

National guidance

The policy was drawn up using a range of national documents. DFE Guidance School Attendance (2014)

Schools should:

1. Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
2. Ensure every child has access to full-time education
3. Act early to address patterns of absence

Parents/Carers must perform their legal duty by ensuring children of compulsory school age who are registered to school, attend regularly.

All pupils must be punctual for the start of the school day. School attendance is subject to various education laws and this school attendance policy is written to reflect these laws and the guidance produced by the Department for Education and Hampshire County Council.

This attendance policy is also consistent with the following school policies:

- admissions
- anti-bullying
- child protection
- exclusion
- safeguarding
- special educational needs
- teaching and learning
- behaviour and rewards

The level of attendance and punctuality expected from all our pupils is included in our school's 'Home School Agreement' (appendix 1), which parents must sign following their child's admission to a school (statutory).

It is very important, therefore, that you make sure your child attends regularly and this policy sets out how together we will achieve this. This policy will be annually publicised in writing for all staff, parents, carers and pupils via the school website and is available in other languages on request.

Rationale/Statement of Intent:

For a child to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality for all our pupils/students and endeavour to provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcome. Parents and pupils play a part in making our school so successful. Every child has a right to access the education to which he/she is entitled. Parents and teachers share the responsibility for supporting and promoting excellent school attendance and punctuality for all.

It is our duty to consistently strive to achieve a goal of 100% attendance for all children. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

For our children to take full advantage of the educational opportunities offered it is vital your child is at school, on time, every day the school is open unless the reason for the absence is unavoidable. The routines children develop around attendance and punctuality at school are the same as the expectations of any future employer in the world of work. High attainment, confidence with peers and staff, and future aspirations depend on good attendance.

Good attendance is important because:

- statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and absence below 95%
- regular attenders make better progress, both socially and academically
- regular attenders find school routines, school work and friendships easier to cope with
- regular attenders find learning more satisfying
- regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, and higher education, employment or training.

The Mission Statement for St Thomas More's states 'The mission of St Thomas More's School is to educate and inspire every child to fulfil their unique giftedness within a loving Catholic community'. We aim to provide children with skills and qualities that will help them become happy, successful and thoughtful adults who will actively contribute to society in the 21st century. In order to fulfil our mission statement successfully pupils need to attend school on a regular basis throughout the year.

Aims:

One of the school aims to support the mission of the school is that 'individual differences are recognised, respected and valued, and responsibility is encouraged, in order to achieve this aim, the school community needs to work together in partnership to enable all pupils to attend school on a regular basis.

There are occasions when pupils will be ill and unable to attend – this is both understandable and acceptable. However, the aim is that every child –

- has 100% attendance throughout the year
- reduces any unauthorised absences to zero

Date to Staff: May 2016

Approved by Curriculum, Admissions & Pastoral Committee: 12/04/16

Review schedule: 3 yearly

Date for review: Summer 2019

Section 1: Operating the policy - Promoting good attendance and punctuality

Promoting good attendance

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents and the child. The Home School Agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and our expectations of what parents will need to do to ensure their child achieves good attendance.

To help us all to focus on this we will:

- provide information on all matters related to attendance in our newsletter and regularly on our school website
- report to you on how your child is performing in school, what their attendance and punctuality rate is and how this relates to their attainments
- celebrate good attendance by a weekly cup for the classes given in assembly. Reported on our website and newsletter
- reward good or improving attendance through class competitions, certificates termly and outings/ events for 100% attendance for the whole year attendance
- set targets for the school and classes for attendance and display these in the school
- run events when parents, pupils and staff can work together on raising attendance levels across the school
- provide an information leaflet with a list of illnesses and guidance regarding the time needed off school
- Provide support for parents from our Home School Link Worker (HSLW) with morning routines, reward charts at home and regular meetings

Monitoring

- Headteacher to receive half termly reports of any children who's attendance has fallen below 96% from SIMS Officer
- Headteacher to give regular reports to the appropriate Governor/ committee

Section 2 : Roles and responsibilities of the School Attendance Leader

At St Thomas More's the responsibility of the school's attendance leader is ultimately held by the Headteacher supported by the SIMS Officer and the HSLW.

The Headteacher will oversee, direct and co-ordinate the school's work in promoting regular and improved attendance and will ensure the attendance policy is consistently applied throughout the school. The Headteacher will also ensure that attendance is both recorded accurately and analysed. He will ensure that attendance issues are identified at an early stage and that support is put in place to deal with any difficulties.

