

Attendance Policy

Philosophy

Each pupil in our care has God given talents and by having high attendance levels, pupils are able to utilise their talents to the fullest

“No one lights a lamp and covers it with a bowl or puts it under a bed instead, he puts it on the lamp stand so that people will see the light as they come in”

Luke 8:16

St Paul's is a successful school and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to do the best that is possible. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that they attend regularly unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement as well as social development. Children with poor attendance more likely not to be in education, employment or training when they leave school.

Statutory Duty of School

The Education Act of 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance or otherwise. In terms of achieving regular attendance, St Paul's would expect every pupil to work towards attaining the average school attendance figure or above. Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is a parent's or guardians legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason creates an offence in law. While the school seeks to work proactively with parents and guardians to avoid legal consequences; an unacceptable level of absence may result in prosecution.

Aims:

The school will ensure that:

- high levels of attendance and punctuality are expected and encouraged;
- pupils are registered accurately twice daily using SIMS (School Information and Management System) registration;
- parents, carers or guardians are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised. This should be on the first day of absence where possible;
- pupil attendance and punctuality is monitored regularly;
- pupils are supported where low attendance is an issue;
- school attendance statistics are reported to governors and to the DfE;
- it works in partnership with the Senior Attendance Officer – (Legal Interventions) (formerly Educational Welfare Service);

- parents, carers or guardians whose first language is not English or who have literacy problems will be offered appropriate support in communicating effectively.

Pupils are expected to:

- attend school and all their lessons;
- be punctual to school and lessons and be fully prepared for the school day;
- inform their Form Tutor, Chaplaincy Assistant or Year Leader if there is a problem that may lead to absences;
- ensure that messages between parent and school via their planner are communicated.

Parents, Carers or Guardians are expected to:

- encourage outstanding attendance;
- inform the school on each day of non-attendance giving the reason and, if possible, the likely duration of the absence. This should then be followed by written confirmation by letter or via the student planner on the pupil's return;
- notify school immediately if there is a problem that may lead to the absence of their child;
- ensure that their child is fully prepared for the school day;
- discuss any planned absence with the school in advance.
- avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day
- notify the school either in person or by telephoning on each day of absence,

Registration

Registration will take place twice daily. Pupils will register at 8.50am with their form tutor. This is also an opportunity for pupils to be given relevant information regarding the school day. In the afternoon registration will take place in the last lesson on the pupil timetable.

If a pupil arrives late for registration in the morning after 8.55am, this will be marked as late by the tutor on SIMS. Where a pupil arrives after registration has closed, 9.05am on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and 9.15am on Friday, they should sign in at pupil reception where they will be marked late for the morning session. Where a pupil arrives after 9.30am, they will be registered as being absent for that morning session and parents will be required to provide a reason in order for the school to consider authorising the absence.

Where a pupil is regularly late to school or to their lessons, they can expect sanctions to be put in place. Where necessary parents, carers or guardians will be notified and may

be invited in to discuss possible strategies to address the situation. If punctuality to school continues to be an issue, a referral may be made to the Senior Attendance Officer – (Legal Interventions) (formerly Educational Welfare Service).

Absence

The school makes the decision whether to record absence as authorised or unauthorised. A communication from a parent, carer or guardian informing the school of absence does not in itself authorise an absence.

Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- genuine illness;
- unavoidable medical/dental appointment;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances;
- fixed term exclusion;
- permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Where the reason given for absence is illness for more than three days then the school nurse will instigate contact with parents, carers or guardians to enquire what guidance and support the school might be able to offer. Parents, carers or guardians may be asked to provide either a doctor's note or a stamp from the surgery to show an appointment has been attended if their child is regularly absent from school due to medical reasons.

Absence **will not** be authorised for:

- holidays in term time;
- birthday celebrations;
- house minding or moving house;
- caring for siblings or relatives;
- shopping trips;
- medical appointments that cannot be verified;
- reason to believe that the note is not genuine or not valid;
- day trips;

- family problems. (more information would be required)

Requests for authorisation of absence forms must be completed and received by the school at least four weeks in advance. The school **never** authorises holidays in term time.

Prosecution for non-attendance or persistent absence.

Where a pupil is persistently late or absent and efforts to improve the situation have been unsuccessful, parents, carers or guardians may face legal intervention. Persistent

absence is monitored on a half termly basis. When a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, parents, carers or guardians will be notified regardless of the reasons provided for absence and whether these absences have been authorised or not. Where necessary, a meeting with parents will be arranged to discuss the issues surrounding absence. If there is no significant improvement following this intervention, this ultimately could result in a pre-court interview following referral to Legal Interventions (previously known as The Educational Welfare Service). Fixed penalty notices and fast track prosecutions may be imposed where school considers it appropriate to do so.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

St Paul's School offers an environment in which all pupils can feel valued and are made welcome. A broad, balanced and flexible curriculum is offered to all pupils to provide opportunities for them to be successful.

Every effort is made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to pupils' needs, in order for pupils to build self-confidence and achieve good attendance.

