



ST PAUL'S ACADEMY

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Date of Policy: March 2020
Due for Review: March 2021

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1. AIM

At St Paul's Academy we aim to encourage every student to achieve the highest possible levels of attendance in order to take full advantage of the learning experiences which are available to them. We understand the strong connection that exists between a student's level of attendance and their educational achievement. Poor attendance affects a student's learning and poor punctuality affects the whole class learning.

Our attendance target for all students is 100% and our minimum is 97%. Students whose attendance drops below 90% will be regarded as a persistent absentee.

2. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORK

A student is required by law (under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act and Regulations of 2006 and 2010) to attend regularly at the school where they are registered. The school is required to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. It is expected that the parent/carer to inform them regarding absence. However, it is for the school to ascertain whether the explanation given is satisfactory justification for the absence.

Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and Section 105 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 empowers Local Authority officers, principals and the police to issue penalty notices in cases of unauthorised absence from school, and for parental failure to ensure that their child is not in a public place during school hours without reasonable justification during the first five days of an exclusion.

This policy should be read alongside the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy, The Home Visits policy and the Inclusion & SEND policy.

3. RIGHTS AND DUTIES

It is the duty of everyone (students, parents, governors and all staff) in the school to improve the attendance and reach the annual targets set by the Local Authority and the DfE. This is successfully brought about by a close partnership between the Local Authority, school, families and support agencies.

4. RESPONSIBILITIES

Key Personnel

- Heads of Year supported by Form Tutors
- School Attendance Officer – **Gina Gotts**
- School Attendance Advisory Officer – **Vicky Jahans**
- Designated Safeguarding Lead – **Kim Nicholas**

The Attendance team is part of the Inclusion learning zone and is overseen by the Assistant Principal for Inclusion – **Áine Allen**

Students

All students are expected to attend all of their lessons regularly and punctually. Where there are situations that require great effort in ensuring regular attendance support will be offered from Form Tutors, Heads of Year, School Leaders, Learning Mentors and the Attendance Team. Attendance figures are monitored and reported to key personnel. Good attendance is rewarded appropriately by pastoral teams across the academy. Poor attendance will be monitored closely and parents/carers will be contacted.

Parents & Carers

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly, punctually and has the necessary equipment for learning. They are expected to notify the school on the designated absence line on the morning of their child's absence. The reason for absence will be noted on the child's register. The school will contact the parent/carer on the first day of absence if no reason has been provided. Parents/carers are encouraged to make their child's dental/medical appointments out of school time, if at all possible and only expected for their child to be out of school for the minimal period of time when this is unavoidable. See Section below on reporting an absence.

Reporting an Absence (Parents / Carers)

For a planned appointment

The Parent or Carer should send in a copy of the paperwork for the appointment e.g. letter or appointment card. This should be marked for the attention of the school attendance officer Gina Gotts. The documents can also be brought to reception where a copy will be taken for school attendance records

For unexpected illness or exceptional event

1. The academy must be notified EVERY DAY the student is absent. This can be done by:
 - Phoning the school absence line 020 8311 3868 ext 131
 - Emailing the attendance officers: gina.gotts@stpauls.greenwich.sch.uk
vicky.jahans@stpauls.greenwich.sch.uk
2. For an absence of 3 or more days, the parent or carer must supply medical evidence in the form of a doctor's note / copy of the prescription or medical appointment card to show that your child has been to see a health professional.

School

Attendance is the responsibility of the whole school community but especially that of Form Tutors, Heads of Year and the Attendance Officers who closely monitor and regularly communicate with parents/carers, students and staff. Absences and poor punctuality are followed up and a precise log will be kept of all enquiries regarding moving schools. The school has a duty to support families who may be experiencing difficulty in ensuring good attendance.

5. REGISTRATION & RECORDING of ABSENCES

Registration takes place at 8.25am and 2.55pm. If a student fails to arrive before the school gate closes at 8.22am he/she should report to the Reception Office and sign in using the electronic signing in system, InVentry. The register will read 'late'. If a student is regularly late parents/carers are contacted. Arrival more than 40 minutes after the registers have closed without an acceptable reason can result in the student being marked as unauthorised. **(SEE PUNCTUALITY BELOW)**

Tutors take registers in their form rooms using SIMS and will notify the Attendance Officers or Heads of Year of any concerns. Registers are taken for every lesson including afternoon tutor registration.

