

Attendance Policy

Philosophy

Each pupil in our care has God given talents and by having high attendance levels, students are able to utilise their talents to the fullest.

“No one lights a lamp and covers it with a bowl or puts it under a bed instead, he puts it on the lamp stand so that people will see the light as they come in”

Luke 8:16

St Paul's is a successful school, and every child plays their part in making it so. We aim to create an environment which enables and encourages all members of the community to do the best that is possible. For our children to gain the greatest benefit from their education, it is vital that they attend regularly unless the reason for their absence is unavoidable. There is a clear link between poor attendance at school and lower academic achievement as well as social development. Children with poor attendance are more likely not to be in further education, employment, or training when they leave school. There is also a much more significant risk around aspects of safeguarding where children have high levels of absenteeism and do not have regular access to the support of staff in school.

Statutory Duty of School

The Education Act of 1996 requires parents, carers or guardians to ensure their children receive efficient, full-time education, either by regular attendance or otherwise. In terms of achieving regular attendance, St Paul's would expect every student to work to attain at least 96 % attendance or above. Ensuring children's regular attendance at school is a parent's or guardian's legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without very good reason creates an offence in law. While the school seeks to work proactively with parents, carers, or guardians to avoid legal consequences, an unacceptable level of absence may result in prosecution.

Aims

The school will ensure that:

- high levels of attendance and punctuality are expected and encouraged.
- students are registered accurately twice daily using SIMS (School Information and Management System) registration.
- parents, carers, or guardians are contacted when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised.
- student attendance and punctuality are monitored regularly.
- students and parents, carers, or guardians are supported where low attendance is an issue.

- effective processes are in place within school to address non-attendance and persistent absence.
- it works in partnership with the Senior Attendance Officer – (Legal Interventions) (formerly Educational Welfare Service);
- school attendance statistics are reported to the School Leadership Group, the Governing Board and to the DfE;
- where there is a language and/or literacy barrier, parents, carers, or guardians will be offered appropriate support so that they are able to communicate effectively.

Students are expected to:

- attend school and all timetabled lessons;
- be punctual to school and lessons and be fully prepared for the school day;
- register with their form group each morning;
- inform their Form Tutor, Chaplaincy Leader or Year Leader if there is a problem that may lead to absences;
- ensure that any messages between parent, carer, or guardian and school via their planner are communicated.

Parents, carers or guardians are expected to:

- encourage outstanding attendance;
- inform the school of the absence of their child by 8.30am each morning giving the reason and, if possible, the likely duration of the absence. School should be notified on each day of absence.
- notify school if there is a problem that may lead to the longer term absence of their child;
- discuss any planned absence with the school well in advance (ideally 4 school weeks).
- avoid making medical or dental appointments during the school day. Where this is not possible, ensuring their child does not miss a full day's education due to any appointment.
- To provide a doctor's surgery stamp or GP's letter when requested by the school in order to authorise absence.

Registration

Registration takes place twice daily. Students will register at 8.50am with their form tutor. This is also an opportunity for students to be given relevant information regarding the school day. In the afternoon registration will take place in the last lesson on the student timetable.

If a student arrives late for registration in the morning after 8.55am, this will be marked as late by the tutor on SIMS. Where a student arrives after registration has closed (9.05am

each day), they should sign in at student reception where they will be marked late for the morning session. Where a student arrives after 9.30am, they will be registered as being absent for that morning session and parents, carers or guardians will be required to provide a reason in order for the school to consider authorising the absence.

Where a student is regularly late to school or to their lessons, they can expect sanctions to be put in place. Where necessary parents, carers, or guardians will be notified and may be invited in to discuss possible strategies to address the situation. If punctuality to school continues to be an issue, a referral may be made to the Senior Attendance Officer – (Legal Interventions) (formerly Educational Welfare Service).

Absence

The school makes the decision whether any absence is authorised or unauthorised. A communication from a parent, carer, or guardian informing the school of absence does not in itself authorise an absence. School may not authorise absence despite a medical note being provided by an external agency if it considers the note does not fully address the reasons for a student's absence.

Absence from school will be authorised for the following reasons:

- genuine illness;
- unavoidable medical/dental appointment;
- days of religious observance;
- exceptional family circumstances;
- fixed term suspension;
- permanent exclusion until removed from roll or re-instated.

Where the reason given for absence is illness for more than three days, the school nurse may contact parents, carers, or guardians to enquire what guidance and support the school might be able to offer. Parents, carers, or guardians may also be asked to provide either a doctor's note or a stamp from their doctor's surgery to show an appointment has been attended if their child is regularly absent from school due to medical reasons.

Absence **will not** be authorised for:

- holidays in term time;
- birthday celebrations;
- house minding or moving house;
- caring for siblings or relatives;
- shopping trips;
- medical appointments that cannot be verified;
- it is believed that the note is not genuine or not valid;
- day trips;

- family problems. (more information would be required)

Where the school considers the period of time requested for the approval of absence unreasonable in relation to the reason stated, we may only authorise part of the period of time asked. For example, school would authorise reasonable travel time to and from an event such as a funeral as well as the day on which it took place.

