





St Augustine's Catholic High School and Sixth Form

Attendance Policy

Approved		Date
Co-Chair, Governors		09.11.22
Principal G T O'Connor		09.11.22
Full Board Meeting:	Ratification by LGB	14.12.22
Cycle of Review: 3 years Next Review Date: November 2025		
Catholic Mission & Community		



ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

Attendance Policy

1.0 Aims

At St Augustine's High School and Sixth Form, we believe that attendance is everyone's responsibility, from children and their parents, to form teachers, heads of year, and pastoral staff. We strive for a whole school attendance target of 97%. Where this is not possible, we endeavour to support families to achieve the highest attendance percentage possible. We demonstrate compassion for children's individual needs, whilst also striving to increase attendance. We believe academic achievement and attendance go hand in hand. We recognise that poor attendance and persistent absence can indicate wider needs in a child's social and emotional wellbeing, and seek ways to eliminate these barriers and support our children and their families.

RISE

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

- Promoting good attendance and reducing absence, including persistent absence
- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled
- Acting early to address patterns of absence

We will also support parents to perform their legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age attend regularly, and will promote and support punctuality in attending lessons.

2.0 Legislation and Guidance

- This policy meets the requirements of the [Working together to improve school attendance guidance](#) from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on [school attendance parental responsibility measures](#). These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
 - Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
 - Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
 - Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
 - [The Education \(Pupil Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006](#) (and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments)
 - [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)
- This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold.

3.0 Roles and Responsibilities

3.1 The Local Governing Body

The LGB is responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy. The Link Governor for attendance is Chris Heath, Parent Governor.

3.2 The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school and supported by the Senior Leader responsible for attendance and pastoral care.

- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3 The Attendance Officer

The school Attendance Officer:

- Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level
- Reports concerns about attendance to the headteacher, safeguarding lead, and/ or Head of year
- Works with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Advises the headteacher when to issue fixed-penalty notices
- Supports the day to day running of the Attendance Office, alongside the attendance clerk and Reception team.
- Issues letters to parents in line with Local authority guidelines for example when pursuing legal sanctions, or when responding to requests for Leave in term time.
- Monitoring the attendance of students who attend alternative provisions and updating MIS to reflect their attendance.

3.4 The Attendance Administration Assistant

The school Attendance Administration Assistant:

- Monitors daily absence using the school MIS system, inputs data received for example through telephone calls and/or emails regarding pupil absence
- Monitors lateness and issues sanctions for lateness
- Implements first response safeguarding processes such as First Absence messages (within 1 hour of registers closing), and telephone calls, and refers concerns to attendance officer or safeguarding team, inputting Accurate comments into MIS and Attendance monitoring spreadsheets.
- Ensure accuracy when inputting register marks, monitors and request missing registers, and clarifies anomalies in the data
- Reports daily attendance figures to Headteacher and attendance team
- Alongside reception team, close monitoring and safeguarding of students who leave the site early or arrive late; this includes checking validity of appointments and ensuring accurate records are kept.

3.5 Form Tutors

Form tutors are responsible for:

- recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office.
- Making amendments to submitted registers if students arrive late
- Following school processes for Attendance interventions, when students reach thresholds of 97%, 95%, 90%, or less than 90%. Report sent via Studybugs weekly will inform form tutors of any students whose attendance is less than 93%.
- Carry out informal 'return to school' interviews with students when they return from periods of absence, especially when that absence has been unauthorised or prolonged.
- Understand register codes and identify children who are frequently Late (L) or very late (U), and implement interventions to support these children.
- Liaising with HOY in fortnightly meetings, raising specific attendance concerns
- Using MIS communication log to record any communications with parents or students, including failed attempts.

