

# Section 3.1 Attendance and Punctuality Policy

## Rationale

As a fully inclusive and successful Church of England school for girls, we believe that if our students are to benefit from their education and achieve their potential, good attendance and punctuality are crucial. Establishing high expectations in both these areas embeds good habits our students will need to thrive in the world of work. As a school we are therefore committed to doing all that we can to encourage, enforce and reward maximum attendance and excellent punctuality.

## Purpose

As a school we aim to ensure that all pupils are in school with a minimum of 96% attendance.

The purpose of our policy is to enable the school to deliver its key aims which are:

- to promote excellent rates of attendance and reduce absence - including persistent absence;
- to ensure every student has access to full-time education to which they are entitled in line with the Education Act 1996;
- to act early to address patterns of absence;
- to ensure that all students are punctual to school and to their lessons

Both staff and parents/carers play a vital role in encouraging good attendance and punctuality, by rewarding good attendance and by following up on lateness and absences.

## Attendance Procedures

Any child who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period must have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised, unexplained or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the head teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

School Registers are recorded electronically on our SIMS system; in certain cases (e.g. a registration is covered by another member of staff; in the event of an evacuation), the register will be taken on a paper copy. This will subsequently be scanned by the Attendance Officer. A register is a legal document and all absences therefore need to be authorised in line with the Department for Education School attendance guidelines. Parents and carers are required to provide evidence of absences in order for school to authorise any absence.

## **The Attendance Team**

It is the responsibility of the Attendance Officer to be aware of, and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. (S)he will keep the Directors of Learning (DoLs) and Heads of Year (HoY) informed and bring any concerns to their attention. Sixth Form registers are monitored by the Sixth Form Registrar.

We recognise that parents and carers have a vital role to play in establishing regular and punctual attendance and therefore strive to work in partnership with parents and carers in promoting and encouraging 100% the fullest possible attendance and punctuality for all our students.

Our partnership work means that if there is a problem which affects a student's attendance or punctuality we will investigate, identify and strive in collaboration with parents or carers and students to resolve the problem/s as quickly and efficiently as possible. If concerns persist, the necessary steps are taken to escalate the intervention (see 'Attendance Procedures').

The Inclusion Officer (with responsibility for behaviour and attendance) will work closely with the pastoral team bringing to their attention any emerging attendance concerns. In addition, (s)he will also provide supportive intervention to prevent and tackle persistent absence.

In cases where a student begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem with the parent or carer. The school may refer to School Nurse, if the problem appears to be a medical one.

## **Registers**

An attendance register is taken on SIMS at the start of the first session of each school day and during afternoon registration.

The School Admin Assistant (with responsibility for attendance) will follow up any absences to:

- ascertain the reason;
- ensure that the proper safeguarding action is taken;
- identify whether the absence is approved or not;
- identify the correct code to use (SEE APPENDIX 1).

## **First Day Absence**

On the first day of absence, parents/carers are asked to phone the school stating the reason for the absence. They are asked to also provide a written note on the child's return to school explaining the reason for the absence.

## **Follow Up**

Any absence from school not previously recorded will be followed up by the Attendance Officer, who will telephone the parents or carers of any student who is absent on that day. When the student returns to school they should bring in an absence note which will be placed in the student's file.

## **Persistent Absence**

Persistent absence is defined in legislation as having an absence rate of 10% or more either authorised or unauthorised. A child who is persistently absent is at risk of failing to achieve their full potential within the school environment. As a school we always seek to put appropriate intervention in place to support students and their families when attendance becomes a cause for concern. This may include a signed agreement between the school and the parents or carers which sets out clear targets for improving attendance as well as reporting and evidencing genuine absence.

Failure to achieve an improved attendance through support provided may result in a referral to Family Early Help, whose Education Inclusion Team will work with the student and parents/carers to agree a formal plan of improvement. If, after a period of review, no significant improvement is made then statutory (legal) action will commence against the parents or carers in line with the Education Act 1996.

