



# SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY



|                          |  |                                   |
|--------------------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| <b>Approved by:</b>      | <br>Headmaster<br><br>Chair of Governors | <b>Date:</b> 10/12/24<br>10/10/23 |
| <b>Last reviewed on:</b> | December 2024  |                                   |
| <b>Next review by:</b>   | October 2025   |                                   |

*Note: This policy applies to all sections of the School including EYFS*

This policy:

- Is non-contractual in nature;
- Can be adjusted by the School to suit specific circumstances;
- Can be varied unilaterally by the School.

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## 1. Aims

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regards to school attendance through our whole-school culture and ethos that values good attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school
- We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

## 2. Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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](#)

It also refers to:

[School census guidance](#)

[Keeping Children Safe in Education](#)

[Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#)

## 3. Roles and responsibilities

### 3.1 The governing board

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy.

### 3.2 The Headmaster

The headmaster is the School's Senior Attendance Champion and 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
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary
- Prioritising and incentivizing good attendance.

### **3.3 The Senior Leadership Team**

The Senior Leadership Team are responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Building relationships with parents/carers to discuss and tackle attendance issues
- Creating intervention reintegration plans in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils and families.

### **3.4 Class teachers and form tutors**

Class teachers and form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.

### **3.6 School office staff**

School office staff will:

- Take calls from parents and carers about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents and carers to the Assistant Head Pastoral in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

### **3.7 Parents/carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 8:30 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

### 3.8 Pupils

Pupils are expected to:

- Attend school every day on time and no later than 8.50am in the morning
- Attend every timetabled session on time
- Arrive punctually to each lesson

## 4. Recording attendance

### 4.1 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. See Appendix 1 for Department for Education attendance codes.

In addition to these statutory requirements, teachers in the senior section of the school will register pupils at the start of each session to check attendance during the school day.

### 4.2 Lateness

Once the registers are closed at 8:50, any pupil arriving at the school will be marked as late. Records are kept of those pupils who are late; this is documented on the Management Information System for each pupil. Any child who arrives for school later than 9.25am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning.

Children, who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to school late, will have the absence recorded as a medical absence.

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often the most important aspect, as the beginning of the day is where the teacher explains the learning and what each child is expected to achieve. The following table demonstrates what consistent lateness equates to in lost learning over the course of an academic year:

| Lateness                 | Lost Learning          |
|--------------------------|------------------------|
| 5 minutes late each day  | 3 days learning lost   |
| 10 minutes late each day | 6.5 days learning lost |
| 15 minutes late each day | 10 days learning lost  |
| 20 minutes late each day | 13 days learning lost  |
| 30 minutes late each day | 19 days learning lost  |

Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

### 4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:30 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff (see also section 7).

We will mark absence due to physical or mental illness as authorized, unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

Where the absence is longer than 10 days or there are doubts about the authenticity of the illness, the school will ask for 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.

#### **4.3 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.

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 authorise.

#### **4.4 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

#### **4.5 Following up unexplained absence**

Where any pupil we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Call the pupil's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the pupil's emergency contacts, the school may contact social care
- 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 where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer

#### **4.6 Reporting to parents/carers**

The school will regularly inform parents/carers about their child's attendance and absence levels

### **5. Authorised and unauthorised absence**

#### **5.1 Approval for term-time absence**

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

We define 'exceptional circumstances' as:

- Death of a close relative
- Attendance at a funeral
- Attendance at a close relative's wedding
- A one-off, once in a lifetime event
- A holiday, when it may be judged too important for the well-being and cohesion of the family, following serious or terminal illness, bereavement, or another traumatic event

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least a week before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form. The Headmaster may require evidence to support any request for leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised absence** include:

Illness (including mental illness) and medical/dental appointments (see sections 4.2 and 4.3 for more detail)

Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents/carers belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents'/carers' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

Absence due to exceptional circumstances

**In the result of an absence that extends past a period of 14 days, it is a requirement for the school to have a visual meeting to fulfil its duty of care. In such cases, the class teacher or form tutor will arrange a meeting via Microsoft Teams or Zoom to 'check-in' and provide any support that the pupil may need. If the absence extends past subsequent periods of 14 days, follow-up meetings will be arranged until the pupil returns.**

## 5.2 Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents/carers 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/carers 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 take into account:

- 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.

## 6. Attendance monitoring

The school monitors attendance via its Management Information System (MIS). Class teachers and form tutors are accountable for monitoring attendance in the first instance and it is an expectation that they refer concerns regarding attendance to a member of the pastoral team. If a pupil's attendance falls below 90% then the following, set procedure is followed:

- A letter is sent to parents informing them that attendance has fallen below 90% and reinforces the school's expectations regarding attendance.
- If attendance continues to be below 90%, in the subsequent term in the same academic year, parents will be invited into school to meet with the pastoral team and discuss support strategies.

Parents can access their child's attendance record via the parent portal of the school's MIS and are expected to fully support their child's academic progress by ensuring they attend school. **Parents put their child(ren)'s place(s) at risk if they do not support the school's attendance policy and procedures.**

### **6.1 Monitoring attendance**

The school will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil 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.

### **6.2 Analysing attendance**

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns

### **6.3 Using data to improve attendance**

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers and form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with pupils and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

### **6.4 Promoting and Incentivising Good Attendance**

At the start of each term, the Headmaster will promote the importance of good attendance and remind pupils that 10% absence means the equivalent of one day or more per fortnight across a full school year.

