Attendance Policy

Outstanding attendance and punctuality to school are essential if students are to achieve their full potential and derive maximum benefit from school life. At St. Augustine's, students, parents/carers, and staff work together to achieve this through our inclusive, caring, and nurturing environment. The school prides itself on its high standards and it's our continued aim to do so and improve all student's life chances by ensuring they are in school consistently. Social deprivation presents challenges to some students and parents/carers' ability to manage their own attendance and punctuality as effectively as we would like. As a school community we are committed to enabling all students to 'be the best they can be as we grow in the Christian virtues of Faith, Hope and Love."

Approved by:	The Governing Body	**Date:** October 2023
Last reviewed on:	September 2023	
Next review due by:	October 2025	

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Our Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and 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 also 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.

We have carefully considered and analysed the impact of this policy on equality and the possible implications for pupils and staff with protected characteristics, as part of our commitment to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requirement to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations.

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:

- 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

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the school census, which explains the persistent absence threshold, Keeping Children Safe in Education and Mental Health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools.

Roles and responsibilities

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. The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school and making sure school leaders fulfill expectations and statutory duties.

The Headteacher

The Headteacher 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 pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies

The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Addressing any inaccuracies or issues with register completion.

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.

The Main Office and DOL/PYC

Main Office and DOL/PYC staff are expected to take calls from parents about absence and record it directly onto SIMS and inform the Attendance Officer where possible. This will only be in a situation where the parent/carer either phone or email directly the DOL/PYC.

Parents and Carers

Parents and Carers are expected to:
- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8.30am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Students

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register and place all pupils onto this register. We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. This will be displayed as the pupil's AM and PM mark. All lessons before and after these two sessions are expected to also be completed as part of our effective Safeguarding Procedures.

The attendance register 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

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- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

(See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes)

We will also record:
- For students of compulsory school age whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil 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.)

Pupils must arrive in school by 8.45am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 8.50-9.10am and will be kept open until 9.30am. The register for the second session will be taken at 3.10-3.30pm and will be kept open until 3.40pm. On Friday's, the PM registration will be the same as period 6 due to an earlier finish.

Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8.30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 7). Parent/Carers must call the Attendance Officer on 02073283434 or email the school admin/leave a voicemail message.

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

Where the absence is longer than 5 days or if the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, 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/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parent/Carer will need to contact the school preferably 24 hours in advance of the planned absence. Parent/Carers can contact the Attendance Officer directly or can call/email the pupil's DOL/PYC. For a medical/dental appointment, the pupil is required to show on the day the absence/leave is required either the text/email confirmation and/or appointment card to their DOL/PYC before being given permission to leave the school site.

However, we encourage parents/carers 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.

The pupil's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can a4uthorise.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil 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.

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- Punctuality issues are identified by the Attendance Officer.

Communication between the Attendance Officer and the pupil's DOL/PYC to then plan the most appropriate support and/or intervention will be put in place. This can include parent/carer meetings, punctuality report, referral to Early help or identification of any barriers that are contributing to the pupil being late.

Following up unexplained absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:
- Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason, by the Attendance Officer. This will be completed via text/email and letter. No response will result in the Attendance Officer contacting the parent/carer by phone. Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. Truancy Call will be sent as soon as registers are closed, and all checks have been made by the Attendance Officer that the pupil is not on site.
- 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
- Pupils who are LACs, are part of our DSP or are CODA are priority in terms of contact with parent/carers/LA if absence on a daily basis. Young carers, pupils who are eligible for free school meals, who speak English as a second language or have special educational needs and disabilities also form part of the immediate monitoring group.

Reporting to parents

St Augustine's reports to parents formally two to three times in an academic year. The report includes the child's overall attendance at each point. Parents/Carers also have access to our Parent App which has their child's attendance record.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Approval for term-time absence
The Headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, including the length of time the pupil is authorised to be absent for

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as any event or crisis that cannot be resolved or addressed at a later date. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, considering the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. For example, has there been any similar patterns of absence during other academic years?

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments
- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.
  Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

Other possible 'exceptional circumstance' where the Headteacher may grant term-time holiday.