Absences for half a day (one session) is coded according to category.

The Attendance Officer monitors the registers closely and follows up any incorrect procedures and inconsistencies.

Authorised & Unauthorised absences

It is essential that staff follow the same criteria when deciding whether or not to authorise an absence. The role of the Attendance Officer is key in this issue and ensures consistency of practice. The attendance team decides on how

absence is recorded following the latest guidance from the DfE. They will look at the reason provided for absence by the parent or carer, and decide whether the reason is genuine (authorised).

Examples of authorised absences

- Illness, medical and dental appointments
- Interviews with prospective colleges or 6th forms
- Dual registration
- Approved education off site activities
- Representation in sport and other areas
- Public performance
- Special situations – funerals, caring for relatives (known young carers)

Examples of unauthorised absences

- Known truancy
- Absent with no explanation from parent
- Working
- Birthdays or family celebrations
- Holidays (See below)
- Looking after siblings (this must be reported to the Principal)
- Errands for parents (e.g. dropping younger siblings to school – this must be reported to the Principal)
- Persistent absenteeism without medical evidence

Parents/Carers who persist in taking their children out of school may receive a fixed penalty notice. See below.

Holidays / Exceptional Leave

Parents/carers are required to complete a 'leave of absence' form if they wish to take their child out of school during term time. The principal will consider the request and will notify the parent in writing of the academy's decision. If the leave of absence is deemed to not be of an 'exceptional circumstance' the Principal may refuse to grant permission and will code the absence as unauthorised on the child's attendance record.

The following are considered exceptional circumstances

1. When an absence from school is recommended by a health professional as part of a parent or child's rehabilitation from a medical or emotional issue.
2. The death or terminal illness of a person close to the family.
3. To attend the wedding or funeral of a person close to the family
4. Service personnel returning from a tour of duty abroad where it is evidenced that the individual will not be in receipt of any leave in the near future that will coincide with school holidays.
5. Where there are exceptional and unforeseen circumstances that fall outside of the situations described above, the Principal may then consult with the Attendance Advisory Service (AAS), prior to any authority given to the parent or carer. The AAS will then make a recommendation to the school.

N.B. Please note that evidence will be required in each of the cases described above.

- In the case of a holiday, if the parent or carer goes ahead with a planned holiday during term time, then the period of absence (of 5 days or more) must be clearly recorded as 'G' on the official attendance register (thus ensuring that it is recorded as an unauthorised family holiday);
- Once the student has returned to school, the Attendance Team may complete a Penalty Notice referral form to the Attendance Advisory Service and attach:

- The letter sent to the parent(s)/carer(s) notifying them that the absence would not be authorised and warning them that the matter would now be passed on to the Local Authority
- A copy of the student's registration certificate which clearly shows the period of absence which has been coded 'G' (unauthorised family holiday)

Fixed Penalty Notice

- Upon receipt of the relevant documentation, the Attendance Advisory Officer will issue a Penalty Notice in respect of the unauthorised family holiday. Parents will be given 21 days to pay £60, at which point the fine will double to £120 and parents will be given a further 7 days to make the payment in full.
- Parents failing to pay £60 within 21 days/£120 within 28 days will face prosecution under section 444 of the Education Act 1996.
- Where court proceedings are instigated as a result of non-payment, the School Attendance Advisory Officer will be responsible for providing a Section 9 witness statement and the Principal of the relevant school, will be required to provide a signed statement of attendance, a proforma of which will be provided to the Principal, as individual cases enter the court process.
- If you have any queries/questions in relation to this process, please do not hesitate to contact the School Attendance Advisory Officer on: 0208 311 3868 ext 132.

Long term Absence

When a student is absent for a longer (authorised) period of time e.g. hospitalisation, the Head of Year will co-ordinate the sending of work to the student.

