

St Thomas's Centre

Induction Handbook



2014 - 2015

St Thomas's Centre

Induction Handbook – Staff, Parent, Pupil, Commissioner, Visitor

"St Thomas's Centre is a good school." Ofsted November 2013

St Thomas's Centre works with students who have experienced difficulties in the mainstream setting, due to medical, social, emotional or behavioural needs.

We believe that all our pupils are entitled to the very best education, through a developed personalised curriculum delivered by highly dedicated, experienced and qualified staff.

It is our expectation that every pupil succeeds. No exceptions. No excuses.

We are very proud of our most recent OFSTED inspection which recognised the school was good in all 4 areas of the OFSTED framework.

Inspectors reported:

"All groups of pupils in school make good progress from their individual starting points".

"Pupils told inspectors about their improved aspirations since attending St Thomas's and many pupils successfully progress on to further education or training when they leave".

"Teaching across the school promotes equal opportunities and good learning in all subjects, whether their ability or ethnicity. Teachers use the excellent learning environment well and ensure there are opportunities in all subjects for pupils to develop their key skills"

"Teachers work in highly effective partnership with the support staff to engage, enthuse and direct pupils to make correct choices".

"St Thomas's provides a safe and purposeful learning environment where positive attitudes and good behaviour are expected. Staff are highly skilled in managing behaviour. They establish positive relationships and help pupils to manage their own behavioural difficulties".

"Compared with their attendance records in previous mainstream schools, attendance at St Thomas's improves significantly".

"Leaders ensure good opportunity within the curriculum is underpinned by the principle that every pupil makes the maximum personal and academic progress. The curriculum also ensures there is a good provision for pupil's emotional development alongside good spiritual, moral, social and cultural provision"

Parents commented:

“St Thomas’s has had a massive impact and my son now enjoys coming to school”.

“Behaviour is managed exceptionally well”.

“Parents speak highly of the range of activities offered by the school in meeting the needs of their children and helping them to support their child’s learning”.

St. Thomas’s Centre will:

- Prepare pupils for reintegration into future educational establishments where appropriate.
- Prepare pupils for adult life and a place in society.
- Ensure good order within the Centre.
- Raise pupils’ self-esteem.
- Develop good relationships within the Centre.
- Encourage pupils to develop a sense of personal responsibility through self discipline and challenge.
- Encourage pupils to develop a sense of “self” and give them the courage to be themselves.
- Encourage pupils to accept and understand other people, including those in authority.

All staff working in St. Thomas’s Centre will encourage pupils to:

- Attend regularly and on time.
- Be patient, polite and considerate of others.
- Be respectful towards other people’s property.
- Be respectful to each other, the staff, Centre and its equipment.
- Remove all outdoor clothing, including headgear, gloves and scarves on entering the building.
- Wear St. Thomas’s Centre sweatshirts.
- Switch off mobile phones and other electronic devices and hand to staff at the beginning of the day for secure keeping.

Offensive weapons or materials should not be brought into the St. Thomas’s Centre.

Inappropriate sexual, racist behaviour or language is not tolerated.

Valuables are best left at home. (If anything valuable is brought into the Centre it should be handed to the classroom teacher to be deposited in the safe). School does not accept responsibility for valuables brought into school.

When taking part in visits or activities away from the Centre all pupils are expected to treat other members of the community and their property with respect and courtesy.

Pupils are to remain on St. Thomas’s site unless given permission to leave.

Rules of the Centre

There are 5 simple rules at St Thomas's

Pupils are encouraged to:

- **Arrive on time and settle down quickly.**
- **Listen to and follow instructions.**
- **Respect other people and their property.**
Including:
Avoid 'put downs' and refrain from negative comments aimed at other people.
Keep hands, feet and objects to themselves.
- **Speak to each other politely and respectfully.**
- **Make a positive contribution to lessons.**

Rewards

St. Thomas's Centre operates a positive rewards system.

