



ST PAUL'S ACADEMY

Attendance Policy



*'You are God's work of art'
Ephesians 2:10*

Approved by: Sheila Ward
(Principal) and Governors

Date: 31 January 2024

Last reviewed on:

January 2024

Next review due by:

March 2025

Statement of Intent

The governors and staff of St. Paul's Academy have high expectations for all students. St. Paul's Academy is an inclusive Catholic Academy which welcomes students regardless of their level of need, ability or disability, ethnicity and socio-economic background. We work to the premise that every child is 'God's work of art'. It is a privilege for us as a community to have such a formative role in nurturing a young person to be full of ambition and hope in the future. St Paul's is a place of welcome and a haven for all who spend time here.

Aims

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.

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance;
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence;
- Ensuring every student has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled;
- Acting early to address patterns of absence;
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure students have the support in place to attend school.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

It also refers to:

- [School census guidance](#)
- [Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)
- [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

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 will inform school 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 SEND & Inclusion Policy.

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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Key Personnel

- Heads of Year supported by Form Tutors
- School Attendance Officer: **Shawney Vaughan**
- Designated Safeguarding Lead: **Kim Nicholas**

The Attendance Team is overseen by the Vice Principal for Pastoral: **Michelle Hepburn**

The Governing Body

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

The Principal

The principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

The Designated Senior Leader responsible for Attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school

- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention re-intergration plans in partnership with students and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is **Michelle Hepburn** and can be contacted via michelle.hepburn@stpauls.greenwich.sch.uk

The Attendance Officer

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance officer is **Shawney Vaughan** and can be contacted via shawney.vaughan@stpauls.greenwich.sch.uk

Form Tutors and Class Teachers

Form Tutors and Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office [for AM registration and each lesson, including PM registration – P6].

School office staff

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents/carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Take messages from parents/carers to the head of year in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

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'. Parents/carers should also provide the Academy with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child.

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, Pastoral Managers, 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.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

Registration takes place at 8.25am and 1.30pm. If a student fails to arrive before the school gate closes at 8.19am 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.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. 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: shawney.vaughan@stpauls.greenwich.sch.uk

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.

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

The parent/carer should send in a copy of the paperwork for the appointment e.g. letter or appointment card in advance of the appointment. This should be marked for the attention of the school Attendance Officer Shawney Vaughan. The documents can also be brought to Reception where a copy will be taken for school attendance records

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

Lateness and punctuality

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Following up unexplained absence

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's emergency contacts, the school may conduct a home visit or contact the police
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Call the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

Authorised and unauthorised absence

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
- Religious observance
- 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. The school or local authority can fine parents/carers for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent/carers must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

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.

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- 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 Service 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.

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.
- 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 Faculty. 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 with the Greenwich Attendance Advisory Service, 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.

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 Safeguarding 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.

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.

School Gate Closes at 8.21am

The bell is rung [8.19am] at the Student Gate to signal to any students in the immediate vicinity that the gate will close imminently.

Late Gate: 8.21-8.55am

Members of staff will be located in the Reception area from 8.25am to 8.55am 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 item 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 8.21-8.50am 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 members 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 students 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 8.55am **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 8.55am

At 8.55am 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 [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].

Inclusion & Safeguarding

The Attendance Team meets with the Vice Principal and 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.

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 Vice Principal for Pastoral and take into consideration the changing needs of the school, as well as relevant frameworks and guidance.

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
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X	Not required to be in school	Pupil of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day