Attendance Policy

Approved by:	MR I R TUCKER	Date: JULY 2019
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Next review due by:		

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1. Aims

St John's School believes good attendance and punctuality gives students a better opportunity for success academically and personally thus helping towards developing their skills for life. All students deserve to be able to make the most of the opportunities available to them at St John's. Good attendance and punctuality are essential now and in the future.

St John's aims to meet its obligations in regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance

- Reducing absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance 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:

- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006
- 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 (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3. School procedures

3.1 Attendance register

By law, all schools (except those where all pupils are boarders) are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.

The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the afternoon session.

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 08:25am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:30am and will be kept open until 08:40am. The register for the second session will be taken at 14:10pm and will be kept open until 14:20pm.

3.2 Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence – for example, if their child is unable to attend due to ill health – by 08:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 6).

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt or has been longer than 5 days the school may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a specialist's letter, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

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

3.3 Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

Please call the student absence line **01672 515081** on the morning of every absent day. However, we encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Applications for other types of absence in term time must also be made in advance. Information relating to whether the school can authorise such absences can be found in section 4.

STUDENT ABSENCE LINE – 01672 515081

3.4 Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

3.5 Following up absence

The school will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary, identify whether the absence is approved or not and identify the correct attendance code to use. If we do not have a reason for absence, it will be recorded as unauthorised.

3.6 Reporting to parents

Attendance data will be sent out to parents in all school reports.

4. Authorised and unauthorised absence

4.1 Granting approval for term-time absence

The school will only **authorise** a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school may request medical evidence if a parent contacts the school to confirm the student is unwell in the form of a medical appointment card with one appointment entered, letter from a professional, medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription.

Whenever a student is to be taken out of school for a medical appointment, the parent must call the student absence line **01672 515081** and write a note of explanation. All students are to show the note at Reception when signing out.

The Principal may not authorise medical absence without this evidence.

The Principal will only authorise Leave of Absence if there are exceptional circumstances. However, the parent must contact the Principal in advance to secure authorisation, by completing a Student leave of Absence Form. We define 'exceptional circumstances' as work related interviews and meetings with external agencies (i.e. - CAMHS). The Principal **may** also authorise events where students are involved in any supervised sporting events or trials, theatre performances and participation in acts of religious worship.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the Principal's discretion.

Reluctance to attend school

Sometimes students seem anxious about leaving home to go to school. They may tell you that they feel unwell or give another reason to not attend. You may notice that they are worried from things that they say e.g. that they do not want to do particular subjects, feel that they have no friends or are being bullied. If this is the case, please contact the school as soon as possible to speak to the relevant Head of Year:

- Year 7   Mrs Nuala Hawkins

- Year 8   Mr Dean Evans

- Year 9   Mrs Sarah Parry

- Year 10   Mrs Vicki Light

- Year 11   Mr Kevin Jefferies

4.2 Legal sanctions

Schools can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

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

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice ultimately rests with the headteacher, following the local authority's code of conduct for issuing penalty notices. This may take into account:

- A 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 pupil 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 the parent or withdraw the notice.

5. Strategies for promoting attendance

- Mark the registers in accordance with the law twice a day (but for every lesson in addition).

- Informs any parents/carers who have not contacted the school, of the absence of their child on a particular day.

- Maintains records and monitors attendance of students on a regular basis.

- Authorises absences in accordance with the government guidelines. Please note that **only** the Principal can authorise absence.

- Contacts parents/carers when the attendance falls below acceptable levels and/or when particular patterns of absence are causing concerns.

- Works with external agencies to maintain good attendance and to support the student/family with any issues that may affect attendance and punctuality to school.

- Provides reintegration support for students returning from long-term absence.

- Maintains a range of strategies to encourage good attendance by means of rewards.

- Works with relevant external agencies if a students' attendance becomes a concern, i.e. Social Care, CAMHS, Education Welfare Service and The Police.

6. Attendance monitoring

The Attendance Officer monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

Parents are expected to call the school on every morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 3.2).

If a pupil's absence goes above 4 days, we will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a pupil's attendance continues to drop, we will consider involving the Local Authority.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee.

Pupil-level absence data is collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. We compare our attendance data to the national average, and share this with governors.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The Governing board

The governing board is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2 The Principal

- The Principal is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data.
- The Principal will report on attendance data to the governors and the Excalibur Academies Trust Board.
- The Principal also supports other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils and issues fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

7.3 Assistant Vice Principal (Attendance)

- Will report to SLT on all aspects of attendance and punctuality
- Will establish annual attendance targets for the whole school and individual Year Groups
- Will regularly review Attendance and Punctuality data through the spreadsheet in consultation with Attendance Officer and Heads of Year.
- Will have bi-weekly meetings with the Attendance Officer.

7.4 The Attendance Officer

- Monitors attendance data at the school and individual pupil level.
- Reports concerns about attendance to the Assistant Vice Principal
- Works with the Assistant Vice Principal and Year Heads to tackle persistent absence.
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.
- Advises the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices.

7.5 Head of Year

- Is responsible for reinforcing the importance of regular attendance and punctuality for the Year Group through assemblies and meetings with Tutors. Regularly reviewing and helping
- monitoring registration procedures in the Year Group; setting targets across the Year Group; liaison with school's Attendance Officer and organising School Attendance Meetings with parents

7.6 The Class Teacher

- Is responsible for taking a register at the beginning of each lesson, adjusting for latecomers as require and taking regard of notes flagged next to individual student names.
- Is responsible for alerting Attendance Officer and Keyworkers by truancy email urgently if there are any suspicious absences from their classrooms.

8. Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Assistant Vice Principal and Attendance Officer. At every review, the policy will be shared with the governing board.

9. Links with other policies

This policy is linked to our child protection and safeguarding policy

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
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