In the event of unauthorised long term absence, the Attendance, Pastoral and Inclusion Teams will maintain contact and work closely together with parents or carers to discuss strategies to support the student back into school. This may involve consulting with other agencies such as CAMHS or the LA.

6. COMMUNICATION WITH THE LOCAL AUTHORITY / PERSISTENT ABSENTEEISM

Students whose attendance falls below 90% is defined as a persistent absentee. All absences must be supported by documentation proving appointments, illnesses or medical conditions. Without evidence, absences are recorded as unauthorised and will remain so until documentation is received by the Attendance Team. Students whose attendance falls below 90% will be monitored by the Attendance Team and Inclusion Panel colleagues. Families will be sent letters, offered meetings and/or home visits. Documentary evidence will be requested and parents / carers will be informed that the school may need to request a Fixed Penalty Notice from Greenwich Local Authority if there is no improvement or documentary evidence is not produced. Students who have 10% unauthorised absence or more may be referred to the Local Authority and a penalty notice could be issued to the parent/carer. This is normally the last resort as St Paul's would work with the student/family putting in place various interventions before a decision is made to refer to the Local Authority.

Prosecution by Local Authority

If a child of compulsory school age fails to attend school (or alternative provision) regularly, their parents or carers may be guilty of an offence and can be prosecuted by the Local Authority. Only local authorities can prosecute and they must fund all associated costs.

7. INCLUSION & SAFEGUARDING

Inclusion Panel meetings are held once per half term for each year group. The Attendance team / SENDCo, Heads of Year / DSL / Learning Mentors/ Inclusion Co-ordinator meet to discuss and review the needs of students, and any interventions they may require.

The attendance team also meet with the Safeguarding team on a bi-weekly basis to review high profile cases and hard to reach families, and decide next steps.

Records are kept and reviewed at each meeting.

See Also appendix 1 – Attendance, Safeguarding & Early Help flow chart

8. STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE

- St Paul's Academy provides an environment in which our students feel safe, valued and welcome. Our ethos demonstrates that students feel their presence is important and that it is vital for their achievement and progress. Students need to know that they will be missed and any absence will be followed up.
- Students who feel vulnerable and experience difficulties attending class or have friendship problems will be supported and given strategies to help them cope. The Heads of Year and Learning Mentors will be the key members of staff involved liaising closely with the Form Tutors and the Attendance Team. Interventions will be agreed via the Inclusion Panel.
- A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Teachers are made aware of students' additional needs and given strategies to support their access to the curriculum through quality first teaching via individual provision maps. Special provision will be made for identified students including students who may need specific emotional wellbeing support.
- A clearly defined and consistent approach to positive behaviour management exists to provide a fair system and support for all St Paul's Academy students especially those who have difficulties; focusing on rewards and positive encouragement.
- Attendance data (such as the weekly winning tutor group document) will be produced and monitored regularly and analysed in order to identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and support and inform policy/practice.
- Heads of year recognise high attendance and students are awarded within their Learning Zone. Reports for students who obtain 100% attendance and punctuality and most improved attendance and punctuality are displayed and sent out to staff. Families receive regular communication via In Touch e.g. letters of congratulations on a half termly basis for those students with 100% attendance or those whose attendance is most improved.
- Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be monitored closely. Students are discussed at Inclusion Panel meetings and the Attendance Safeguarding meetings, where next steps are agreed.
- Parents will be reminded regularly (via letters home, In Touch emails etc.) of the importance of regular school attendance.

- Parents and carers of students whose attendance falls in the 90 – 95% range will receive letters to alert them to the importance of improving this number and reminding them of the school expectation of at least 97% attendance.
- Students who have been absent for an extended period of time, or who are experiencing serious attendance issues will have individually tailored packages of support which may include a reduced timetable or phased return via our in-house alternative provision.
- School staff will liaise with other services/agencies who may assist students who are experiencing difficulties.
- The Principal reports to the Governing body six times a year on attendance and punctuality matters. The Attendance Team produce reports in advance to be reviewed and analysed by the governors.