3.6 Heads of Year

Heads of Year are responsible for:

- Attending weekly meetings with the attendance officer, passing concerns from Form tutors and sharing relevant information

- Conducting fortnightly meetings with the Form tutors in their year group, tracking students' attendance and passing causes for concern to the attendance officer
- Engaging with parents via telephone call, email or face to face meetings
- Alongside the attendance officer, implementing strategies in school to support children for whom attendance is a cause for concerns

3.7 SENCO and Progress leaders

For children on the SEN registers, SENCO and Progress leaders are responsible for:

- Weekly meeting with the attendance officer to share information and pass concerns
- Appropriately and accurately registering students who attend sessions outside of their timetabled programme as part of a support plan in school. This includes AM/PM registers, and class registers. Flagging the attendance mark to indicate the child was not in the timetabled session.
- Making contact with families when children are absent from school, especially if this absence is prolonged or unauthorised, and Reporting the outcomes of this contact (or failed contact) to the attendance officer. This will be in addition to the standard Absence procedures implemented for all absent students by the attendance office clerk.

3.8 School Reception staff

School reception team are responsible for:

- Receiving calls, emails and voicemail messages from parents about absence and record it on the school system.
- close monitoring and safeguarding of students who leave the site early or arrive late; this includes checking validity of appointments and ensuring accurate records are kept.

4.0 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. It will mark whether every pupil is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils must arrive in school by 9.15am on each school day. The register for the first session will be taken at 9.15AM and will be kept open until 9.20. Latecomers can be marked present (Late) from 9.20AM until 9.40AM. The register for the second session will be taken at 1.10PM and will be kept open until 1.15PM. Pupils, including those of non-statutory age, must attend both registrations every day. Students who arrive late for any reason must sign in at the Main reception or attendance office and must not enter school by any other entrance. Sanctions will be issued for lateness, and prolonged lateness will incur further sanctions, in line with our behaviour policy.

4.2 Unplanned absence

The pupil's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9.10 am, or as soon as practically possible (see also section 8.0). There are various means of communication available to parents. Our primary means of communicating absence is our StudyBugs app, details of which are included weekly in our

newsletters. Studybugs allows for the most efficient transfer of information from parents to registers, and we urge all parents to use the app if at all possible.

If parents require a follow up phone call regarding the absence, this can be requested via the StudyBugs app in addition to reporting the absence. In the unlikely event that parents are unable to use the Studybugs app, parents and carers can email sta-attendance@sta.magnificat.co.uk and report the absence. If parents require a call back from the attendance officer, they can request this via this email. If electronic means are not available, a telephone call can be made to the school office giving the child's name, form group and reason for absence.

The attendance administration assistant, or attendance officer, may follow up any absence report via telephone to address concerns, or check the validity of any report. We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the pupil's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

If unauthorised absence is frequent, the attendance officer may contact parents and implement legal sanctions. If on any day we do not hear from parents for the reason for absence, and our subsequent telephone call and other attempts to contact parents are unsuccessful, we will implement safeguarding processes such as Home visits, and in extreme cases contact 101 to report the child missing.

4.3 Planned Absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised provided the pupil's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. This notification can be made by any of the means of communication above, however as with absence reporting, StudyBugs is our preferred means of notification. 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, and attend school both before and after their appointment time.

For students of non- statutory age, a Pink Slip must be signed by a member of the Sixth Form leadership team. Students must provide evidence of the appointment or engagement. Students must bring the signed Pink slip to the attendance office and sign out. Driving lessons may only be booked during Free/ non-timetabled sessions. In all cases, students should be out of school for the minimum amount of time required, and attend school both before and after their appointment if possible. 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. See 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 (after 9.20 and before 9.40) will be marked as late, using the appropriate code (L) A breaktime detention will be issued for all latecomers who do not have an authorised reason.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code (U)
- Form teachers will speak to children who are frequently late, and report the outcomes of these conversations to HOYs and Attendance officer.

4.5 Following up absence

Where any child we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the school will:

On the day of absence:

- attendance Administration Assistant will send absence text and email reminder.
- If this does not yield a response, a follow up phone call will be made.
- If still no response, further safeguarding such as home visits or logging with 101 may be implemented.
- ensure the correct code is used and the MIS correctly annotated

As part of a wider attendance monitoring strategy, the school will:

- attempt to contact parents through a variety of means, such as text, email, letter
- speak to the child in school about their attendance and their needs

- meet with parents and their children to consider ways we can remove the barriers to attendance, and implement strategies tailored to the child and their family to increase their attendance and support any additional needs they may have.
- monitor individual attendance and send letters according to the guidance from the Local authority
- Consider implementing legal sanctions if necessary.