## **Fixed Penalty Notice for Non Attendance at School**

A Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) is a fine can be used as an alternative to prosecuting parents and carers who do not ensure that their child attends school regularly. (See APPENDIX 2)

A FPN will only be issued by the headteacher or someone authorised by them, a local authority officer or the police. The school will liaise with the local authority before issuing a FPN. Copies of all FPNs issued by the school will be sent to the local authority.

FPNs are generally issued where there have been at least 10 sessions of unauthorised absence from school within a recorded 10 school week period. However, there are some occasions where they are issued outside of these criteria. Should the period of absence for a holiday in term time be 15 school days or more, a FPN may not be deemed suitable. Instead the matter may be brought directly before the court. Reasons for issuing can include (but not limited to):

- truancy;
- parentally-condoned absences which are unauthorised by the school - perhaps within a rolling academic year or one-off instances of irregular attendance;
- holidays taken in term-time without permission from the school;

- parents/carers allow their child to be present in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of a fixed period or permanent exclusion (parents will be notified by the school at the time of the exclusion)
- persistent late arrival at school - after the register has closed.

## **Unauthorised Leave of Absence and Holidays**

If the school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday, but the parents/carers still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The school will not give retrospective approval. If the parents/carers did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

## **Leave Of Absence Authorised By the School**

A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion.

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. The headteacher (or member of staff designated by the headteacher) will consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and the relevant background to the request.

The headteacher will not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

The application must be made in advance and the headteacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts of each case which warrant the granting of authorised leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the headteacher will determine the number of days a student is permitted to be away from school.

## **Rewards for Students**

Attendance and punctuality are recorded on a registration certificate which is sent home with the Records of Progress sheets to parents/carers.

At the end of every term, good attendance and punctuality are rewarded in assembly with certificates and students are entered into a prize draw.

## **Permission to Leave During the School Day**

If students need to go out of school during the school day, they are issued with a 'permission slip'. In the case of medical or dental appointments, students should show the appointment card to the office in advance so that their slip can be prepared beforehand. Where possible, parents/carers are encouraged to make appointments outside of school hours. On their return to school, students must report to the office so that their return time can be recorded. Duplicates of all permission slips are kept for filing.

No students are allowed out at lunch time except for Sixth Formers.

## **Home Educated Children**

On receipt of written notification to home educate, the school will inform the relevant local authority who will make contact with the parents or carers to offer support and to formalise the arrangements in line with their procedures.

## **Punctuality Procedures**

Students who are consistently late are disrupting not only their own education, but also that of others. If students miss assemblies and the information given out in the mornings, then they are losing out as members of the whole school community and missing an opportunity to benefit from the school's ethos.

Where persistent lateness gives cause for concern, a meeting with the relevant staff will be arranged to discuss what support can be offered.

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.45 a.m. The afternoon registration is at 1.45pm. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked late, unless the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment; in this instance the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

## **Late Desk**

We run a late desk from 8.50am in the main school entrance, with the Admin Assistant (with responsibility for attendance) plus two other members of staff. All students who arrive late are recorded and then given a 15 minute detention after school that same day. This is increased by another 15 minutes if a student does not have their planner with them. If a student is late more than once in a week, subsequent detentions within that week automatically increase to 30 minutes. Late desk detentions are monitored so that appropriate interventions are put in place when there is a persistent failure to be punctual.

Should a student fail to attend a late detention, an Inclusion Officer will ensure that the student is given a 30-minute detention the following evening. Lateness is recorded on the registration certificate which is sent home with Records of Progress.

Continual lateness to school will be monitored by a Pastoral Inclusion Officer and overseen by the appropriate Director of Learning. Any student who misses registration for any reason MUST report her arrival to the Office before going to her lesson. Subject teachers should make a point of asking anyone who arrives late whether this has been done.

## **Punctuality to Lessons**

At St Saviour's it is a cardinal principle that students and staff should ensure that punctuality to lessons and registrations is excellent.

Staff must ensure that they arrive to lessons on time to meet and greet their students and are expected to issue sanctions to any student who arrives late to the lesson.

