School Attendance Update

September 2024

Important - please read!

26th September 2024

Dear Parent/Carer,

This is an important update about school attendance for the 2024/25 academic year.

St Thomas More Catholic Primary School continues to work in partnership with parents and the Local Authority to improve school attendance.

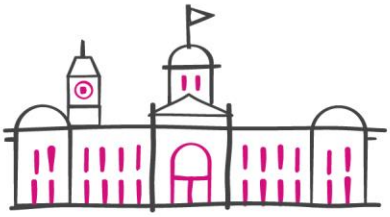
A big thank you to the majority of parents who make sure their children attend school regularly, particularly during the current cost of living crisis impacting families.

Your efforts, working in partnership with the school, will ensure that your child will have the best chance to achieve their academic potential and have real opportunity in further education and the world of work. It will also enable your child to:

- access the lessons needed to achieve their expected grades
- maintain friendships and develop new ones
- have access to social and sporting events offered by the school
- explore potential careers
- develop work habits such as good punctuality which are essential to thrive in the world of employment

How does your child compare?

Attendance during one school year	equals this number of days absent	which is approximately this many weeks absent	which means this number of lessons missed
95%	9 days	2 weeks	50 lessons
90%	19 days	4 weeks	100 lessons
85%	29 days	6 weeks	150 lessons



You may be aware of the changes to the law related to school attendance, in particular the new national penalty notice framework which came into force on the 19th August 2024. Penalty notice amounts have increased and there is now an escalation process for repeated offences.

The Government has brought in the changes due to concerns about the decline in attendance linking to a deteriorating attainment and progress levels for children over the last few years. There is more information for parents here:
National changes to education penalty notices - September 2024 | School attendance, advice for parents | Birmingham City Council

If you are worried about your child/children's attendance the first port of call is to discuss your concerns with the school directly. The school has specialist staff who may be able to help, and all schools work closely with health and council teams who may also be able to help if needed. If you have concerns about mental health; domestic abuse; parenting; bereavement; finance; problems with drugs and alcohol; you can find help and support from the 'From Birmingham with Love' webpage:
From Birmingham with Love

It may be tempting to book a family holiday in term time to save on costs during the cost of living crisis. ***However, family holidays in term time are not allowed in law and are very unlikely to be authorised.*** *Taking children on leave without applying for authorisation may mean the school has to report your child as 'missing' to the local authority and holidays cannot be authorised retrospectively in law. Adding even more absence to the time children have already missed only means that the children miss even more lessons that will not be repeated.*

Family emergencies also need careful consideration. It is not always appropriate or in the best interests of the child to miss school for emergencies which are being dealt with by adult family members. Notifying the school of leave due to a family emergency does not mean it will be authorised.

Please note that where parents fail to ensure their child attends school regularly, legal action, including penalty notices, may be considered. New regulations also mean that children on extended period of leave may lose their school place where there is no evidence of a timely return to school or the date provided is too far away.

We hope this information is helpful to you and we wish you and your child/children all the best for the new academic year.

Kind regards,

Education Legal Intervention Team
Birmingham City Council

Mr McLoughlin
Principal