5.0 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 Approval for Term-Time Absence

The Principal will only grant a leave of absence to pupils during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the Principal's discretion. The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- 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 belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision
- If a child is on a reduced timetable as part of a support plan in school.
- Family bereavement or funeral.

Please be aware that absence will NOT be authorised for the following reasons:

- Family members having COVID if the child does not have confirmed covid themselves.
- Problems with transportation
- Issues with uniform- in the event of uniform being damaged or incomplete, please notify school and we will attempt to arrange temporary exemption or loans of uniform (eg ties or blazers)

5.2 Reducing Persistent Absence

Persistent absence is where a child's attendance falls below 90%. The School will attempt interventions before this figure is reached, using the guide attached. Tackling Absence is everyone's responsibility and form tutors, Heads of Year, Pastoral teams, Chaplaincy, SEN teams and the attendance officer all have responsibilities to support children for whom attendance is becoming problematic.

6.0 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age. If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority. Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police. The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may 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 a suspended 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.

7.0 Strategies for Promoting Attendance

Where a child's attendance is dipping, the following strategies are put in place:-

- Pastoral Support Programme (PSP)
- Parental meetings
- Governor meetings

- Rewarding students when attendance is showing signs of improvement; these include postcards, rewards, shout-outs etc.

8.0 Attendance Monitoring

The attendance officer at our school monitors pupil absence on a daily, weekly and monthly basis. A pupil's parent/carer is expected to call the school in the morning if their child is going to be absent due to ill health (see section 4.2). We require parents to contact school to report absence every day that the child is off school, unless in specific circumstances (eg. child in hospital for set number of days). In the case of certain long-term conditions, it may be agreed that weekly reporting will be sufficient. If a pupil's absence goes above 3 consecutive days the school will contact the parent/carer of the pupil to discuss the reasons for this, even if absence has been reported daily. The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee and advice will be sought from the Local authority. 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.

The School will retain attendance data through our MIS system and through our internal recording systems. Telephone calls, meetings and letters will be recorded in this way, to build specific casework relating to each child. Data analysis by the Attendance officer using the MIS system will identify children or groups for whom absence is a cause for concern, and once identified, the strategies identified within this policy will be implemented.

We invite all parents and carers to contact the school Attendance officer at any time should they wish to discuss concerns about their child's attendance.

8.1 Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum, annually by SLT member responsible for Pastoral Care.

9.0 Escalation of procedures

9.1 Saint Augustine's have adopted Worcestershire Children First approach to escalating school attendance matters who we believe are vulnerable and/or missing from education (CME)

