

St Edward's Catholic Primary School

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Headteacher: Mr S Atkinson

15th September 2026

Dear Parents and Carers,

Ref: Introducing our new Attendance Policy: Thrive Under Five

At St Edward's Catholic Primary School, we believe every child deserves the very best opportunity to succeed. One of the most important factors in achieving this is excellent school attendance.

This year, we are launching our new attendance initiative, **"Thrive Under Five"**, which reflects our commitment to ensuring every child attends school regularly so they can flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

What does "Thrive Under Five" mean?

Our aim is simple: Children should miss no more than five days of school during the academic year wherever possible.

Research consistently shows that children who attend school regularly:

- achieve better academically;
- develop stronger friendships and social skills;
- build confidence and resilience;
- experience greater wellbeing; and
- are better prepared for the next stage of their education and future life.

Every lesson matters. Learning is carefully planned so that each day builds on the one before. Even occasional absences can mean children miss important teaching, making it harder to catch up.

Our new attendance expectations

As part of our updated Attendance Policy, we will continue to work closely with families to ensure every child has the best possible attendance.

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We will be introducing a clear colour-coded attendance system to help families understand attendance levels:

-  Excellent – Above 99% (2 days' absence or fewer / 4 sessions or fewer)
-  Good – 97%–99% (Less than 5 days' absence / fewer than 10 sessions)
-  Below Expectation – 95%–96.9% (9 days' absence / 18 sessions)
-  Poor – 90%–94.9% (13–18 days' absence / 26–36 sessions)
-  Persistent Absence (Major Concern) – Below 90% (More than 19 days' absence / more than 38 sessions)

Rather than waiting until attendance becomes a significant concern, we will contact families early if attendance begins to fall so that we can work together to identify any barriers and offer appropriate support before attendance becomes a bigger issue. We will write to parents when the 5 days of absence threshold has been met, and attendance will be discussed at all parent teacher meetings. Once this threshold has been met the school may request a higher threshold of medical evidence in order to authorise absence.

When should my child stay at home?

The NHS advises that many common childhood illnesses do **not** require children to miss school. If your child is well enough to take part in normal school activities, they should attend.

Condition	Should my child attend school?	Guidance
Mild cold or cough	☒ Yes	Children with a mild cold or cough should attend school. Encourage good hand hygiene and provide tissues if needed.
Sore throat	☒ Yes	Most sore throats do not require time off school. Ensure your child drinks plenty of fluids.
Anxiety or worries about school	☒ Yes	It is common for children to feel anxious at times. Attending school usually helps, and we encourage families to speak to us so we can provide support.
Conjunctivitis	☒ Yes	Children can usually attend school. Encourage regular hand washing and avoid rubbing the eyes.
Head lice	☒ Yes	Children do not need to stay at home. Hair should be treated with an appropriate treatment.
COVID-19 (mild cold-like symptoms)	☒ Yes	Children can usually continue attending school if they feel well enough.

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Please notify the school as soon as possible if your child is absent due to illness using the school's usual reporting procedure.

Where absence has become frequent and attendance is not good or better; we may ask for medical evidence before authorising further illness absence.

Working together

We know that illness and unforeseen circumstances sometimes happen, and our approach will always be one of partnership.

Our priority is to work with families to:

- identify any challenges affecting attendance;
- provide support wherever possible;
- help children return to school quickly; and
- ensure every child feels happy, safe and successful in school.

At the same time, it is important to remember that only the school can authorise absences. Leave will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and in accordance with our new policy. A copy of the policy is available on our school website.

Every day really does count

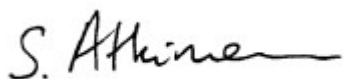
Missing just five days of school across the year means your child is still attending around **97%** of the time—a level that gives them the best chance to succeed.

By working together and aiming to **"Thrive Under Five"**, we can ensure every child benefits from the rich learning experiences, friendships and opportunities that school provides every day.

Thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we can give every child the very best chance to thrive.

If you have any questions about our new Attendance Policy or would like to discuss your child's attendance, please do not hesitate to contact the school office.

Yours sincerely,



Mr. S Atkinson

Headteacher

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