- The children will be allowed into the classrooms from 8.40am onwards.
- Lessons start at 8.50am
- Any child who arrives *after 8.50am is considered to be late* and must enter the school via the main office entrance.
- If there is an accompanying adult, they will need to sign the late book at the office. The accompanying adult must wear a parent's badge if they are taking their child to class.
- Any child not in school, whose parent has not contacted the school by 9am, will be routinely phoned in accordance with our first response policy.
- *If any adult needs to come into the building for any reason, they must enter via the main entrance by the school office.*

#### **During the School Day**

- When a child needs to leave the school building for appointments, the parent /carer must sign their child out in the signing in/out book outside the school office. The same applies when the child is returning to school from an appointment.

#### **End of the Day**

- The school gates will open at 3.20pm and will be locked at 3.45pm.

# St. Theresa's Catholic School

## The Importance of Good Attendance and School Procedures

**"At St. Theresa's School, we learn together, we play together, we pray together, we grow together in the love of God"**



At St. Theresa's Catholic School we take attendance and punctuality very seriously. With your support we want to give all our children the best possible start in life and to maximize all of their learning opportunities, so that they can fulfill their potential. Every day matters.

### **Why should your child be in school?**

- It is the law.
- They will make the maximum amount of progress both academically and socially.
- They will find learning more satisfying and enjoyable.
- They will have an easier transfer to secondary school.
- They will help their class win a non-school uniform day.
- They will be awarded a 100% attendance certificate.

### **What happens when your child is not in school?**

- They will miss lessons and crucial information.
- They will fall behind with their work and there will be gaps in their learning.
- Socially, your child may feel excluded and friendships can be impacted.
- The Educational Welfare Officer may be informed.
- You could receive a fine.

### **What should I do if my child is off school?**

- Please contact the school office before 09:00am on the first day of their absence to let us know why your child is absent. (tel: 020 8346 8826 email: [office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net](mailto:office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net))
- Medical appointments should be made for out of school hours. However, if it is an urgent appointment, please inform the School Office and provide evidence as soon as possible.
- If you know in advance that your child will be absent, please contact the School Office.

### **Illnesses that will prevent your child from coming to school**

- Vomiting and diarrhoea (your child can return to school 48 hours after the last episode)
- High temperature with a diagnosed infection
- Hospital admission
- Dental surgery
- Medical emergency

## Illnesses that will not prevent your child from coming to school

- Mild cough
- Cold/Sneezes
- Tiredness

## Authorised and Unauthorised Absences

### Examples of authorised absences

- Proof of illness from GP/Hospital provided
- Phone call from parent explaining that their child is ill
- Proof of medical appointment
- Permission given from Headteacher following a written request for exceptional leave of absence (i.e. Religious days etc.). All requests for exceptional leave of absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher. Request forms are available from the school office.

### Examples of unauthorised absences

- Holidays
- Days out
- Birthdays
- Parent or sibling unwell
- Tiredness
- No reasonable explanation received from parent/carer

Holidays in term time will not be authorised; we see every day that a child is not in school as a day's learning lost. **Every day matters.**

### Information about Fixed Penalty Notices

It is important for all children to attend school. Parents/Carers commit an offence if their child does not attend school regularly or if the absence is not agreed by the school. A Penalty Notice costs £60 per parent and per child, if payment is made within 21 days. £120 if paid after the 21 days, but within 28 days.

## Punctuality

- Doors open at 8.40am.
- If your child arrives after 8.50am, they will be marked in the register as late.
- It is important that your child is present for registration because it will help them prepare for lessons and also lessons will not be interrupted. Punctuality is monitored and parents will be notified if their child's punctuality needs improvement.

## Early Collection

- In order to avoid early collections we recommend that you make appointments during school holidays or after school.
- Parents or sibling appointments are not acceptable.

100% Attendance	0 weeks of learning missed	Best chance of success – well done!
95% attendance	9 days of absence	Best chance of success – well done!
90% attendance	19 days of absence	Poor attendance Cause for concern Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted
85% attendance	27 days of absence (almost half a term)	Poor attendance Serious cause for concern Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted
80% attendance	36 days of absence (half a term missed)	Poor attendance Serious cause for concern Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted
75% attendance	45 days of absence (one whole term missed)	Poor attendance Serious cause for concern Educational Welfare Officer will be contacted

Every child's attendance is monitored.