Requests for authorisation of absence forms must be completed and received by the school at least four weeks in advance unless there are exceptional circumstances where a family must travel at short notice. School **never** authorises holidays in term time.

Prosecution for non-attendance or persistent absence.

Where a student is persistently late or absent and efforts to improve the situation have been unsuccessful, parents, carers or guardians may face legal intervention. Persistent absence is monitored on a regular basis. When a pupil's attendance falls below 90%, parents, carers or guardians will be notified regardless of the reasons provided for absence and whether these absences have been authorised or not. Where necessary, a meeting with parents will be arranged to discuss the issues surrounding absence. If there is no significant improvement following this intervention, this ultimately could result in a pre-court interview following referral to Legal Interventions (previously known as The Educational Welfare Service). Fixed penalty notices and fast track prosecutions may be imposed where school considers it appropriate to do so.

Strategies for Promoting Attendance

- Students and parents, carers, or guardians are educated regarding the link between good attendance and academic and social development.
- St Paul's School offers an environment in which all students can feel valued and are made welcome.
- A broad, balanced, and flexible curriculum is offered to all students to provide opportunities for all students to be successful.
- All education is suited to age, ability, and aptitude, taking into account any special educational needs.
- Attendance is reported to parents on progress checks and discussed at mentoring sessions.
- The importance of attendance is raised through students' assemblies and form group time.
- Attendance data is monitored regularly and analysed to help those students who need support.
- A Chaplaincy Leader is available in each year group to support attendance concerns.
- Parents are reminded regularly via newsletters, mentoring days, parents' information evenings, etc of the importance of regular attendance.
- Attendance and punctuality are discussed in Leadership Group meetings on a half term basis.

- The Governing Board receives an annual report on attendance and punctuality as well as reviewing it through the Admissions and Safeguarding Sub Committee.

Students who are absent for any extended period of time as a result of a health condition which is confirmed by a medical practitioner, may be provided with remote learning or where necessary individual tutoring. Any provision put in place would be reviewed on a weekly basis and undertaken with the view of supporting the student to return to school as soon as possible. As part of any review, school might request further medical information to inform any decision as to whether alternative provision needed to remain in place. Regular contact would be maintained by the school with the student as part of our safeguarding procedures.

Reintegration following a period of long term absence

When required, students will be provided with individually tailored re-integration programmes. This may incorporate;

- the use of the learning support area and/or school library;
- the use of part time timetables (see below);
- the provision of a quiet area at break and lunchtimes;
- catch up sessions through literacy and numeracy intervention coaches;
- a reduction in a students' curriculum (particularly when a return is prior to a public examination period). A reduction in curriculum would involve a pupil remaining on school site with the provision to undertake other study.

The use of part time timetables

School would only consider a part time timetable when all other options have been exhausted. The purpose of a part time timetable would be to support a student to return to full time education in the shortest time frame possible and put in place in the following circumstances:

- Part of an in-school support programme in agreement with parents/carers to help a student who is not currently successful on a full-time basis to gain success.
- Where a student has a serious medical condition where their recovery is the priority.
- Reintegration This would form part of a planned reintegration into school following long term absence e.g school refusal. Long term illness etc.

In looking to offer a reduced timetable, this would be agreed with parents, carers or guardians and any other professional body who may be working with a student. In informing any decision to place a student on to a part time timetable we would carefully consider:

- the rationale and desired outcome;

- The duration and review process;
- the specific learning needs of the student;
- the broader needs of the student;
- the member of staff to act as point of contact;
- the member of staff responsible for managing process (if not the above);
- the level of input into the support package of any involved professional body and/or agency;
- any travelling and transport arrangements;
- a risk assessment of when a pupil is not on school site;
- whether an alternative provision could be used to meet need.

School will require parental permission in writing acknowledging parental responsibility when their child is not in school for the duration of the agreed time. Where a pupil is a Looked After Child, we would need written agreement of the relevant Virtual School.

To confirm the agreement of any part time timetable, a letter identifying the duration (no more than 6 weeks) and any intermediate review dates will be sent to parents and any other professional body or agency involved with the student. Only under exceptional circumstances would school look to extend the duration of a part time timetable and only with parental agreement. The proposed support plan would include a review and evaluation of the initial plan and state the rationale behind any extension.

School will report a reduced timetable to Milton Keynes Council Children missing education team, completing a Part Time School Timetable referral. cme@milton-keynes.gov.uk A copy will also be sent to exploitation@milton-keynes.gov.uk to notify the Children Missing Exploited and Trafficked (CMET) hub.

This will include a copy of the plan, including the number of teaching hours.

Expectations of staff

Staff look to set an outstanding example to students by modelling high expectations and therefore be in the classroom waiting for the students to arrive. This also allows for an orderly start to a lesson and promotes positive behaviour management.

School trips

School would find it difficult to justify a student attending a trip (not directly related to their curriculum learning) where their attendance was a concern. If it was evident that a student had missed a lot of 'face to face' contact time with their teachers without good reason, they would not be allowed to participate in a school trip during school hours.