Attendance data is monitored regularly and analysed in order to help those pupils who need support. The Chaplaincy Assistant attached to each year group will ensure early intervention as well as provide sustained support to families who require help in the longer term. Pupils who are absent through sickness for any extended period of time will where appropriate, have individually tailored re-integration programmes prepared for them with the school nurse. This may incorporate the use of the learning support areas within the SEN and/or EAL departments. Chaplaincy Assistants will also regularly liaise with other services and agencies to support and assist pupils who are experiencing attendance difficulties. Information will be shared with staff regarding long-term absentees and when necessary they may be asked to provide specific plans to support pupils returning to school.

Pupils are made aware that outstanding attendance is key not only to academic success but also vital in developing good working habits and social skills. Pupils know that absence will be followed up and that poor attendance and punctuality is not acceptable. Pupil attendance is communicated to parents, carers or guardians via the termly progress check and is discussed on mentoring days where relevant.

Staff should look to set an outstanding example to pupils by modelling high expectations and therefore be in the classroom waiting for the pupils to arrive. This also allows for an orderly start to a lesson and promotes positive behaviour management.

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As part of the school's transition process visits are made to primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible transfer to secondary education. Other opportunities are available to pupils from feeder schools to participate in activities at St Paul's (Induction days, Sports day, specialist subject days, etc) so that they are comfortable with their new school environment when they come on roll in year 7. Parents, carers or guardians are reminded regularly via newsletters, pupil mentoring days, parents' information evenings, etc of the importance of regular attendance.

The Headteacher will make an annual report to the school's Governing Board on attendance matters and the Deputy Headteacher, on a termly basis, through the Admissions and Safeguarding Sub Committee.

Register Policy

The school maintains an accurate register of all pupils on roll at St Paul's, updating regularly to account for mid-term entries and leavers. Staff are aware that the SIMS registers are legal documents and are given clear guidelines regarding the registration of pupils. Training is provided through pastoral teams on how to take a register and there is an attached administration person for each year group to provide further support.

Administration staff ensure that all data and contact information is kept fully up to date throughout the academic year.

Registration is a formal legal procedure which should be done carefully by staff and in an atmosphere which signals its importance.

Pupils are also registered through SIMS in each of their lessons and it is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure this happens. Registers are checked on a daily basis and where missing marks are noted staff are required to bring these up to date. In order to make these checks as accurate and effective as is possible, staff are asked to complete the register of period one within the first ten minutes of the start of that lesson. The registers taken by the form tutors and the teachers of lessons timetabled for the first period of the day will inform decisions regarding first day absence calls.

Data on pupil attendance is provided in line with legal requirements at the request of the DfE.

Attendance Procedures

Where possible a first day call will be made for all year groups if the school has not been notified regarding a pupil's absence. Letters requesting reasons for absence will be issued if the school does not receive written confirmation of absence regardless as to whether a parent, carer or guardian has received a first day absence call. Where pupils are involved in activities which take place during registration they should register with the member of staff who has responsibility for the activity they are attending. If a pupil is not physically present in front of a tutor the pupil should be marked absent.

Pupils who arrive after 8.55am should be marked as late by the form tutor. Those pupils

arriving after 9.05am on Monday to Thursday or 9.15am on Friday should sign in at the General Office where they will be recorded as being late. Any pupil arriving more than 30 minutes after the start of the school day will be marked as a U and parents will be required to provide a reason for this period of absence.

Where pupils may be involved in a school trip, their registration mark will be entered centrally by the Faculty Administration Assistant once their attendance has been confirmed.

School Organisation:

In order for the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to pupils the importance and value of education.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Head Teacher:

- oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy;
- regularly report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents;
- set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.

Designated Attendance Officer: (Pastoral Manager/ Deputy Headteacher)

- oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data;
- oversee the work of administrative staff;
- manage the attendance profile for the whole school on a half term basis;
- report to the Head Teacher/ Leadership Group on attendance issues;
- work in partnership with the Senior Attendance Officer – (Legal Interventions) (formerly Educational Welfare Service);
- report progress on attendance to governors, pupils and parents.

Chaplaincy / Pastoral Assistants in liaison with Year Leaders – see school website for staff responsible for each year group.

- challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence;
- follow-up immediately any unexplained absence by contacting parents – First day absence call;

- liaise regularly with the Designated Attendance Officer;
- work to achieve challenging targets set by Head teacher and reduce the levels of absence;
- create partnership with parents and guardians of pupils with poor attendance below 90%;
- work with their faculty administrator to ensure effective communication;
- work in liaison with tutors and class teachers;
- welcome back absentees, reintegrating back socially and academically.

Class Teacher

- complete registers accurately and on time;
- notify their faculty administration where there is a problem in taking a register;
- inform Chaplaincy / Pastoral Assistant, Year Leader of attendance concerns;
- ensure letters of absence are produced on pupils return to school.
- work in liaison with Chaplaincy / Pastoral Assistant and Heads of Department to issue consequences for lateness to school and lessons.
- welcome back absentees, reintegrating back socially and academically.

Office Staff:

- produce absence letters in liaison with Pastoral/ Chaplaincy Assistants;
- produce reply letters to request for leave of absence;
- ensure messages regarding attendance and absence are passed on to the form tutor and Pastoral / Chaplaincy Assistant;
- identify and inform staff where marks are missing or registers incomplete;
- enter attendance marks centrally when necessary.

Governors:

- may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.



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- may have representation at school attendance panels, parents evenings etc.
- request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

Review: 2022/23 by Leadership Group for presentation to Governors' Curriculum and Teaching Committee