



St Laurence School

Policy on Attendance

1. Introduction

The Governing Body recognises the causal link between student attendance and student achievement and acknowledges that full attendance underpins learning. It expects staff to place high priority on punctuality and attendance by students in partnership with their parents in order to maximise student achievement and progress.

As a Church school, our ethos is one that values all students equally and seeks to provide the opportunity for every student to develop to their full potential during their time at school. All young people have a right to education and it is well documented that poor attendance can result in restricted access to the curriculum, disaffection from school, lowered academic success and loss of educational opportunity. We embrace our moral duty to ensure that attendance is a high priority and are unwavering in our drive to continue to improve the attendance of all students to give them the very best possible chance of success.

Our school aims to meet its obligations with regards to school attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Exceeding current national and Wiltshire average attendance rates for secondary schools of 94.5% and 94.3% respectively¹
- Setting aspirational targets for our school average attendance rate (this academic year 96% when taking account of COVID related absence)
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence, ensuring that the number of students identified with persistent absence are significantly below national and Wiltshire averages for secondary schools of 13.7% and 13.8% respectively²

We will also support parents and carers 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

The Law firmly places the responsibility for attendance with the parents or carers of the child. Section 7 of the Education Act 1996 states that parents of children of compulsory school age are required to ensure that they receive sufficient full time education. Attendance includes punctuality and the responsibility for ensuring a child is in school on time also lies with the parent or carer.

If a child who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly and there are no legitimate reasons, then parents are guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, parents will be liable to a fine of up to £2500/and or a prison sentence of up to 3 months. Magistrates may also impose a Parenting Order

This policy meets the requirements of the school attendance guidance published by the DfE in August 2020 (*School Attendance: Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities*) and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance published in January 2015 (*School attendance parental responsibility measures: Statutory guidance for local authorities, school leaders, school staff, governing bodies and the police*). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:

¹ Based on published DfE data for 2018-19 as, at time of writing, figures for 2019-20 have not yet been published

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- 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 published in February 2019 (*School census 2018 to 2019 Guide, version 1.7*) which explains the persistent absence threshold and further details about the coding of absence.

3. Strategies

The Governing Body agrees Annual Attendance Targets as part of the annual review of the attendance policy and is committed to the following approaches for maximising standards of attendance:

- promoting a welcoming and caring ethos where good attendance and punctuality are recognised as 'the norm' and are valued by the school community
- where appropriate, making decisions that allow for a programme of personalised learning and individual learning pathways often in consultation with other agencies
- acknowledging and recognising high levels of attendance and improved attendance through individualised contact, use of the rewards system and House Briefings
- emphasising parental responsibility as shown by the Home-School Partnership document
- working in partnership with parents and carers and communicating clearly about matters relating to attendance
- using an accurate system for collating and monitoring attendance with a rapid follow-up of any unexplained absence
- evaluating attendance data systematically and targeting appropriate intervention
- providing support for students and families who, for genuine reasons, may experience attendance problems
- offering a tailored approach to the reintegration of students after long periods of absence
- raising awareness about the importance of uninterrupted attendance with staff, parents, carers and students
- employing a clear set of criteria for authorising planned absence
- working in partnership with our cluster primaries to maintain clear criteria for the granting of exceptional leave of absence
- ensuring an effective partnership with the Education Welfare Service (EWO) and a range of outside agencies
- making a firm stand against low levels of attendance including the use of Fixed Penalty Fines and Fast Track Prosecution

4. Roles and Responsibilities

4.1 Governors of the Community and Ethos Committee are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. They also hold the Headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

4.2 The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the policy is effectively implemented across the school and communicated to parents as well as for making decisions regarding parental requests for holidays or pre planned exceptional leave of absence.

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4.3 The Deputy Headteacher is responsible for:

- a) monitoring school-level attendance data, identifying trends and presenting termly summary reports to the senior leadership team and the governors
- b) initiating whole school policies as required
- c) developing coherent whole school systems for improving attendance including supportive interventions
- d) promoting good attendance through assemblies, briefings and communications with parents and carers
- e) supporting other staff in monitoring the attendance of individual pupils.

This includes close liaison with the Attendance Officer and other members of the admin team who ensure that data is circulated regularly to the Deputy Headteacher and the House Teams.

4.4 The Assistant Headteacher Safeguarding and Student Well-being is responsible for:

- a) developing safeguarding systems and effective working with partners and other agencies to protect and promote the welfare of students, maximising their attendance
- b) representing the school at Local Authority Attendance Meetings which are chaired by the Educational Welfare Officer
- c) ensuring that PP students are monitored carefully and appropriate intervention is provided where needed
- d) monitoring the attendance of LAC students in line with their PEPs

4.5 Heads of House, in conjunction with their Assistant Head of House and tutors, are responsible for:

- a) monitoring the attendance of their House Group, including the monitoring of vulnerable students and disadvantaged groups
- b) being vigilant in monitoring absence and alert to any patterns that may indicate: SEND needs, or the potential of as yet undiagnosed SEND needs, which may be the underlying cause of poor attendance and referring these to the AEN team; possible safeguarding issues associated with poor attendance and referring these to the safeguarding team; unreported bullying which should be investigated so that appropriate intervention and support can be provided
- c) promoting and celebrating good attendance through the rewards system and House Briefings
- d) challenging unexplained or persistent absence through contact with parents and carers
- e) meeting with parents and carers where attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern
- f) closely monitoring students with previous attendance concerns and those whose attendance falls below 96%
- g) co-ordinating the sending of letters to parents and carers of those students with attendance concerns
- h) targeting appropriate intervention to secure improvement
- i) putting in place early intervention for students who are at risk of PA
- j) using knowledge of historical patterns of attendance to identify students at risk of poor attendance and apply early intervention
- k) identifying and reporting children who are missing in education
- l) offering support through external agencies as required