Transition

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As part of the school's transition process, visits are made to primary schools to ensure the smoothest possible transfer to secondary education for students. Where possible, school requests attendance data on every student during this process. This data is used to identify those students who have historic poor attendance and allows early intervention for those who need additional support to develop good attendance routines.

Register Policy

The school maintains an accurate register of all students on roll at St Paul's, updating regularly to account for mid-term entries and leavers. Staff are aware that the SIMS registers are legal documents and are given clear guidelines regarding the registration of students. Training is provided through pastoral teams on how to take a register and there is an attached administration person for each year group to provide further support.

Students are registered in each of their lessons, and it is the responsibility of the class teacher to ensure this happens. Where missing marks are noted, staff are required to bring these up to date immediately. To make our attendance checks as accurate and effective as possible, staff are asked to complete registers within the first five minutes of the lesson. The registers taken by form tutors and the teachers of lessons timetabled for the first period of the day will inform decisions regarding any contact with parents regarding a student's absence.

Attendance Procedures

It is expected that all students will attend registration with their form group in the morning unless alternative arrangements have been made by school. Where a student is not present in their form group at the point of registration, they will be recorded as being absent. If a student is not physically present in front of their form tutor, the student will be marked absent. Where a student is recorded as absent and school has not received a communication from a parent, carer, or guardian, school will contact them to explain that the student has not been present during registration.

We ask that parents, carers and guardians report their child's absence before 8.30am each day. Where a child is off for more than one day, a call should be made for each day where a child is unable to attend, unless it is agreed with the school that this is not necessary, due to the nature of the longer-term absence.

The Chaplaincy & Pastoral Leader for each year group will decide as to whether it is necessary for them to make a phone call to individual parents. This decision will be informed by the attendance pattern and history of the individual student involved. The Chaplaincy Leader will look to invite a parent into school where there is a persistent attendance issue with their child.

Where school does not receive a response following communication with a parent, parents will be given one further opportunity to provide a reason for their child's absence. If this is not received, then the absence will be recorded as unauthorised.

Where students may be involved in a school trip or other school activity, their registration

mark will be entered centrally by the Faculty Administration Assistant once their attendance has been confirmed.

Students educated off site

Students are dual rolled (St Paul's remaining as the main school) when their education is redirected to an alternative educational provider or while they are undergoing a 'Managed Move' to another school. School will keep regular contact with the providers of any alternative provision to ensure...

- the placement continues to meet the needs of each student;
- the student maintains good attendance and punctuality;
- any safeguarding concerns are addressed.

School Organisation:

For the attendance policy to be successful, every member of the staff must make attendance a high priority and should convey to students the importance and value of education and the impact this can have on attainment and social development.

In addition, there may be specific responsibilities allocated to individual staff such as the following:

Head Teacher:

- oversee and demonstrate ownership of the whole policy;
- regularly report progress on attendance to governors, students and parents, carers and guardians;
- set challenging but achievable targets to reduce levels of absence.

Designated Attendance Officer:

- oversee the efficient operation of the attendance system and the collation and analysis of attendance data;
- oversee the work of administrative staff;
- manage the attendance profile for the whole school;
- report to the Head Teacher/ Leadership Group on attendance issues;
- work in partnership with the Senior Attendance Officer – (Legal Interventions) (formerly Educational Welfare Service);
- report progress on attendance to governors, students and parents, carers or guardians.

Chaplaincy / Pastoral Leaders in liaison with Year Leaders – see school website for staff responsible for each year group.

- challenge suspicious or inappropriate reasons for absence;

- follow-up immediately any unexplained absence of students’;
- liaise regularly with the Designated Attendance Officer;
- work to achieve challenging targets set by Head teacher and reduce the levels of absence;
- create partnership with parents, carers or guardians;
- work with their faculty administrator to ensure effective communication;
- work in liaison with tutors and class teachers;
- welcome back absentees, reintegrating back socially and academically.

Class Teacher

- complete registers accurately and on time;
- notify their faculty administration where there is a problem in taking a register;
- inform Chaplaincy / Pastoral Leader, Year Leader of attendance concerns;
- ensure letters of absence are produced on students return to school.
- work in liaison with Chaplaincy / Pastoral Leader and Heads of Department to issue consequences for lateness to school and lessons.
- welcome back absentees, reintegrating back socially and academically.

Office Staff:

- produce absence letters in liaison with Pastoral/ Chaplaincy Leaders;
- produce reply letters to request for leave of absence;
- ensure messages regarding attendance and absence are passed on to the form tutor and Pastoral / Chaplaincy Leaders;
- identify and inform staff where marks are missing or registers incomplete;
- enter attendance marks centrally when necessary.

Governors:

- may be given a specific role/interest in monitoring attendance and/or policies.

- may have representation at school attendance panels, information evenings, open nights, school tours etc.
- request regular attendance progress reports for Governors' Meetings.

Review: 2025/26 by Leadership Group for presentation to Governors' Curriculum and Teaching Committee