

All Saints Catholic College



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

Approved by Governors:

17th June 2021

Date of next review:

June 2022

Introduction

Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential.

All Saints Catholic College believe that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

All Saints Catholic College values all pupils. As set out in this policy, we will work with families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

All Saints Catholic College recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and equality. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Race Relations Act 2000.

Legal Framework

Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents must ensure that children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude to any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A child is of Compulsory School Age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

Under the Education Act 1996, the Local Authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents secure education for children of compulsory school age and where necessary, use legal enforcement.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

The register must record whether the pupil was:

- present;
- absent;
- present at approved educational activity; or
- unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

Pupils Not on Roll by the Expected Start Date

If pupils do not appear on the relevant school migration report by their expected start date, school admissions staff will request the reason from the school.

If a reason cannot be ascertained or an alternative agreed start date is not communicated to the parent /school admissions by the 16th day the following actions will be put in place:

If the child is missing because school cannot make contact with the family, School Admissions will remind the school to notify the CME Officer.

If the child is not missing, an Education Welfare Officer will be assigned to investigate the matter. If the pupil is refusing to attend, the school will be expected to take steps to address the non-attendance in the usual manner. This can include legal action. Responsibility is deemed to have been passed to the new school once the start date has been notified to them (as stated in the offer letter).

If the school has not contacted the parent to explain how the admission will be organised the Education Welfare Officer will escalate the matter to a Senior EWO. If, following Senior EWO intervention the pupil is not in school by day 25, formal steps to direct the school to admit the pupil will be taken. For full documentation please see appendix 1.)

Categorising absence

Where pupils of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence has been received.

Parents should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence by 9:15 and provide the school with an expected date of return. The school contact number is (0161) 338 2120 Option 1. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer. If your child is absent without any notification from home you will be contacted by phone or text to ascertain the reason for absence as legally required.

Absence will be categorised as follows:

Illness Parents must ensure a telephone call is made on the first day of absence informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable in the first instance as evidence of illness. This should be followed by a note from parent/carer on the first day of returning to school. Parents may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness or where absence falls below 95%. Absence notes can be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc. However, if their child's absence is affected severely by absence then medical evidence provided by a doctor will be needed to prevent prosecution.

Medical/Dental Appointments Parents are advised, where possible, to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. Where this is not possible, pupils must attend school for part of the day. Parents and or pupils must show the appointment card to school. If a pupil is absent for a full day to attend a medical appointment then the pupil will incur half a day unauthorised absence unless clearly stated in a medical appointment letter.

Other Authorised Circumstances This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement, visiting a parent in prison or part time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The child's PSO/Head of Year will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

Family Holidays Headteachers cannot authorise holidays during term time. Parents do not have an automatic right, in law, to remove their child from school during term time for the purpose of a holiday and should be made aware that Penalty Notice Fines will be applied for.

The DFE Attendance guidelines state that Head teachers cannot grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances.

If the pupil still goes on holiday, the absence will be **unauthorised**. In such cases the school will issue a Penalty Notice.

Religious Observance All Saints Catholic College acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance. Only one day of absence will be authorised in relation to religious observance. Parents are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent. Failure to do so may lead to the absence being recorded as unauthorised.

Study Leave Study leave may be granted for Year 11 pupils approaching GCSE examinations. School will offer in school study programmes during this period to reduce absence levels.

Traveller Absence The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

To protect Traveller parents from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

When in or around Greater Manchester, if a family can reasonably travel back to their Base School (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

All Saints Catholic College will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school; in such cases, the pupil's school place at All Saints Catholic College will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

All Saints Catholic College can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents must:

- advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- inform the school regarding proposed return dates

All Saints Catholic College will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school

- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another Local Authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer based distance learning that is time evidenced

Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

Late Arrival Registration begins at 9:00; pupils arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late (L). The register will close at 9:30 pupils arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late (U), this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

On arrival after the close of the school gate, pupils must sign in at reception and proceed straight to registration or their lesson.

The absence will only be authorised if a satisfactory explanation for the late arrival can be provided, for example, attendance at a medical appointment.

The absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** if the pupil has arrived late without justifiable cause, for example, if they woke up late or were waiting for their uniform to dry.

Unauthorised absence Absences will not be authorised unless parents have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school. If the pupil's attendance falls below 95% the absence will remain unauthorised unless medical evidence is provided.

Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A pupil's/family member's birthday
- Shopping
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Staying at home to care for any family member
- Pupils refusal to attend school
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Family holidays
- Moving house
- Translating for any family members

Members of staff from All Saints Catholic College may carry out a home visit if a child is absent regardless of whether a reason for absence has been received.

Members of staff will contact Greater Manchester Police if they are concerned for a pupil's welfare.

The school may carry out a home visit where absence has exceeded three days. If required, staff will request to see the pupil during this home visit.

If a parent/carer reports a pupil has moved out of the area, college staff may seek advice and share relevant information with our partner agencies to support in ensuring the pupil is safe. This may include Children's Social care and Greater Manchester Police.

Deletions from the Register

In accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, pupils will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The pupil has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a pupil
- Transfer between schools
- Pupil withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team)
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the pupil
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the pupil

All Saints Catholic College will follow Tameside Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a pupil's whereabouts is unknown.

Attendance guidance in relation to Coronavirus (COVID19)

Although school attendance is mandatory from the start of the autumn term, there are some circumstances where pupil cannot attend school due to coronavirus (COVID-19).

The government have introduced a new category of non-attendance – “not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19). This category only applies for the academic year 2020/21 and can only be used where a pupil does not attend because their travel to, or attendance at, school would be:

- contrary to guidance relating to the incidence of transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19) from Public Health England (PHE) and/or the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC)
- prohibited by any legislation (or instruments such as statutory directions) relating to the incidence or transmission of coronavirus (COVID-19)

In line with the Secretary of State's expectations no parent will be penalised for following official public health advice for their child not attend a given session, this new category of non-attendance will not count as an absence (authorised or unauthorised) for statistical purposes.

Absence codes for Coronavirus (COVID-19)

From the beginning of the new academic year, schools should return to using the attendance codes in use before the outbreak, in addition to the new category of “not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)”

- pupils not attending a session who meet the criteria for “not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)” should be recorded using code X
- schools should continue to use code X for non-compulsory aged pupils who are not expected to attend a session, as they did before the outbreak

In line with the government guidance, the following circumstances would meet the “not attending in circumstances related to coronavirus (COVID-19)” and the Code X would be applied

What to do if...	Action needed	Code	Return to school when ...
...My child has coronavirus symptoms	Do not come to school Contact school daily Self-isolate Get a test Inform school immediately about test results	Code X	..the test comes back negative
.... Somebody in my household has coronavirus symptoms	Do not come to school Contact school daily Self-isolate Household member to get a test Inform school immediately about test result	Code X	... the household members test is negative
.... Somebody in my household has tested positive for coronavirus	Do not come to school Contact school daily Self-isolate for 14 days	Code X	... the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation
... NHS test and trace have identified my child as a “close Contact” of somebody with symptoms or confirmed coronavirus	Do not come to school Contact school daily Self-isolate for 14 days	Code X	... the child has completed 14 days of self-isolation
..we/my child travelled and has to self-isolate as part of a period of quarantine	Do not take unauthorised leave in term time Consider quarantine requirements and FCO advice when booking travel Provide information to school as per attendance policy <u>Returning from a destination where quarantine is needed:</u> Do not come to school Contact school daily] self-isolate for 14 days	Code X	...the quarantine period of 14 days has been completed
..We have received medical advice that my child must resume shielding	Do not come to school Contact school as required by the attendance team Shield until you are informed that restrictions are lifted and shielding is paused again	Code X	... school inform you that restrictions have been lifted and your child can return to school again

Roles and Responsibilities

All Saints Catholic College believe that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents, pupils and the wider school community. As such,

The Governing Body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to pupils and their parents
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the Local Authority or Department of Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

The Leadership Team will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with consistently good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2013 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Ensure that there is a named Assistant Head Teacher to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource
- Return school attendance data to the Local Authority and the Department for Children, Schools and Families as required and on time
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through half termly reporting to the Head Teacher and Governing Body
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site are implemented
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support pupils and their families when required

- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Department Heads/Pastoral Staff/Form Tutors will:

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to pupils and their parents
- Form positive relationships with pupils and parents ,talk to pupils about their subject area and take a positive interest in children’s work and educational progress
- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all pupils to attend and to achieve
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation
- Implement systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all pupils, including those who are educated off-site
- Analyse attendance data to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Contribute to the evaluation of school strategies and interventions
- Work with other agencies to improve attendance and support pupils and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

Pastoral Support officer will:

- Contact the parents/carers of pupils absent. This will include both telephone calls and home visits. As part of safeguarding procedures, home visits may be carried out even if we have received a call to say a student will not be attending college, This is to fulfil our duty of care obligation.
- Request to see your child if a home visit is carried out. If the child is not seen at the property this information will be passed to the designated safeguarding lead and or the police.
- Hold Attendance and Punctuality Panels for pupils who are causing concern.

