Dear Parents/Carers,

**School Attendance**

I would like to welcome all our pupils back after the October half term and thank you for your continued support in helping your child to access and engage with their learning by attending their school as regularly as possible.

I am writing to you to provide a clear outline about absence from school and the procedures your child’s school will follow to support excellent attendance for all pupils.

All the schools within the St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust aim to provide an environment which enables, supports, and encourages all their pupils to learn and reach their full potential. Attending school on a regular basis maximises a pupil’s learning opportunity. We ask that as parents/carers, you continue to support us in promoting a good attitude towards attendance in school and that you ensure your children attend at every opportunity and on time. Evidence shows that pupils who attend school regularly make better progress both academically and socially. Good attendance is a learned behaviour and with your support, we can strive to develop a good pattern of attendance from the onset, which in turn will have a positive impact on their future.

In the ‘Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance’ September 2023, it places emphasis on the responsibilities of parents, schools, trust boards, governing bodies, and local authorities to work together to support students’ education and wellbeing. My aim as the Trust Lead Attendance Officer is to support your schools and work closely with you and your child to identify what support we can offer to help your child attend school every day without any worries and concerns. I and the staff in your schools will monitor all pupils’ attendance on a regular basis. All schools will follow their absence and safeguarding procedures daily and where the school has received no reason for absence, they will contact you to establish the reason why. This will involve telephone calls, text messages, emails, and sometimes home visits. This occurs daily even where your child has been absent due to illness on the previous day. As part of their safeguarding duties, they cannot presume that your child is still absent due to illness and would not wish to put your child at risk by failing to contact you. It is imperative therefore that school has all the up-to-date contact details for your child. However, as part of your responsibility as a parent/carer, I ask that you make it your priority to contact school as early as possible on the first day your child is absent and subsequent days thereafter.

As part of our responsibility, we have a duty to challenge poor school attendance for all pupils. When attendance levels start to decline, your school will contact you via letter to highlight their concerns as early as possible and invite you into school for a meeting. This will be part of a graduated approach to try and support you and your child to improve their attendance. If there is no improvement made and schools identify an emerging pattern of non-attendance, they can request a Penalty Notice as an early intervention. A Penalty Notice may be issued when a pupil has 10 or more sessions of unauthorised absence in each period.

Where the unauthorised absence is generated by an unauthorised holiday/leave of absence in term-time, the Penalty Notice is issued without warning from the Local Authority. In other cases of unauthorised absence, a formal warning is issued by the Local Authority advising that any further unauthorised absence, within a specific period of 15 school days, will lead to the issuing of a Penalty Notice. Hopefully, with early intervention and engagement from you and your child, a Penalty Notice may not be required.

**What we are aiming for at St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust.**

Every child to be in school every day and on time.

Average attendance is around 95% for the year, with good attendance above 96%. The percentage attendance may seem high at 90% (we would celebrate this in an exam), but this is 19 days off school, nearly 4 weeks across a full year, and 95 hours of lost learning. This is why attendance impacts on pupil progress and why it is vital you support your child and their school in promoting good attendance.

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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Threshold attendance** | **Actual attendance** | **Days absent** | **Learning hours lost** |
| **Outstanding** | 100% | 190 days | 0 | 0 |
| 99% | 188 days | 2 | 10 |
| **Good** | 98% | 186 days | 4 | 20 |
| 97% | 184 days | 6 | 30 |
| 96% | 182.5 days | 7.5 | 37.5 |
| **Cause for concern** | 95% | 180.5 days | 9.5 | 47.5 |
| 94% | 179 days | 11 | 55 |
| 93% | 177 days | 13 | 65 |
| 92% | 175 days | 15 | 75 |
| 91% | 173 days | 17 | 85 |
| **Serious Concern** | 90% | 171 days | 19 | 95 |
| 89% | 169 days | 21 | 105 |
| 88% | 167 days | 23 | 115 |
| 87% | 165 days | 25 | 125 |
| 86% | 163 days | 27 | 135 |
| **Critical** | 85% | 161.5 days | 28.5 | 142.5 |
| 84% | 159.5 days | 30.5 | 152.5 |
| 83% | 158 days | 32 | 160 |
| 82% | 156 days | 34 | 170 |
| 81% | 154 days | 36 | 180 |
| 80% | 152 days | 38 | 190 |

**What is considered as poor attendance?**

Anything below 94% is weak, under 90% is poor and if attendance dips below 85%, we will have serious concerns. Below 90% is regarded as persistent absence. Our aim is for every pupil to achieve attendance levels of at least 96%.

**Persistent Absence**

A pupil is a ‘Persistent Absentee’ if they miss 10% or more of school.

Pupils and parents/carers should take Persistent Absence seriously. Some of the work children miss when they are absent from school is never made up, leaving these pupils at a considerable disadvantage. For your child to reach his/her full potential, they must attend school on a regular basis. **There is an expectation for all schools to address the problem of persistent absenteeism by the Government.**

**Punctuality**

There is an expectation for all pupils to arrive on time at school. Registration is an important part of the school day. Registers close 30 minutes after the start of registration, andany pupil arriving to school later than the close of registration will be marked as ‘U’ (late after register has closed). This will affect your child’s percentage attendance, counting as an unauthorised absence for the morning session.

I hope that this letter will help you to have a clear understanding about the Trust and your child’s school attendance expectations. Thank you for taking the time to read this letter and I would be very pleased to answer any questions you may have about maintaining, supporting, and improving your child’s attendance record. If you are experiencing any difficulties regarding your child’s education, I would welcome the opportunity to advise and support you.

Yours Sincerely,

Mrs J Davies

St Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Academy Trust

Lead Attendance Officer