- Study LeaveFlexi-schooling requests – Parent/Carers have to request a meeting to discuss Flexi-Schooling. At St Augustine's, we want every student to be in school full time as this has a positive correlation with academic achievement and well-being. Any decision for Flexi-Schooling will be on a case-by-case basis and will be time limited in the first instance, with the overall aim to have pupils in school full time.

Reducing persistent absence

If a pupil is identified as at risk of persistent absence or has more than 10% unauthorised absence, a number of strategies are used to both monitor and improve attendance.

For example:
Attendance Officer to identify the pupils who are at risk of becoming a persistent absentee and to initiate strategies to improve.

- Initial phone call with the Attendance Officer and/or letter to try to identify reasons for absence if possible. This is to support parent/carers/pupils to ascertain if there is a particular need that needs intervention.

- Parent Meeting and Pastoral Support via the PYC and/or Attendance Officer.
- Targets set and Attendance Report to the Attendance Officer and/or PYC.
- Referral to Early Help if no improvement in attendance.
- Referral to Social Services and any other external services such as CAHMS/MASH if required.
- TAF Meetings, CIN, CP Core Group Meetings if required or absence is a Safeguarding concern.
- Referral to CME via the Local Authority is no contact or safeguarding concern.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents 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 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 consider:
- 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 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 or withdraw the notice.

Strategies for promoting attendance

- Letters for 100% Attendance are sent home every half term.
- Students are entered into a Termly Prize Draw if they have achieved 100% Attendance
- Identify tailored intervention which meets the needs of the pupil, for example:
  - mentoring
  - careers advice and guidance input
  - college placement
  - out of hours learning
  - alternative provision where appropriate
  - lead daily or weekly check-ins to review progress and impact of support
  - make regular contact with families to discuss progress
  - hold regular meetings or reviews of caseload with the local authority attendance team, external partners and alternative providers to check on welfare and review progress

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liaise with school leaders (designated safeguarding, special educational needs coordinator and pastoral leads) on referrals to external agencies and multi-agency assessments
- o coordinate and contribute to multi-agency meetings to review progress and agree on actions
- o work in partnership with local authority attendance team and other agencies to ensure the appropriate use of statutory parental responsibility measures
- o provide regular reports to leaders on the impact of action plans and interventions

Attendance monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily basis.

A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health.. The Parent/Carer is expected to call the school each day their child is absent.

If a pupil's absence goes above 3 days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this. If a pupil's absence continues to rise after contacting them parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

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 will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

We collect our Attendance Data via SIMSand use this programme to:

- Track the attendance of individual pupils
- To identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause
- for concern.
- Monitor and evaluate those children identified as needing intervention and support.
- Our Data is also shared via a portal which the local authority has direct access to in order to support with targeted attendance meetings, intervention and prevention.
- Monitoring attendance and absence data half termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual level
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern

Pupil-level absence data will be 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. The school will compare attendance data to the national average and share this with the governing board.

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Intervention:

- Deliver intervention in a targeted way, in response to data or intelligence.

- Monitor and analyse attendance data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence (register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking).

- Use attendance, pastoral and SEND staff who are skilled in supporting pupils and their families to identify and overcome barriers to attendance.

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- Create action plans in partnership with families and other agencies that may be supporting families, for example, children's social care and early help services. Commission or deliver interventions to improve attendance.

- Monitor the impact of any intervention, adjusting if necessary and using findings to inform future strategy.

Where interventions fail to address attendance issues, identify the reasons why and, where appropriate, change or adjust the intervention.

Follow local authority codes of conduct, policies and procedures and make referrals for statutory intervention when interventions have not resulted in improved attendance and relevant triggers / thresholds are me

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum once a year by Rachel Kelly, Headteacher. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

Other policies

This policy links to the following policies:
Child protection and safeguarding policy
Behaviour policy

Documentation used to support Policy

School attendance Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities (Updated August 2020)

1. Improving School Attendance (May 2021)
2. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full- attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities
3. Children Missing in Education https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-missing-education
   Supporting Students with Medical Conditions:
4. https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3
5. Keeping Children Safe in Education: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/keeping-children-safe-in-education--2

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

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Code	Definition	Scenario
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
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

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Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school (Up to and including 2020-21, Code 'X' has also been used for any positive Covid-19 result and/or self-isolation)	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

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