If absence is frequent or continuous, except where a child is clearly unwell, staff will discuss with parents/carers the need and reasons for their child's absence and will encourage them to keep absences to a minimum. A note or explanation from a pupil's home does not mean an absence becomes authorised. The decision whether or not to authorise an absence will always rest with the Headteacher.

Responsibilities of classroom staff

Ensure that all students are registered accurately twice a day – once for morning registration and once for the afternoon registration. This will:

- promote and reward good attendance with students at all appropriate opportunities
- liaise with the SIMS Officer and/or Headteacher on matters of attendance and punctuality
- communicate any concerns or underlying problems that may account for a child's absence
- support pupils with absence to engage with their learning once they are back in school

Responsibilities of students

- Attend every day unless they are ill or have an authorised absence (exceptional circumstances authorised by the Headteacher)
- Arrive in school on time

Responsibilities of parents/carers

Ensuring your child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility (Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act) and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school creates an offence in law.

Parents will:

- inform and discuss with the Headteacher any planned absences well in advance
- support the school with their child in aiming for 100% attendance each year
- make sure that any absence is clearly accounted for by telephone by 9:00am on the first and subsequent days of absence and by letter on the child's return
- avoid taking their child out of school for non-urgent medical or dental appointments
- only request leave of absence if it is for an exceptional circumstance

Section 3: Recording attendance

Legally the register must be marked twice daily. This is once at the start of the school day, 8:45am, and again for the afternoon session at 1:00/1:10pm.

Lateness/punctuality

It is important to be on time at the start of the morning and afternoon school sessions. The start of school is used to give out instructions or organise work. If your child is late they can miss work time with their class teacher forgoing vital information, cause disruption to the lesson for others, and it can be embarrassing leading to possible further absence.

- The school day begins at 8:45am and **all pupils are expected to be in school at this time**
 - Morning registration is at 8:45 am and the register closes at 9:15am
 - Arrival at school after 8.45am and before 9.15am, pupils will be marked late (L code)
 - All lateness is recorded daily. This information will be required by the courts, should a prosecution for non-attendance or lateness be necessary
- Arrival after the close of registration will be marked as unauthorised absence and coded *U* in line with Hampshire County Council and Department of Education guidance. This mark shows them to be on site, but is legally recorded as an absence
- If a pupil is late due to a medical appointment, they will receive an authorised absence, coded *M*. Please be advised that, where possible, doctors and dentists appointments are to be made outside of school hours or during school holidays

Pupils who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education but also that of the other pupils. Ongoing and repeated lateness is considered as **unauthorised absence and will be subject to legal action** (see Section 6 for further detail).

Parents, guardians or carers of pupils who have patterns of lateness will be contacted to discuss the importance of good time keeping and how this might be achieved. If lateness persists, parents, guardians or carers will be invited to attend a meeting at the school and discuss the problem, where support will be offered. If support is not appropriate or is declined and a child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence due to lateness recorded in any 10 week period, the school or Hampshire County Council will be required to issue parents with a Penalty Notice in accordance with Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* (See Section 6.2 of this policy for further detail).

Please collect your child promptly at the end of the school day. Where late collection is persistent and/or significantly late, the school is obliged to take any uncollected pupil to a place of safety and share concerns, as necessary, with other agencies. The school will place a child into the after-school care where available and provide the parent/carer with the bill.

A child not attending school is considered a **safeguarding** matter. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required.

First day absence

If your child is absent you must:

- Contact school before 9:00am on the first day of absence.
- Written explanation of the absence to be sent into school on the first day they return, even if you have already telephoned the school or reported it to the school reception.
- We will endeavour to have every child accounted for by 9.30am.

If your child is absent we will:

- The SIMS Officer will telephone you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you (**it is your responsibility to telephone the school and let us know that your child is absent**) – this is because we have a duty to ensure your child's safety as well as their regular school attendance
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Headteacher, Deputy Headteacher and/or HSLW if absences persist.
- Refer the matter to the Hampshire County Council's Attendance Legal Panels if absence is unauthorised and falls below 90%.

Third day absence

If your child has not attended school and contact has not been established with any of the named parents/carers, after three days of absence the school is required to start *child missing in education* procedures as set down by Hampshire County Council guidance. We will make all reasonable enquiries to establish contact with parents/carers and the child, including making enquires to known friends and wider family. School will send a letter asking parents to respond in writing as to why their child/children are absent.

Ten days' absence

We have a legal duty to report the absence of any pupil who is absent without an explanation for 10 consecutive days. If the child is not seen and contact has not been established with the named parent/carer then the local authority is notified that the child is *at risk of missing*. Children's Services staff will visit the last known address and alert key services to locate the child. So help us to help you and your child by making sure we always have an up-to-date contact number. There will be regular checks on telephone numbers throughout the year.

Continued or ongoing absence

If your child misses 10% (three weeks/sessions) or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason, they are defined as *persistent absentees*. Absence for whatever reason disadvantages a child by creating gaps in his or her learning. Research shows these gaps affect attainment when attendance falls below 95%. As such, we monitor all absence thoroughly and all attendance data is shared with the local authority and the Department for Education. If your child has had absence and their attendance level is falling towards 90% we will contact you and, depending on the reasons for the absence, will meet with the parents/carers and implement the following.

All persistent absentee pupils and their parents are subject to an Attendance Action Plan this will be led by the school HSLW. It will be reviewed fortnightly until attendance is above 95% consistently for a half term period. If attendance does not improve as a result of the support and actions put in place, parents will be invited to discuss the matter with the Headteacher and prosecution for non - attendance will be considered.

A welcome back

It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils. Include details of how catch-up work will be organised.

Section 4: Request for leave of absence

For national guidance refer to:

- 1 *School attendance*, 2016, located at:
www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance
- 2 National Association of Headteachers' guidance document on *Authorised absence*, 2014:
www.naht.org.uk/welcome/news-and-media/key-topics/parents-and-pupils/naht-issues-newguidance-on-authorised-absence/.

For Hampshire County Council advice and guidance refer to:

- 1 Guidance on recording absence:
<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-maindocument.pdf>
- 2 Guidance on approval of *Extended leave of absence*:
[www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/ atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools](http://www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools)

Amendments to school attendance regulations were updated and enforced from September 2013: The Education **(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations state that headteachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.** It is important to note that headteachers can determine the length of the authorised absence, as well as whether absence is authorised at all. The fundamental principles for defining *exceptional* are rare, significant, or unavoidable, which means the event could not reasonably be scheduled at another time. **There are no rules on this** as circumstances vary from school to school and family to family. There is, however, no legal entitlement for time off in school term time to go on holiday **and in the majority of cases holiday will not be authorised.** Parents/carers wishing to apply for leave of absence need to fill in an application form available from the school website or school reception in advance and before making any travel arrangements.

If term-time leave is taken without prior permission from the school, the absence will **be unauthorised** and if the number of sessions absent hits the thresholds set down in Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct*, parents/carers will be issued with a fixed-penalty fine or other legal action in accordance with the code (see Section 6 for detail). **Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's schooling as much as any other absence and we expect parents to help us by not taking children out during school time.**

Section 5: Understanding types of absence – authorised and unauthorised

Understanding types of absence

Pupils are expected to attend school every day for the entire duration of the academic year, unless there is an exceptional reason for the absence. There are two main categories of absences:

- **Authorised absence:** when the school has accepted the explanation offered as satisfactory justification for the absence or given approval in advance for such an absence. If no explanation is received, absences cannot be authorised.
- **Unauthorised absence:** when the school has not received a reason for absence or has not approved a child's leave of absence from school after a parent's request. This includes:
 - parents giving their children permission to be off school unnecessarily such as for shopping, birthdays, to look after siblings
 - truancy before or during the school day
 - absences which have not been explained.

A school can, if needed, change an authorised absence to an unauthorised absence and vice versa if new information is presented. Any changes will be communicated to parents/carers. An example of this would be where a parent states a child is unwell but on return to school there is evidence they have been on holiday.

Section 6: Penalty Notices for non-attendance and other legal measures

In education law, parents/carers are committing an offence if they fail to ensure the regular attendance of their child of compulsory school age at the school at which the child is registered, unless the absence has been authorised by the school.

Legal measures for tackling persistent absence or lateness

Hampshire schools and Hampshire County Council will use the full range of legal measures to secure good attendance. Legal measures will only be considered when there is unauthorised absence and:

- 1 The child or family do not require the support from any agency to improve the attendance

- 2 The child has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence and parents are complicit in the child's absence.

The following legal measures will be used for pupils of compulsory school age who are registered at a school:

- Parenting Contracts set at Education Planning Meetings
- Parenting Orders
- Penalty Notices
- Education Supervision Orders
- Prosecution

Where a child has **unauthorised absence** the school must enforce Hampshire County Council's *Code of conduct: issuing Penalty Notices for unauthorised absence from schools* or follow its guidance on other legal measures for non-attendance. The *Code of conduct* is a statutory document that ensures that powers for legal sanctions are applied consistently and fairly across all schools and their families within the authority. A copy is available from www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.