9. PUNCTUALITY

Persistent lateness counts towards a student's attendance record and affects whole class learning. All students are expected to arrive at school on time and to arrive at each lesson on time.

Students will be registered during tutor periods (8.25 – 8.50) and (2.55 – 3.10)

School Gate Closes at 8.20am

The bell is rung at the Student Gate to signal to any students in the immediate vicinity that the gate will close imminently.

Late Gate: 8.20-8.50am

Members of staff will be located in the Reception area from 8.25am to 8.50am as per the Late Gate Supervision arrangements. One member of staff will oversee the signing in of students at the screen and ask to see their school planner for confirmation of their identity. If the student does not have a planner the '*Late Gate - no planner*' option should be selected. Their identity must then be confirmed using their swipe card. If the student has neither items and is unknown to the member of staff supervising the signing in (or other in the Reception area), the Reception Team can confirm the student's name from their photo on SIMS.

Between 8.20-8.50am either the 'Late Gate' or 'Late Gate - no planner' options should be selected. The other options available will be utilised for students arriving late after 8.50am.

The other member of staff overseeing the Late Gate supervision should enquire as to the reasons behind the student's lateness discussing solutions/revised times to leave home etc. Students must be reminded that they need to aim to be on the premises by 8.15am at the very latest. Whilst queuing, students should be getting themselves ready for learning by ensuring their uniform is worn correctly just as they would be expected to do during the morning line up.

Sanction for Lateness

The Attendance Team will distribute the list of student who signed in late each morning from InVentry. Form Tutors will use this information to check if any of the students in their tutor group were late to school. Any students who presented at the Late Gate before 8.50am must be issued with a Yellow Detention by their Form Tutor which should be completed on the same day as the lateness where possible.

Lateness after 8.50am

At 8.50am the InVentry screen and printer will be repositioned so that it faces the Reception Team. This will allow one of the Reception Team colleagues to monitor the signing in and check the printed sticker before handing it over to the student. It is important that the name on the printed sticker is the correct name to prevent students signing

in late as another student. This printed sticker is the student's entry ticket to the lesson and the student should stick it into their planner for record.

Persistent Lateness

Heads of Year will monitor student lateness across their year group and action the necessary interventions and sanctions to those students with persistent lateness to school. (See below) Students with persistent lateness of 6 or more lates over a half term period will be issued with a Principal's Punctuality Detention (PPD) which takes place after school (for 2 hours) every Friday.

Interventions / Sanctions for morning lateness

First Late	Behaviour conversation with form tutor
Second late	Yellow detention (20 minutes)
Third Late	HOY detention (40 minutes)
Fourth Late	Yellow detention (20 minutes)
Fifth Late	Yellow detention (20 minutes)
Sixth Late	Principal's Punctuality Detention (PPD – 2 hours)

Following a PPD for the sixth late, students go back to stage one of the sanction cycle outlined above.

Lateness to Lessons/Tutor Time

If a student is late to period 1 and presents with a late print out from InVentry, they are issued with an Amber Detention by the class teacher. This sanction is due to extreme lateness to school. A detention should not be issued if suitable parental notification has been received or evidence of a medical appointment etc. has been presented. This will be highlighted on the InVentry Report that is circulated by the Attendance Team.

If a student arrives late to a lesson or tutor time (i.e. after the official start time of the lesson as per the school timetable) they are issued with a Yellow detention (unless it is extreme lateness, for which an Amber detention should be issued).

Arrangements / Sanctions for lateness after Lunch

12,45pm	Bell rings – students proceed to line up / met by class teacher
12.50pm	Whistle for Silence
12.51pm	Register by class teacher. Students arriving after register closed –Yellow detention
12.55pm	Learning begins – Students arriving after 1pm – Amber detention

10.MONITORING AND REVIEW OF THIS POLICY

The Attendance Policy should be reviewed annually. This should be done by the attendance team and overseen by the Assistant Principal for Inclusion and take into consideration the changing needs of the school, as well as relevant frameworks and guidance.

This policy will be due for review in March 2021.

Gina Gotts / Áine Allen
March 2020

Attendance, Safeguarding and Early Help Protocol Flow Chart