4.6 The Assistant Headteacher (Director of 6F) in conjunction with the 6F Administrator and tutors are responsible for:

- a) monitoring the attendance of Y12 and Y13 students, including the monitoring of vulnerable students and disadvantaged groups
- b) being vigilant in monitoring absence and alert to any patterns that may indicate: SEND needs, or the potential of as yet undiagnosed SEND needs, which may be the underlying cause of poor attendance and referring these to the AEN team; possible safeguarding issues associated with poor attendance and referring these to



the safeguarding team; unreported bullying which should be investigated so that appropriate intervention and support can be provided

- c) promoting and celebrating good attendance through the rewards system and House Briefings
- d) challenging unexplained or persistent absence through contact with parents and carers
- e) meeting with parents and carers where attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern
- f) closely monitoring students with previous attendance concerns and those whose attendance falls below 96%
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- h) targeting appropriate intervention to secure improvement
- i) putting in place early intervention for students who are at risk of PA
- j) using knowledge of historical patterns of attendance to identify students at risk of poor attendance and apply early intervention
- k) identifying and reporting children who are missing in education
- l) offering support through external agencies as required

4.7 The Attendance Officer is responsible for:

- a) liaising with Heads of House, the Assistant Heads of House, tutors, parents and the EWO on any attendance issues causing concern
- b) monitoring registration marks for morning and afternoon attendance
- c) checking daily messages on the absence line
- d) recording on SIMs the details of messages left by parents and carers on the absence line
- e) sending truancy call to parents of students with unexplained absence
- f) sending any concerns to the relevant pastoral team for follow up
- g) alerting relevant members of the pastoral team should any student leave the site without permission
- h) monitoring incomplete registers on a daily basis and provide the DHT with regular information to act on
- i) completing forms for Fixed Penalty Notices where applicable and maintaining a log
- j) issuing Fixed Penalty Notice requests in line with LA guidance

4.8 Teachers and Tutors are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that an accurate register is taken at the designated times
- b) recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes
- c) ensuring that a register is taken for each lesson and following up on any suspicious absenteeism.
- d) challenging lateness and setting high standards of punctuality themselves

4.9 Parents are partners in the education process and their positive involvement is essential. They are responsible for:

- a) ensuring that their child attends school and arrives at school punctually, in accordance with their legal obligations
- b) working with the School to ensure that their child has full time attendance planning holidays outside of term time and during the school holidays
- c) completing, in advance, an official leave of absence request form if, in exceptional circumstances, a leave of absence is requested
- d) making every effort to ensure that medical and dental appointments are arranged outside of school hours
- e) contacting the School on the first day of absence and on subsequent days
- f) explaining all absences to the relevant members of the pastoral team
- g) Parents and carers will be asked to provide evidence of a doctor's involvement for prolonged or intermittent absence exceeding 10 sessions or in the case where a student's attendance has dropped below the concern level



Students are expected to attend school unless they are ill or have an authorised absence. In addition, they should be punctual to school every day, arriving on site by 8.30am so that they can start lessons on time at 8.35am. They are also expected to catch up on their studies, including Homework missed through absence.

5 Authorisation of Absence

All absence is challenged and the School determines whether to authorise an absence in line with LA and National Guidelines. No holiday absence will be authorised in term time except in compassionate or very exceptional circumstance with consideration also being given to the student's attendance, attainment and public examinations. Absences may only be authorised at the discretion of the Headteacher and where prior permission has been sought. Retrospective requests will be denied as a matter of course.

6 Monitoring

- 6.1 Termly monitoring of whole school attendance and the attendance of groups of students takes place in senior leadership team meetings and in Community and Ethos Governors' Meetings.
- 6.2 Fortnightly monitoring is conducted in the Behaviour and Attendance Meeting attended by the Deputy Headteacher, the Head of House, Assistant Head of House and Attendance Officer. In addition, Heads of House meet with the EWO on a fortnightly basis for guidance, advice and discussion of more complex cases.
- 6.3 Weekly monitoring of the attendance log is undertaken by the Head of House and the Assistant Head of House and appropriate interventions are planned and actioned.
- 6.4 Daily monitoring is undertaken by the House Team and the attendance officer who liaise closely to ensure that all absences are explained, that the correct coding has been used and that contact is made with parents and carers as required. As part of the daily monitoring, the House Team will prioritise contact for students with Pupil Premium status.
- 6.5 Compliance with regulations relating to maintenance of the Admission Register and other procedures (e.g. Children Missing from Education, Meeting the Medical Needs of Students; Exclusion Procedures) is monitored through the Heads of House regular, individual meetings and review with the EWO.
- 6.6 Student 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.
- 6.7 The Governors Community and Ethos Committee monitors progress against annual attendance targets.
- 6.8 The Governing Body ensures that annual absence figures are published and used as benchmark data for school improvement.

7 Links with other Policies

- 7.1 The implementation of the [latest government guidance](#) for the full opening of schools during the COVID-19 pandemic necessitates adjustments to existing policy and practice which is detailed in an addendum to this policy, published in September 2020. The addendum takes account of the specific changes to the recording of absence during the academic year 2020-21, in relation to coronavirus (COVID-19) and applies until further notice.

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7.2 This policy also links closely to the following policies and procedures:

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour Management Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Equalities Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Students with Medical Needs Policy



Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance (detailed in section 2 of this policy). They apply to children of compulsory school age (defined in the document as "up to 16 years old up to the last Friday in June"). We make use of these codes for all students at St Laurence.

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
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



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