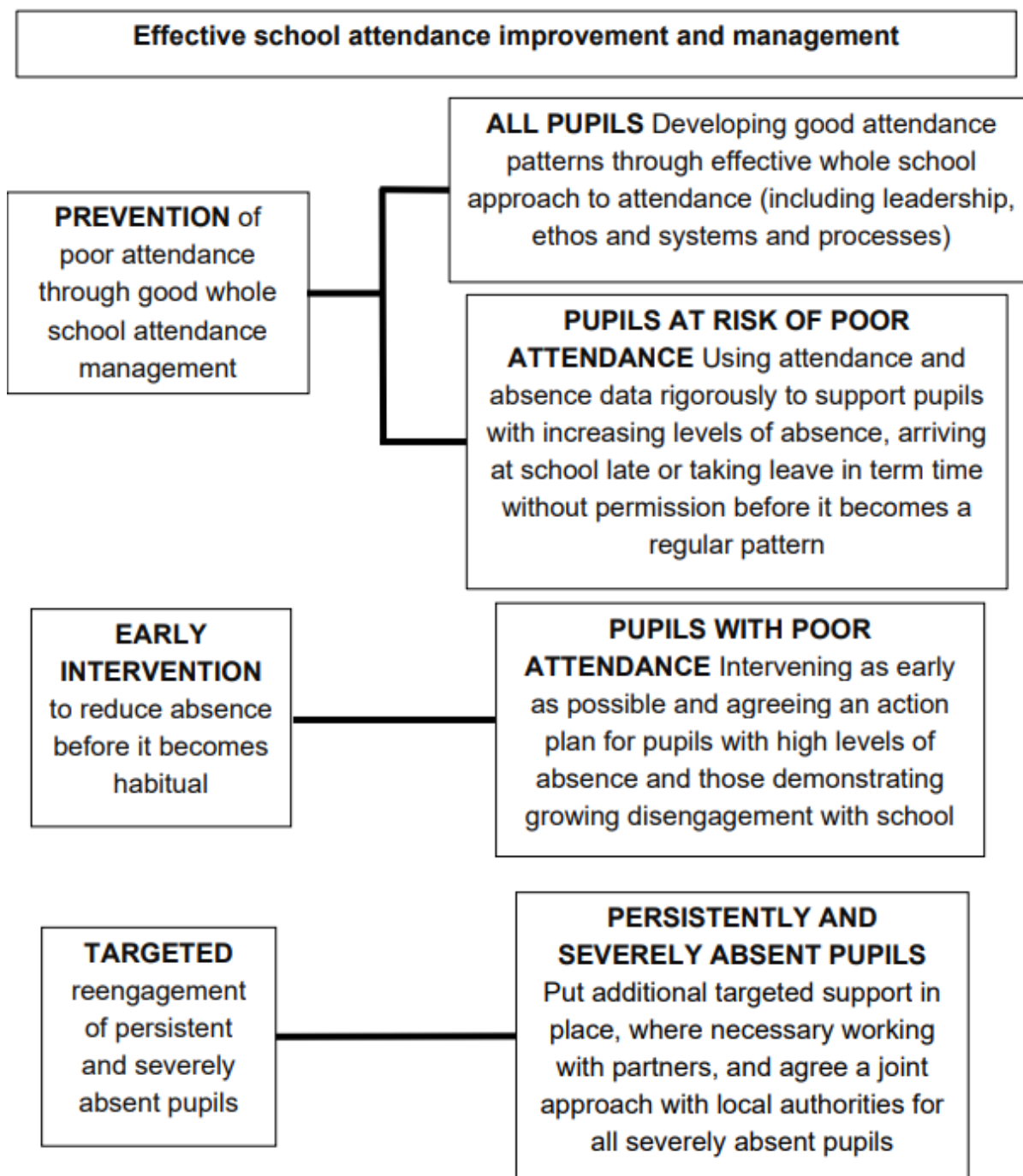
Where absence escalates and pupils miss 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year), schools and local authorities are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and reengage these pupils.

In doing so, schools should sensitively consider some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support for children who might be facing difficulties, rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Particular focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50% or more of school). These severely absent pupils may find it more difficult to be in school or face bigger barriers to their regular attendance and as such are likely to need more intensive support across a range of partners. All partners should work together to make this group the top priority for support – this may include specific support with attendance or a whole family plan, but it may also include consideration for an education, health and care plan or an alternative form of educational provision where necessary to overcome the barriers to being in school.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated by schools, local authorities, and other partners, and the appropriate educational support or placements (e.g. an education, health and care plan) have been provided but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect. Schools and local authorities should be especially conscious of any potential safeguarding issues in these cases and where these remain, conduct a full children's social care assessment.

In all cases, schools and local authorities are expected to make patterns of both persistent and severe absence a focus of their regular data monitoring and identify pupils and cohorts who need targeted attendance support as quickly as possible. Both persistent and severe absence should also be central to school, trust, and local authority level strategies for improving attendance.



Help and support is available as part of the Worcestershire Early Help offer through the [Worcestershire Virtual Family Hub](#).

Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
E	Excluded	Pupil has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances

I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence	Pupil from a Traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
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

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
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