At the end of each academic year, pupils who have achieved 98-100% attendance will be awarded a certificate at an Attendance Award Breakfast.

### **6.5 Reducing persistent and severe absence**

Persistent absence is where a pupil misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a pupil misses 50% or more of school.



The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents/carers of pupils who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

### **7. Monitoring arrangements**

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every two years by the Headmaster. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

### **8. Links with other policies**

This policy links to the following policies:

- Child protection and safeguarding policy
- Behaviour policy

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

### Present Codes

|    |   |
|----|---|
| /\ | present during registration   |
| B  | educated off site and taster days and do not fit K, V, P or W codes |
| K  | attending provision arranged by the local authority                 |
| L  | arrived after the register has started but before it has closed     |
| P  | Sporting activity with prior agreement from school                  |
| V  | educational visit or trip   |
| W  | work experience   |

### Absent Codes

#### Authorised Absences

|    |  |
|----|--|
| C  | exceptional circumstances  |
| C1 | in a regulated performance/undertaking regulated employment abroad                   |
| C2 | absent due to part-time timetable  |
| D  | dual registered  |
| E  | suspended or permanently excluded  |
| I  | illness (not medical or dental appointments)   |
| J1 | job/school/college interview   |
| M  | medical or dental appointment  |
| Q  | unable to attend because of a lack of access arrangements                            |
| R  | religious observance (only 1 day allowed, any more coded as C if agreed)             |
| S  | study leave  |
| T  | parent travelling for occupational purposes  |
| X  | non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school                        |
| Y1 | unable to attend due to transport provided not being available                       |
| Y2 | unable to attend due to widespread transport disruption                              |
| Y3 | unable to attend due to part of the school premises being closed                     |
| Y4 | unable to attend due to whole school closure   |
| Y5 | unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention                           |
| Y6 | unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law                    |
| Y7 | unable to attend due to other avoidable cause (must affect the pupil NOT the parent) |

#### Unauthorised Absence

|   |   |
|---|---|
| G | holiday (not agreed)  |
| N | reason for absence not yet established (must be corrected within 5 days)    |
| O | absent in other or unknown circumstances                                    |
| U | late after register has closed  |
| Z | pupil not yet on register   |
| # | planned whole school closure (eg holidays, insets and polling station days) |

## **Appendix 2: Timings of the School Day**

|        |                              |
|--------|------------------------------|
| 8.40am | Registration opens           |
| 8.50am | Registration closes          |
| 8.50am | School starts for all pupils |
| 3.30pm | School ends for KS1          |
| 3.45pm | School ends for Year 3-5     |
| 4.00pm | School ends for Year 6-11    |
| 4.00pm | Registration closes          |

### Appendix 3: Absence letter templates

#### 90% attendance

Dear X

I am writing regarding X's attendance which our records show has recently fallen below 90%.

As I feel certain you are aware, school attendance is important to a child's academic achievement, well-being, and wider development, and evidence suggests that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children's and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes.

This being the case, the school is concerned that X is missing out on key experiences and learning foundations, and we want to make sure that we can support X's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help them to address gaps in learning due to absence.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child. Please let us know if you are aware of any external factors at home or at school which are impacting on X's attendance at school.

If you would like to arrange a meeting to discuss X's attendance further, please contact me on [X@saintnicholasschool.net](mailto:X@saintnicholasschool.net) at the earliest opportunity.

Yours sincerely

#### 75% attendance

Dear X

I am writing regarding X's attendance, which our records show has recently fallen below 75%.

As I feel certain you are aware, school attendance is important to a child's academic achievement, well-being, and wider development, and evidence suggests that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes.

This being the case, the school is concerned that X is missing out on key experiences and learning foundations, and we want to make sure that we can support X's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help him/her to address gaps in learning due to absence.

We would like to invite you to come into school to discuss X's attendance in more detail, to ascertain whether there is anything:

- happening at school that makes it difficult for X to attend
- happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- we can do to make it easier for X to attend school regularly.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child.

Please contact me on [X@saintnicholasschool.net](mailto:X@saintnicholasschool.net) at your earliest convenience so we can arrange to discuss this important matter, and how we can work together to help improve X's attendance.

Yours sincerely

## 50% attendance

Dear X

I am writing regarding X's attendance which our records show has recently fallen below 50%.

As I feel certain you are aware, school attendance is important to a child's academic achievement, well-being, and wider development, and evidence suggests that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children's and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes.

This being the case, the school is concerned that X is missing out on key experiences and learning foundations, and we want to make sure that we can support X's education in the best way possible, including looking into how we can help him/her to address gaps in learning due to absence.

We would like to invite you to come into school and meet with the Headmaster to discuss X's attendance in more detail, to ascertain whether there is anything either:

- happening at school that makes it difficult for X to attend
- happening at home that we can help with, or that you think we should be aware of
- we can do to make it easier for X to attend school regularly.

We know that every family's circumstances are different and want to work with you to provide the best education for your child.

Please contact Julia Bradley at your earliest convenience – [heads\\_pa@saintnicholasschool.net](mailto:heads_pa@saintnicholasschool.net) or 01279 429910 ext 1, to make an appointment to discuss this important matter with the Headmaster, and how we can work together to help improve X's attendance.

Yours sincerely