Persistent poor punctuality should be dealt with by the Head of Department (HOD) and then the DoL. If the poor punctuality is across subject areas the DoL may place the student on Punctuality Report.

## **Links with Other Policies**

This policy has been developed and evaluated with a view to helping our students achieve more and realise their potential. It links with the following policies with which it should be read in conjunction:

- Behaviour Policy
- Teaching and Learning Policy

## **Evaluation and Monitoring**

This policy has been written based on the most recent DfE guidance available (July 2019).

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/818204/School\\_attendance\\_July\\_2019.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/818204/School_attendance_July_2019.pdf)

The Attendance policy will be updated as new guidance is produced or in response to research, review or other events.

# APPENDIX 1

## Absence and Attendance Codes

The use of the national absence and attendance codes is not a legal requirement. The codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level and the reasons for absence. The codes are:

### Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

#### **Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm**

Present in school during registration.

#### **Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed**

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

### Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes are as follows:

#### **Code B: Off-site educational activity**

Pupils who are present at a supervised educational activity which is off-site and approved by the school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

#### Consortia Schools

Pupils attending consortia schools as part of their course only need to be placed on the registers of their 'main' school rather than on all of the schools they attend. They should be treated as guest pupils at the other consortia schools. The consortia schools must, however, ensure that they have suitable systems in place for monitoring and reporting the attendance and absence of the pupils involved; these must be shared with the 'main' school.

#### **Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment**

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census.

The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

The main examples of dual registration apply to pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller children, but only when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question. Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school.

**Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment**

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

**Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity**

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

**Code V: Educational visit or trip**

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

**Code W: Work experience**

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

**Authorised Absence from School**

'Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes are as follows:

**Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school**

Only exceptional circumstances warrant leave of absence. Schools should consider each request individually taking into account the circumstances, such as: the nature of the event for which leave is sought; the frequency of the request; whether the parents gave advance notice; and the pupil's attainment, attendance and ability to catch up on missed schooling.

**Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made**

If no alternative provision is made for pupils to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

**Code F: Extended family holiday authorised by the school**

Headteachers may, in exceptional circumstances, agree more than 10 school days leave of absence in a school year. The application must be made in advance and the headteacher must be satisfied that the circumstances warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

**Code H: Family holiday authorised by the school**

Currently headteachers may, in special circumstances, grant leave of absence of up to ten days for the purpose of family holidays during term time. The application must be made in advance and the

headteacher must be satisfied that there are special circumstances which warrant the leave. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the headteacher's discretion and is not a parental right.

### **Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)**

Schools should advise parents to notify the school as soon as possible when a child is ill. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if they are not satisfied of the seriousness of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical certificates unnecessarily (particularly retrospective certificates), especially if the illness was not treated by a doctor at the time. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards etc. , rather than doctors' notes.

### **Code M: Medical or dental appointments**

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

### **Code R: Religious observance**

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

### **Code S: Study leave**

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only for year 11 pupils during mock and public examinations.

### **Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence**

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children, it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school.

Children from these groups, whose families do not travel, are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at school.

### **Unauthorised Absence from School**

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

### **Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period**

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not

allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

**Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided**

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended.

**Code O: Absent from school without authorisation**

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

**Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed**

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

**Administrative Codes**

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

**Code X: Not required to be in school**

This code is used to record sessions during which non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

**Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances**

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause;
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where the pupil's home is not within walking distance;
- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel which has prevented the pupil from attending school.

This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

**Code Z: Pupil not on admission register**

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. Schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school.

**Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure**

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures which are known or planned in advance, such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to 5 non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

## **APPENDIX 2**

A FPN is £60 if paid within 28 days of receipt of the notice; this rises to £120 if paid after 28 days but within 42 days of receipt.

If the FPN is not paid in full by the end of 48 days the next step will be:

- to prosecute the parents or carers in the usual way;
- to withdraw the FPN (in limited circumstances as set out in the Code of Conduct)