**Appendix III**

**St. Theresa's**  
Catholic Primary School



**St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School**  
East End Road, Finchley, London N3 2TD

Telephone: 020 8346 8826 Fax: 020 8346 0215  
Email: office@sttheresas.barnetmail.net Web: www.st-theresas.barnet.sch.uk  
Executive Headteacher: Miss Barbara Costa Head of School: Mr James Troy

Date .....

**Follow Up Attendance Letter**

Dear Parent,

Under the regulations governing attendance registers, I have to account for any absence of every child. Our records show that on the date(s) listed below, your child was absent from school. We do not appear to have an explanation for the absence and need to complete our records.

I would be grateful if you could complete and return the reply slip below explaining your child/children's absence so we can complete the registers. If no reason is given, your child's absence will be marked as unauthorised. Please note that unauthorised absences may result in fixed penalty fines of £120 per parent per child.

I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Thank you,

Barbara Costa  
Headteacher



**Absence Reply Slip**

Child's name ..... Class.....

Date(s) absent (to be completed by school) .....

Reason for absence (to be completed by parent)

Signed..... Date .....

London Borough of Barnet  
Diocese of Westminster







## St. Theresa's Catholic Primary School

### Application for Exceptional Leave of Absence

Parents should refer to the school's attendance policy before requesting leave of absence. By requesting permission for your child to be excused from school, you are agreeing to abide by the decision of the Head Teacher. You must provide relevant information and not make travel plans before receiving permission. **If your request is not agreed, your child must attend school, or you may be liable to a fixed-penalty notice. In some circumstances, you may be jeopardising your child's place at the school.**

**Absence from school is governed by the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, and as amended, 2016.**

I/We request leave of absence for .....in Class.....

From .....to .....

#### Reason for request

Parent/Carer signature ..... date .....

*Once completed, this form should be handed into the school office. You will receive a response once your application has been processed.*



## Appendix V

### Permission to Travel to and/or from School Alone

At St. Theresa's School we aim to ensure we have a record of all children coming to and from school without an adult.

#### **Travelling to school without an adult**

If your child travels to school without an adult, please complete the relevant section of the reply slip below and return it to the school office as soon as possible.

If your child attends breakfast club, please ensure your child does not arrive before 7.45am as the school cannot accept responsibility for children at this time.

*Please note that the morning registers close at 8.50am and the office staff commence following up unexplained absences from 9am onwards. Since, currently, places in breakfast club are open to all children in Rec to Y6 without the need for booking, if you choose to allow your child to travel to breakfast club without an adult, and for whatever reason, your child does not arrive at school – **you will not be notified until after 9am.***

If your child is coming to school at the normal time, please ensure they do not arrive before 8.30am as the school cannot accept responsibility for children before the school gate has opened.

If your child is not attending school (due to illness for example), please contact the school to inform us as soon as possible. Failure to do so will result in the school contacting you. Please ensure that your contact details are kept up to date. If we are unable to contact you, or your other emergency contacts, we will refer the matter to the local police.

#### **Travelling home from school without an adult**

If you wish your child to travel home from school without an adult, please complete the relevant section of the reply slip below and return it to the school office as soon as possible. Please note that only pupils in Y6 will be permitted to travel home without an adult.

Only Y6 pupils who have returned the signed slip below will be allowed to travel home from school alone.

Younger siblings may be collected by older brother and sisters if the older siblings are 16 years of age or older.

Thank you,

Barbara Costa (Executive Headteacher)

✂.....

Permission to travel **TO** school alone.....

My child ....., in Year ..... has my permission to travel **to** school without an adult.

I agree to contact the school if my child will be absent.

Signed ..... (parent/carer) date .....

Permission to travel **HOME FROM** school alone (Year 6 pupils only)

My child ....., in Year ..... has my permission to travel **home from** school without an adult.

Signed ..... (parent/carer) date .....