Parents will:

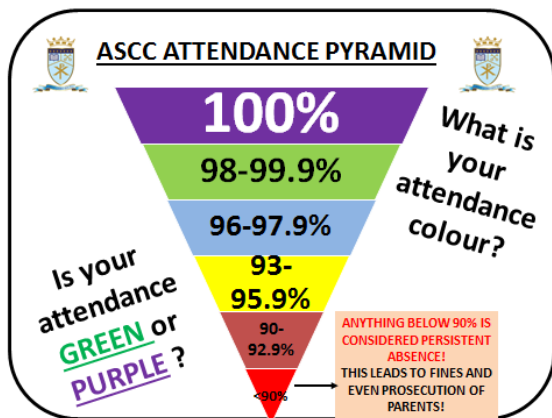
- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child’s work and educational progress
- Encourage the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note.
- Try to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the Doctors, Dentists etc. outside of school hours
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child’s attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child’s education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bed times, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time.

- Provide evidence of their child's attendance if attendance is below 95%

Using Attendance Data

Pupils' attendance will be monitored and may be shared with the Local Authority and other agencies if a pupil's attendance is a cause for concern.

Every week the Attendance Officer / Assistant Head Teacher will provide all form tutors with attendance data for the previous week for each form group. The list will be presented in numerical descending order with the highest attenders at the top; every pupil will be colour coded as indicated below:



Pupils will colour in their attendance in their journal on the designated page so pupils can see their attendance weekly and the impact of any absences.

Heads of Year will receive a complete set of data for their year groups.

Pupil attendance data will be used to trigger school action as set out in the escalation of intervention (Appendix 1).

Attendance data will also be used during BAR reports to identify emerging patterns and trends to inform whole school strategies to improve attendance and attainment.

All Saints Catholic College will share attendance data with the Department for Children, Schools and Families and the local authority as required.

All information shared will be done so in accordance with the Data Protection Act 1998.

Support Systems

All Saints Catholic College recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

All Saints Catholic College also recognise that some pupils are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those pupils with special educational needs,

those with physical or mental health needs, migrant and refugee pupils and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents and pupils
- Pupil Support Officer meetings and interventions
- Attendance meetings
- Parenting contracts
- Referrals to support agencies
- Pupil Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- PSHE
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time time-tables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages
- EHA
- Attendance Governors Panels

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with both parents and pupils.

Where parents fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, All Saints Catholic College will consider the use of legal sanctions.

Legal Sanctions

Prosecution Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

Parenting Attendance Contracts (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003). A Parenting Contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent, it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

Penalty Notices (Anti Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A pupil is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school
- A pupil has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve

A Penalty Notice gives the parent the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

Penalty Notices will be used in accordance with Tameside Council's Penalty Notice Protocol.

APPENDIX 1

Pupils Not on Roll by the Expected Start Date

If pupils do not appear on the relevant school migration report by their expected start date, school admissions staff will request the reason from the school.

If a reason cannot be ascertained or an alternative agreed start date is not communicated to the parent /school admissions by the 16th day the following actions will be put in place:

- If the child is missing because school cannot make contact with the family, School Admissions will remind the school to notify the CME Officer.
- If the child is not missing, an Education Welfare Officer will be assigned to investigate the matter. If the pupil is refusing to attend, the school will be expected to take steps to address the non-attendance in the usual manner. This can include legal action. Responsibility is deemed to have been passed to the new school once the start date has been notified to them (as stated in the offer letter).
- If the school has not contacted the parent to explain how the admission will be organised the Education Welfare Officer will escalate the matter to a Senior EWO. If, following Senior EWO intervention, the pupil is not in school by day 25 formal steps to direct the school to admit the pupil will be taken.

PUPIL ADMISSIONS

- Pupil is offered a place and school is notified of the start date by which the pupil is expected to be on roll. This is 15 days from the date of the offer letter. Action for pupils not on roll by day 16:

