



ST AUGUSTINE OF CANTERBURY CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Status	
Responsible Governors' Committee	PDBW
Responsible Person	
Ratified Date	
Review Date	

St. Augustine of Canterbury Catholic High School

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Equality statement

The Governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all students regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background and to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. All students have access to the curriculum and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping. School aims to encourage students to achieve excellent levels of Attendance and Punctuality.

Crucial to our improvement of standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is something we take for granted and so do not stress enough.

Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.

Government research shows that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and studies show that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

Local authorities, The police, school governing bodies, school head teachers (and staff authorised by the head) and teachers-in-charge of pupil referral units are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions in relation to parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices.

This extract relates to and replaces previous guidance on *Ensuring Children's Right to Education, and statutory guidance on Education-related parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices* published in September 2007.

The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- act early to address patterns of absence
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons

Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

School will work closely with Parents/Carers if attendance and/or punctuality become a cause for concern.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

From September 2015 the government set the persistent absence (PA) threshold at 10% of a pupil's possible attendance. This means that any student who has 10% absence or above (90% attendance or below) fall into this category. The government do not distinguish between absence that is **authorised** or **unauthorised**.

Schools are judged on the number of PA pupils they have in school and are expected to investigate, support and challenge absence that is approaching or meets the above threshold.

If a student is absent for 3 consecutive days and no message has been received then a home visit may be carried out by the Attendance Office/Pastoral Manager/Education Welfare Officer.

For each student we expect a minimum attendance level of 95% to enable her or him to reach their potential. Pupils falling below 95% will follow the pathway outlined above, up to and including a fixed penalty notice.

The school day

The school opens to pupils at 8:00am

Pupils should be in their form room by 8:30am ready for the register to be taken.

The morning register is recorded at 8:30am and 'saved' as soon as possible after this time.

Pupils entering school after 8:30am are recorded as late 'L' on the register. They must now enter through the schools reception and must sign in at the front desk. Pupils must record the time they arrive and the reason why they are late.

If a pupil arrives late due to attending a medical appointment, they must provide evidence of the appointment to the reception staff in the form of an appointment card or hospital letter in order for the register to be marked appropriately.

On their designated assembly day students must not go to form they should instead assemble in the Nugent Arts Arena by 8.30am when the registers will be recorded by form tutors.

The registers close at 10 am. Students arriving after this time without a valid reason will be recorded as 'U', this is counted as an unauthorised absence even though the pupil is in school.

Students arriving after 10 am with a valid reason e.g. medical appointment must show the reception supporting evidence so that the register can be marked appropriately.

The afternoon register is recorded at the start of lesson 5 (1:35pm)

Safeguarding absent pupils

School operates a first day response system; this means parents are expected to contact school on the first day of any absence to explain why their child is not in school by phone or e-mail.

Unexplained absences will be followed up with a text or a phone call from pastoral staff.

For safeguarding reasons school will attempt to contact parents until we receive a response, this may also involve a home visit to ascertain the reason for the absence.

When a child returns to school following an absence they must bring a note in to school explaining the reason for the absence. The note must be signed and dated by their parent. Parents must provide a note for every absence even if contact has been made during the absence. Notes should be handed in at the Reception, with any associated medical evidence attached.

Medical appointments

Only urgent or unavoidable medical appointments should be made during school time and pupils should return to school as soon as possible after the appointment. Routine dental checks or medical appointments should be made outside school time whenever possible. Parents must provide evidence of appointments in the form of medical appointment cards or letters.

Medical Evidence

When pupils have a high incidence of absence, parents may be requested to provide medical evidence to support the absence. If medical evidence has been requested and that evidence has not been provided by the parent, the absence **will be unauthorised** by school.

Acceptable medical evidence can be:

- Sight of prescription medicine or prescription counterpart (copy on right of prescription)
- Signed and dated medical appointment card
- A copy of an Orthodontist's or hospital letter

Where children miss out on education without permission the Local Authority is required by law to take appropriate action. Please help us to support you by giving school as much information about any known absence or medical condition that could adversely affect attendance.

Pupils educated off site

The Attendance Officer is responsible for monitoring the attendance of pupil's who are educated offsite by close liaison with the offsite education provider. Pupils will be marked with the appropriate registration code to explain the education provision being accessed.

Leave of Absence in Term Time (including holidays)

The Headteacher will consider applications for 'leave of absence' during term time in 'exceptional circumstances'. School cannot authorise time off for family holidays and Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays.

Parents must apply for leave of absence in writing using a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' (available on the website) and must attach any evidence for the school to take into consideration. The application must be submitted well in advance of the absence. The form should be returned to the child's Head of Year. The Headteacher or delegated lead will decide if the leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision.

If the Headteacher or delegated lead does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised.

Leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a child is removed from school for a period of leave of absence without the school being informed the absence will be automatically unauthorised.

Parents who are thinking of booking a family holiday **must check** with school when the school holiday dates are **before the holiday is booked**.

Unauthorised holidays during term time may lead to Penalty Notice fines. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.

Penalty Notices

The school follows the Local Authority Code of Conduct for penalty notices. Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. More information on penalty notice fines can be found at:

<https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/education-welfare-service/legal-sanctions-for-unauthorised-school-absence>

Authorised and unauthorised absence

The law states that a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter/message authorises the absence.

Examples of absences from school that would be authorised (providing evidence may be necessary):

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement

Absences from school that will NOT be authorised are:

- Shopping trips
- Birthdays
- Family holidays not agreed by school
- Family celebrations not agreed prior to the event

Safeguarding and Attendance

School considers safeguarding of all its students as one of its critical roles. Completion of registers and initiating first day response procedures for unexplained absence in timely manner is a priority to ensure students' whereabouts are known on a daily basis.

To ensure that pupils remain on the premises during the day and to safeguard our most vulnerable pupils this school expects that 'lesson monitor' registers are completed by teaching staff at the start of every lesson. This enables school to spot students who may be at risk or, may be avoiding certain lessons and take steps to locate or safeguard them as soon as possible.

Children Missing from Education (CME)**When a pupil leaves with notice the school will:**

- Agree with parent the last day the pupil will be attending the school.
- Request current telephone numbers, e-mail and addresses.
- Ask if the pupil has been allocated a place at a new school and if so collect the details.
- If a new school has been allocated contact the school to agree the date the pupil will be starting.
- If it cannot be established that the pupil will be attending the named / any school, follow the LA CME procedure.

Where a pupil leaves without advance notice or their destination is unknown, the school will investigate the whereabouts of the child by:

- Checking possible whereabouts with staff
- Contacting parents by telephone and e-mail
- Contacting emergency contacts held for the pupil
- Making a home visit to the last known address
- Checking if neighbours and friends are aware of the pupil's whereabouts
- Contacting any other agencies known to be involved with the child including; named Social workers SEND services etc.
- Contact the last known school of any siblings
- Check any social media sites e.g. Facebook.

If the pupil is still not located school will refer to the LA Children Missing Education Officer. If significant safeguarding issues are raised regarding the missing pupil school will also make a referral to the Safeguarding Contact Centre. This will enable the LA to make further enquires, as appropriate, to try and locate the pupil. School may also inform the Police.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools are expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

School Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance

- Robust first day response
- Attendance officer closely monitoring attendance daily
- Senior pastoral staff monitoring attendance
- Support from the Education Welfare Service
- Mentor support for pupils
- Avoiding split weeks wherever possible
- Consultation on changing the school day
- Regular contact with parents
- Parenting contracts
- Raising awareness of attendance targets and current attendance with tutors and pupils
- Robust anti bullying policy
- Use of pupil voice
- High profile rewards system

Legislation links

This policy should be read in conjunction with 'Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014' and 'Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff'.

This attendance policy adheres to current government legislation and guidance. For further information please refer to: www.legislation.gov.uk

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

Other relevant government guidance

- Parental Responsibility Measures for school attendance and behaviour
- Children Missing Education