The *Code of conduct* states that: Schools or Hampshire County Council will issue a Penalty Notice for any unauthorised absence where the pupil has been:

- Absent for 10 or more half-day sessions (five school days) of unauthorised absence during any 100 possible school sessions – these do not need to be consecutive (codes *G*, *U* or *O* on the register).
- Persistently late (coded *U*) for up to 10 sessions (five days) after the register has closed.
- Persistently late before the close of the register (coded *L*), but the school has met with parents and has clearly communicated that they will categorise as unauthorised any further lateness (code *O*), and where the threshold of 10 sessions (five days) has been met.
- Absent for any public examinations of which dates are published in advance.
- Absent for any formal school assessments, tests or examinations where the dates have been published in advance.

Unless the issuing of a Penalty Notice would conflict with other intervention strategies in place or other sanctions already being processed.

If a child's unauthorised absence meets any of the above criteria and the family or child do not require any agency support to improve attendance then a Penalty Notice will be issued for either:

- 1 10 sessions of unauthorised absence or lateness in any 10 week school period
- 2 one or more sessions of unauthorised absence during a public exam, formal school assessment or testing where dates are published in advance.

This includes where a pupil has unauthorised absence due to either:

- 1 non-approval of a parent/carer's request for leave of absence or
- 2 a holiday that has been taken without permission and the unauthorised absence (coded *G*) is for 10 or more sessions (five days) in any 100 possible school sessions/10 week period then a Penalty Notice for non-attendance will be issued.

Parents and carers will be warned of the likelihood of a Penalty Notice being issued for unauthorised absence via letter, through the leave of absence request form, or through the

school's attendance policy and website. The Penalty Notice is a fine that is issued to each parent/carer who condoned (or was responsible for the child) during the period of unauthorised absence for which the fine has been issued. For each case of unauthorised absence the school or Hampshire County Council will decide whether a Penalty Notice is issued **to one or more parents/carers** for each child. **NB:** This could mean four Penalty Notices for a family with two siblings both with unauthorised absence for holiday, ie one Penalty Notice for each child to each parent.

Each Penalty Notice carries a fine of £60 if paid within 21 days of the Penalty Notice being posted. If the fine is not paid within 21 days the penalty is automatically increased to £120 if paid within 28 days. If the fine remains unpaid Hampshire County Council will consider prosecution for the non-attendance. Payment methods are detailed on the Penalty Notices themselves. Penalties are to be paid to Hampshire County Council and revenue resulting from payment of penalties is used by the County Council to help cover the costs of issuing Penalty Notices and/or the cost of prosecuting recipients who do not pay.

Please note: If you pay the Penalty Notice and your child has further unauthorised absences additional legal action will be taken. For example, in the event that a Penalty Notice has previously been served to you due to unauthorised holiday, should your child have any future unauthorised leave this will result in further legal action for you, such as prosecution or an Education Supervision Order.

For further information parents/carers can request a leaflet from their school and should visit Hampshire County Council's website at:

www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/attendance-guidance-for-parents/possible-penalties.

Section 7: What can I do to encourage my child to attend school?

Children are sometimes reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parents/carers and the child. If a child is reluctant to attend, it is never advisable to cover up their absence or to give in to pressure to excuse them from attending. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and may make things worse.

Contact your child's class teacher immediately and openly discuss your worries. Your child could be avoiding school for a number of reasons – difficulties with school work, bullying, friendship problems, family difficulties. It is important that we identify the reason for your child's reluctance to attend school and work together to tackle the problem. In some cases you may find it helpful to discuss the circumstances of your child's difficulties with another professional.

Make sure your child gets enough sleep by ensuring an appropriate bedtime and gets up in plenty of time each morning. Ensure that he/she leaves home in the correct clothes and is properly equipped for the school day. Show your child, by your interest, that you value his/her education.

Be interested in what your child is doing in school, chat to them about the things they have learnt, what friends they have made and even what they had for lunch!

For many parents, your child attending school may be your first experience of being separated from them. This can seem daunting at first for both of you, but consistency and a caring, supportive home and school life will make the transition a quick and easy experience for you both. If you have any worries or concerns about your child, contact the class teacher/HSLW and discuss them as soon as possible.