- Pupils can gain a point for following each of the school rules per lesson.
- A maximum of 115 points can be received in a week.
- If pupils receive 100 points a praise postcard will be sent home.
- If pupils receive 115 points in a week, they will receive a provision leader certificate and a call home.
- If a pupil receives 200 points in a half term, they will achieve a £5 gift voucher.
- There will be a Headteachers certificate for Bronze 400 points, Silver 500 points and Gold 600 points each half term.
- Pupils who receive 600 points in a half term will receive a further Headteachers award.
- Once pupils have a total of 200 points they can redeem them for a £5.00 voucher from a variety of retail outlets.
- Pupils cannot lose what they have banked.
- Each student will have a reward chart displayed in their form room or kept in a provision file.
- A copy of this will be available if requested.

Sanctions

- Verbal warning
- Loss of break time
- Loss of enrichment activities
- Parental/Carers contacted
- After school detention
- Meetings with parents and others involved in care of pupil
- Change of teaching group
- Taught in isolation from other pupils

- Personalised curriculum which could include educated off site
- Fixed period exclusions

Restorative approaches will be encouraged following any conflict.

Exclusion Procedures

- St. Thomas's Centre does NOT permanently exclude its pupils.
- St. Thomas's Centre will use short fixed period exclusions in order to review and adapt a pupil's provision, and parents will be promptly informed of the issues arising from the exclusion
- Fixed period / duration are agreed with the Headteacher: only Head/SLT can authorise exclusions.
- Following exclusion, parents will be contacted and invited to a planning / return meeting. Additional professionals involved with the pupil may be invited if appropriate.
- Following the meeting, provision is adapted / strategies agreed and the pupil returns.

Positive Handling

The positive handling policy has been prepared for the support of all teaching and support staff employed at the St. Thomas's Centre.

Purpose of Policy

Good personal and professional relationships between staff and pupils are essential to ensure good order in our Centre. It is recognised that the majority of pupils in our Centre respond positively to the discipline and control practised by staff. This ensures the well-being and safety of all pupils and staff in the Centre. It is acknowledged that in exceptional circumstances, staff may need to take action in situations where the use of Positive Handling may be required.

Every effort will be made to ensure that all staff in our Centre:

- Clearly understand this policy and their responsibilities in the context of their duty of care in taking appropriate measures where Positive Handling is necessary.
- Are provided with appropriate training to deal with these difficult situations.

A full copy of the positive handling policy can be requested from St Thomas's Headteacher.

School day and attendance.

All students are expected on school site for a 9am start to formal lessons.

The school day finishes at 2:30pm except Friday at 12 noon.

Students will receive a breakfast from 8:50am.

Any students arriving after 9am will be marked as late.

St Thomas's promotes full school attendance a copy of the full policy is available on request from the school office.

Aims of the attendance policy are:

1. To ensure individual plans are in place to raise attendance from baseline.
2. To reduce the number of students who persistently do not attend and ensure strategies have been reviewed and LA informed.
3. To consistently ensure safeguarding procedures are in place for those students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
4. To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with St Thomas's including students, parents, teachers and The Management Committee.
5. To ensure there is a whole school, graduated response to improving punctuality and attendance.
6. To define roles and responsibilities and promote consistency in carrying out designated tasks.
7. To use data effectively in order to identify groups of students and individuals whose absence causes concern and implement appropriate interventions.
8. To track students' attendance in order to monitor and evaluate progress.
9. To provide support, advice and guidance to parents and students.
10. To use appropriate assessments and develop strong multi-agency links in order to address higher levels of need.
11. To ensure a shared approach to resource provision and best practice across St Thomas's

Legal Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Under Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act, a parent is responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age receives an efficient full time education that is suitable to the child's age, aptitude and ability and any special educational needs a child might have.

Parental Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Parents must

- Ensure St Thomas's has up to date contact details. This also helps the school to ensure safeguarding. (Where parents/carers do not keep the school up to date with this information, we may need to refer to Children's Services).
- Contact St Thomas's on first day of absence to provide a reason for non-attendance prior to 9.30am.
- Provide medical evidence for absences due to medical appointment or illness where appropriate or at the request of St Thomas's
- Update the school daily for non-attendance if the absence is expected to continue

- Not book holidays within term time. All holidays must take place within the allocated scheduled school holiday periods. (See appendix 1)
- To request any compassionate leave of absence in writing to the Headteacher.
- Work with the school and any other agencies to resolve any difficulties which may affect regular school attendance

St Thomas's Responsibilities Relating to School Attendance

Each provision leader is the attendance lead for the allocated provision. As the attendance lead of the provision he / she will ensure:

- Registers are accurately marked and maintained in accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- A whole provision approach to reinforce good attendance, teaching and learning to encourage all students to attend and achieve
- Individuals or group attendance targets are set and understood by staff, parents and students

Registration

Parents should ensure students arrive promptly to school for breakfast club at 8:50am. Formal registration and lessons begin at 9:00am. This means that any student who arrives after 9:00am will be recorded as being late. This will lead to further sanctions. Where lates are regular, parents/carers will be invited into the school to meet with the provision leader to discuss this as a concern and will offer support, where barriers to positive punctuality have been identified. A support plan will be put into place by the Provision Leader which will be monitored and reviewed weekly.

