

St. Thomas the Apostle School Attendance Policy
In Accordance with New York State Commission's Regulations 104.1(i)
Comprehensive Attendance Policy (CAP)

Attendance Objectives

St. Thomas School prepares our students to become individuals who contribute positively to the community in their future vocations and professions. In this preparation, lateness and absenteeism are to be avoided. Each student's behavior and interaction with others defines our school environment and culture. Their attitudes and habits creates the forum to learn and are linked to consistent attendance. We strive to maintain this philosophy on a daily basis as we set forth this policy.

Strategies to Meet Objectives

Due to the positive correlation between regular school attendance, class participation and successful academic performance, St. Thomas the Apostle Elementary School has adopted this attendance policy to ensure that all students comply with the academic standards set by the New York State Department of Education for successful school completion and to ensure the maintenance of adequate records verifying attendance of all children at instruction in St. Thomas Elementary School.

Designing an optimum learning structure fosters positive attitudes for consistent attendance. Adult role models set by our staff and teachers equally provides the students with a reinforced element to this policy.

In addition the following strategies will be implemented:

- The principal will incorporate data on positive school attendance on the school's website.
- The principal will discuss attendance issues with students during the opening of school assembly/orientation and other appropriate school student meetings.
- The principal will discuss attendance issues with parents at appropriate school board and parent club meetings.

This policy also establishes practical strategies for the school to account for the whereabouts of its children throughout each school day and ensures sufficient pupil attendance at all scheduled periods of actual instruction or supervised activities.

- Attendance will be taken and recorded every morning during homeroom period, 8:00-8:10 A.M. and after lunch at either 12:25PM for grades Kindergarten through grades 3 and at 1:10PM for grades 4-8.

- In the event that your child is absent, you must call the health office at 516 481-9310 before 9:00 A.M. If you do not call, the school will make an effort to call you. Only the person and number listed on a health form distributed to the children at the beginning of the school year will be called.
- Upon the return to school, a note explaining the reason for absence is required.
- A doctor's note is required when a student is absent for 3 or more consecutive days.

Excused Absences

The State Education Law permits excused absence from school for the following reasons only:

- Sickness
- Sickness or death in the family
- Impassable roads or weather making travel unsafe
- Religious observance
- Required attendance in court
- Medical appointments

Unexcused Absences

The State Education Law does not permit absence from school for the following reasons:

- Vacation/Trip
- Take your child to work day
- Babysitting

Attendance Coding System

A=Absent

T=Tardy

ES=Sick

EM=Medical Appointment

EF=Family Sickness

ED=District Transportation

EO=Other

UT=Trip/Vacation

UO=Other (not acceptable) FT=Field Trip

Description of School Attendance Policy Attendance and Course Credit

All compulsory age students are required to attend school every day of the 177 instructional days as set forth by the State of New York Department of Education. Parents of children of compulsory age are responsible for their child's daily school attendance. St. Thomas School will respond appropriately to prevent the development of patterns of non attendance. We will comply with the local agencies involved in truancy prevention.

All children who have attained the age of 6 years by December 1st are required to fulfill this requirement. Students in grades K-6 allocation: 15 absences/trimester and 45 absences for a full year **may** result in the denial of credit for the year.

Middle school students, gr.7&8 allocation: 10 absences/trimester and 30 absences for a full-year **may** result in the denial of credit for the year.

- Excessive absences due to extraordinary circumstances will be considered on an individual basis by the attendance committee, the principal and homeroom teacher.

Incentives and Sanctions

To encourage good attendance yearly certificates for perfect attendance and perfect attendance awards at graduation will be distributed. Students in all grades will receive recognition of perfect attendance at the conclusion of each trimester; December; March and June. This recognition includes honoring at a school assembly accompanied by a " No Uniform Card."

To discourage high absenteeism notification via a phone call or email by the principal to the parents/guardians will be made when an attendance issue arises.

Parental Notification Process

Two attempts by the health office will be made to reach a busy line and calls will usually be made before 10:00 am. It should be understood that there will be occasions when parents will not be able to be reached. The school will assume no responsibility beyond making reasonable efforts to reach the parent through the single number provided to the school.

Persons in the parental relationship to an elementary student will be notified by the principal should a student accrue fourteen absences and a conference will be scheduled to discuss attendance issues.

Students and parents who have questions about attendance status should contact the principal.

Intervention Strategies

Possible Intervention Strategies to Improve Student Attendance.

- 1) student should seek medical help for stated reasons for absences
- 2) student should reduce other activities that interfere with school attendance
- 3) student should have an "attendance contract"
- 4) student should be referred to school support; school psychologist
- 5) student should have a home-based reward/consequence system
- 6) student should have a "school buddy" to foster collegiality

Absenteeism: Health Office will call parent to verify child's absence on the first day of absence

A written notification will be sent home if communication via the telephone is not successful after two attempts.

Tardiness: Students will receive a late pass from the main office when arriving to school after 8:30 A.M. Teachers will issue a demerit to students who are late 3 times/trimester
Three demerits/trimester will constitute a lunchtime detention

Early Departure: Parent or guardian must sign child out from the main office and indicate in the sign-out book the reason for early departure.

- Tardiness and Early Dismissal may not be excused except for the reasons listed under excused absences.

Review of Attendance Records

The principal will review attendance records monthly and initiate action to address attendance issues. Homeroom teachers will notify the principal if an attendance issue arises prior to the monthly review.