Leavers

If your child is leaving our school (other than when transferring to secondary school) parents are asked to, give the SIMS Officer comprehensive information about their plans, including any date of a move and your new address and telephone numbers, your child's new school and the start date when known. This should be submitted to our school in writing.

If pupils leave and we do not have the above information, then your child is considered to be a *child missing in education*. This requires schools and local authorities to then carry out investigations to try and locate your child, which includes liaising with Children's Services, the Police and other agencies. By giving us the above information, these investigations can be avoided.

Absence through child participation in public performances, including theatre, film or television work and modelling

Parents/carers of a child performer can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in a performance. They must contact the headteacher to discuss the nature and frequency of the work, whether the child has a valid performance licence and whether education will be provided by the employer during any future leave of absence. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion as to whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Any absence recorded as part of a child's participation in a public performance is recorded as C, an authorised absence.

Absence through competing at regional, county or national level for sport

Parents of able sportsmen and women can seek leave of absence from school for their child to take part in regional, county, national and international events and competitions. It is, however, down to the headteacher's discretion whether to authorise this and they will wish to discuss with you the nature and frequency of the absence and how learning will continue if absence occurs. Permission for your child to leave early or arrive late to attend coaching and training sessions is also at the discretion of the headteacher and is not likely to be approved if it is a regular event, unless the sports club or association is providing an education tutor as part of their coaching.

Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families

Absence of a child from a Traveller family that has left the area may be authorised if the absence is for **work purposes only** and it is believed that the family intends to return. To ensure the continuity of learning for Traveller children, dual registration is allowed. That means that a school cannot remove a Traveller child from the school roll while they are travelling. When the Traveller is away the 'home' school holds the place open and records the absence as authorised through the T code. Distance learning packs for Traveller children are not an alternative to attendance at school.

For further advice and guidance on attendance and Gypsy, Roma, Traveller and Showman families see Hampshire County Council guidance at:

<http://documents.hants.gov.uk/childrens-services/HIAS/Promotingpupilattendanceandrecordingabsence-Section6.pdf>.

Further support and guidance is available from Hampshire County Council's Ethnic Minority and Traveller Achievement Service (EMTAS).

Section 8: Record preservation

School registers are legal documents. We will ensure compliance with attendance regulations by keeping attendance records for at least three years. Computer registers will be preserved as electronic back-ups or microfiche copies

Appendices

The law

The Education Act 1996, Part I, Section 7 states:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- a) to his age, ability and aptitude and*
 - b) to any special needs he may have*
- either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.”*

For educational purposes the term *parent* is used to include those that have parental responsibility and/or those that have the day-to-day care of the child.

The legislation that appertains to children who are of compulsory school age and are registered at school is contained within this Act.

Part VI, Section 444 contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school.

Register and admission roll keeping

The legal requirements are found in: The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

Guidance documents on attendance

The following Department for Education documents are used to guide attendance recording:

- *Absence and attendance codes* (guidance for schools and local authorities)
- *Keeping pupil registers* (guidance on applying the Education Pupil Registration Regulations).

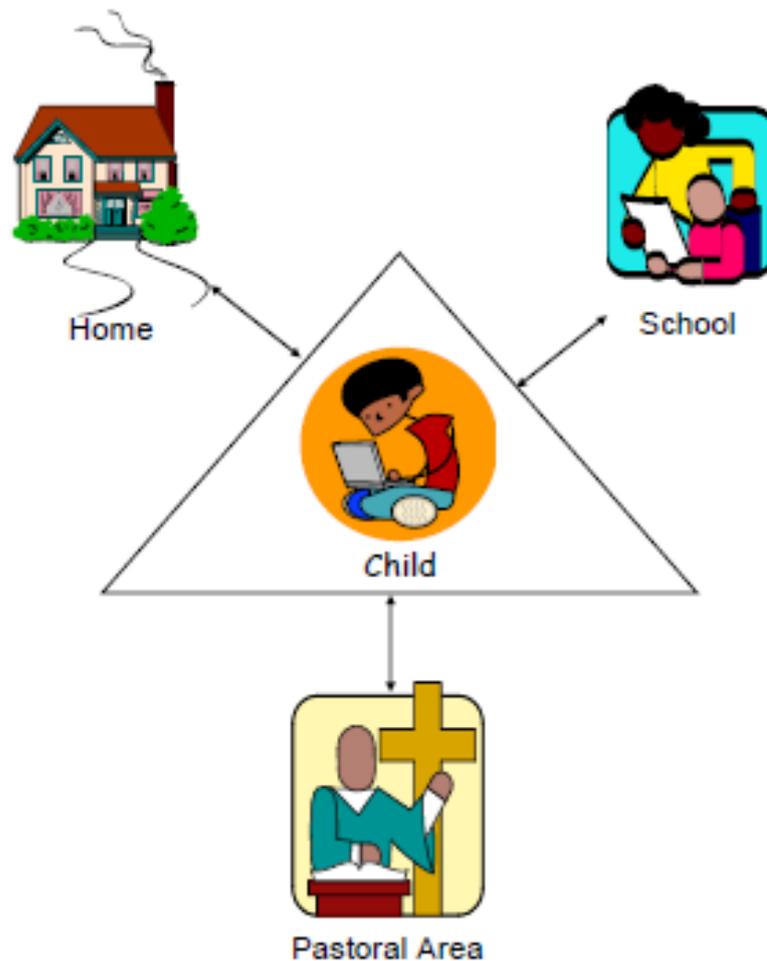
These and other guidance documents are available on the Department for Education website.