A student arriving after 10:00am, will be marked as late after the register closes. This is regarded as an unauthorised absence for the session and will be recorded on the register as a 'U' code. Students who regularly receive 'U' codes are stringently monitored. Where lateness is persistent, the school will issue a warning to parents/carers. If lateness continues following this warning, the school may issue a Fixed Penalty Notice, which can incur a fine of £120 per parent, per child. Where a student has additional unauthorised absences, the Local Authority may prosecute parents through the courts.

A student arriving in school after 9:30am should report to the main reception, giving a reason. The admin team will record as late on SIMs and include the reason.

Leave of Absence in Term Time

St Thomas's is committed to maximising the potential of every child and good attendance and punctuality are essential to this aim. We feel this will be achieved, with the support of parents/carers by ensuring that holidays are not taken in school time. Absence during term time for any reasons interrupts the continuity of teaching and learning and disrupts the educational progress of students.

The Law

From 1st September 2013, the Department for Education has changed the way schools look at applications for holidays in term time. ALL schools and academies both at secondary and primary level have been directed to not authorise any holidays in term time. Any reference to holidays has

now been removed from documents. (The Education, Student Registration, England, Amendment, Regulations 2013).

- (i) St Thomas's will **not** grant permission for holidays or extended leave to be taken in term time.
- (ii) St Thomas's will only consider leave of absence for compassionate leave, in exceptional circumstances, for one period of absence lasting up to **five days** and where the student has achieved individual attendance targets or above. This can be applied for in writing to The Headteacher. A meeting will be arranged to consider the application further. Any travel arrangements should not be made prior to leave being authorised. The School will not be held responsible for any costs incurred where travel arrangements have been if the School does not authorise the absence.

Special and Exceptional Circumstances

The Headteacher or person designated by the Headteacher may consider that the following circumstances are "special" or "exceptional". (This is not an extensive list)

- Unavoidable circumstances e.g. the parent/carer has inflexible leave allocation and this has been confirmed by the employer.
- A family member is seriously ill.
- There has been a death or significant trauma in the family.

PLEASE NOTE IF AUTHORISED, A MAXIMUM OF FIVE SCHOOL DAYS MAY BE GRANTED

However

- Availability of "cheap" holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- The prospect of better weather
- Weddings
- Birthdays

would not be considered as exceptional circumstances and therefore compassionate leave of absence will NOT be granted.

ST THOMAS'S ADVISES YOU NOT TO BOOK FLIGHTS OR TRAVEL ARRANGEMENTS UNTIL THE APPLICATION FOR EXCEPTIONAL LEAVE HAS BEEN GRANTED

Holiday pattern 2014 – 15

St Thomas's Centre

Autumn term 2014

Re-open on:	Tuesday 2 September 2014
Mid-term Closure:	Monday 27 October-Friday 31 October 2014 (inc)
Closure after school on	Thursday 18 December 2014
Number of openings	73

Spring term 2015

Re-open on	Monday 5 January 2015
Mid-term closure:	Monday 16 February-Friday 20 February 2015 (inc)
Closure after school on	Friday 27 March 2015
Number of openings	55

Summer term 2015

Re-open on	Monday 13 April 2015
May Day Closure	Monday 4 May 2015
Mid Term Closure	Monday 25 May -Friday 29 May 2015 (incl)
Closure after school	Wednesday 22 July 2015
Number of openings:	67
Total number of openings:	195

In Set Days – PUPILS DO NOT ATTEND SCHOOL ON THESE DAYS

Tuesday 2nd September 2014
Monday 3rd November 2014
Monday 5th January 2015
Monday 13th April 2015
Wednesday 22nd July 2015