Hampshire County Council guidance is available on Hantsweb at: www.hants.gov.uk/education/hias/learning-behaviour-attendance/lba-resources-for-schools/atten-guidance/attendance-guidance-for-schools.

Home/School Agreement



**An Agreement between the
Home, School, Pastoral Area and Children of
St Thomas More's Catholic Primary School**



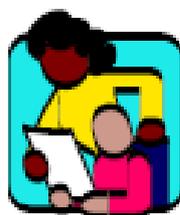
*We will work together to promote relationships
based on Gospel values*

1. Together we will:

- a. Tackle any concerns
- b. Keep channels of communication open in all directions
- c. Encourage our children to do their very best at all times, and value that effort
- d. Encourage our children to take pride in their school environment
- e. Promote positive behaviour
- f. Support individuals in their personal faith development
- g. Be considerate to everyone particularly the school neighbours

2. The School will:

- a. Teach the National Curriculum and RE
- b. Provide extra curriculum enhancement whenever possible
- c. Provide opportunities for spiritual development
- d. Not tolerate bullying and will implement strategies to address it
- e. Keep parents informed of their children's progress
- f. Keep parents informed about school activities through regular letters home, and notices
- g. Be considerate to our school neighbours



Teacher's Signature:



3. The Family will:

- a. Make sure my child arrives in time for school
- b. Make sure my child is dressed in the correct uniform
- c. Make sure my child attends regularly, providing a letter if he or she is absent
- d. Support my child with their faith development
- e. Attend Parents' evenings to discuss my child's progress
- f. Work with the school & my child to promote positive behaviour
- g. Ensure an adequate amount of sleep and a healthy diet
- h. Be considerate to our school neighbours, particularly when parking.
- i. Support my child with their homework

4. The Child:

Parent's Signature:

- a. I will follow the school rules
- b. I will try to follow the example of Jesus at all times
- c. I will be a good listener
- d. I will tell an adult if I think someone is being unkind
or if I don't like how someone is behaving to me
- e. I will think about our neighbours and not leave any litter around



- We respect others' rights
- We accept our responsibilities
- We are kind and helpful
- We are gentle
- We work hard
- We look after property
- We listen to people
- We are honest

Child's Signature:

5. The Havant Pastoral Area will:



- a. Support the school with regular, termly meetings between the priests and the staff
- b. Promote attendance at the school through displaying information about the school, advertising open mornings, etc.
- c. Involve the school whenever possible in parish events
- d. Enable the school to attend one Sunday Mass or celebration per year at each of our three parishes
- e. Share the responsibility with parents and the staff of developing the faith of the children

Havant Pastoral area including worshipping communities of St. Michael and All Angels', Leigh Park, St. Joseph's, Havant, Ss. Thomas', Emsworth and St. Patrick's, Hayling Island

The Sculptors

I dreamt I stood in a studio, and watched two sculptors there.
The clay they used was a young child's mind
and they fashioned it with care.
One was a teacher;
The tools he used were books, music and art.
One a parent;
With a guiding hand, and a gentle loving heart.
Day after day the teacher toiled with a touch that was loving and sure;
While the parent laboured by his side; And polished and smoothed it
o'er.
And when at last the task was done,
they were proud of what they had wrought.
For the things they had moulded into the child could never be sold or
bought.
And each agreed he would have failed, if he had worked alone.
For behind the parent stood the school,
And behind the teacher; The home.