





St Augustine's Catholic High School and Sixth Form

Attendance Policy (updated, CV-19)

Approved		Date
Chair B Stokes		15.09.20
Principal G T O'Connor		15.09.20
Cycle of Review:	3 years	
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ST AUGUSTINE'S CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL AND SIXTH FORM

DEVELOPING THE WHOLE PERSON

Attendance Policy

Introduction

This is a successful school and your child plays their part in making it so. We aim for an environment, which enables and encourages all of our students to realise their full potential and exceed expectations. To achieve these goals and gain the greatest benefit from their education it is vital that students attend school regularly and are on time every day that school is open. It is very important therefore that you make sure that your child attends regularly and this Policy sets out how, by working together we can achieve this. High attendance leads to high achievement and embeds an ethic that will stay with your child in the future.

Why Regular Attendance is so important

Ensuring your child attends school regularly is your legal responsibility and permitting absence from school without a good reason is an offence and may result in prosecution.

The Education Act states that parents and carers must ensure that their child of school age receives a suitable education. For most children this is full-time schooling.

Unacceptable reasons for absence would include: shopping trips, birthday treats and trips out, looking after siblings or elderly family members or non-urgent medical or dental appointments.

Research shows that children who attend school regularly are likely to become more successful.

A student who misses a day of school a week misses an equivalent of two whole school years in their life and a half day a week missed during Years 10 and 11 can mean a loss of a grade for every GCSE taken.

Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everyone's responsibility shared by parents/carers, students and all members of school staff.

To promote this:

- You will receive attendance updates every term giving details of your child's attendance.
- The school will be celebrating good attendance by displaying individual and class achievements.
- The school will reward good attendance by issuing Certificates to your child when they receive 100% attendance each term and half term.

Understanding Types of Absence

Every half-day absence from school has to be classified by the school (not by the parents), as either **AUTHORISED** or **UNAUTHORISED**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school for a very good reason e.g. illness or emergencies. The school understands that some hospital and or medical appointments will fall within the school day but we ask your support in trying to make non urgent appointments and by sending an appointment card or letter into school. **Only the school can authorise an absence.**

Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. This type of absence can lead to Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings.

This includes:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- Truancy during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Children who arrive at school too late to get a mark

Whilst any child may be off school because they are ill, sometimes they can be reluctant to attend school. Any problems with regular attendance are best sorted out between the school, the parent/carer and the child. It is never good to cover for a child by making excuses on their behalf. This gives the impression that attendance does not matter and usually makes things worse. It is vital that you speak to the school so that the matter can be resolved as quickly as possible.

COVID19 Procedures

Saint Augustine's Catholic High School will follow guidelines set out by the Government at both a national and local level. The advice for the September 2020 start is that all students are expected to return to school unless they, or a family member are symptomatic and are self isolating. If a student is symptomatic or a family member is displaying symptoms then students should be kept at home whilst a test is taken. Students should not return until either a test has been confirmed negative or self isolation has been completed.

Parents should use the Track and Trace and keep school informed. We will cooperate with Track and Trace, follow their advice and where required we will share information about which students have been in close contact with a person who has had their infection confirmed.

Persistent Absence (PA)

We, as a school, we are focused on improving overall school attendance and reducing persistent absence. We do this through working on initiatives in partnership within school and other agencies. Our aim is to raise awareness of the problems and possible solutions to parent's/carers and students.

A student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they obtain 64 absences at the end of the Academic year. This means that they will never have above 85% attendance. Absence at this level will cause considerable damage to your child's education and we need every parents fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the level of PA or is at risk of moving towards that mark is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately.

PA students are tracked and monitored carefully through our attendance system and brought to the attention of our Education Welfare Officer and where appropriate court action may be deemed appropriate.

Attendance Procedures

If your child is absent you must:

Contact school on the first day of absence. You can do this by phoning the Attendance Officer on 01527 555965 or email to suchs@saintsa.co.uk

Send a note on their return in their Planner with an explanation for absence.

If your child is absent we will:

- Telephone or text you on the first day of absence if we have not heard from you.
- Invite you in to discuss the situation with our Attendance Officer, Head of Year or Assistant Principal if this becomes a concern.

***Please ensure that we have up to date contact numbers for your child at all times.**

The Education Investigation Service

Parents/carers are expected to contact school at an early stage and to work with the staff in resolving any problems together. This is nearly always successful. If difficulties cannot be resolved in this way, the school may refer the child to the Education Investigation Service (EIS) at the Local Authority. They will also try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and

unauthorised absence persists, these Officers can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court. Full details of the options open to enforce attendance at school are available from the school or Local Authority.

Alternatively, parents or children may wish to contact the EIS themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Authority.

Punctuality

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the school day they will miss out on vital information and news for the day. Late arriving students also disrupt lessons. This can be embarrassing for your child and also encourage absence.

How we manage lateness:

The school day starts at 9.15am and we expect your child to be in class at that time

Registers are marked by 9.20am and your child will receive a late mark if they are not in class by that time.

Students who are late will receive a break detention the same day. If your child is late to school twice or more in one week they will receive an after school detention for which you will be notified by letter. The detention will be completed the Wednesday following receipt of the letter.

HOLIDAYS IN TERM TIME

Holidays in term time are actively discouraged by the school and Worcestershire County Council (WCC).

Taking holidays in term time will affect your child's education as much as any other absence. We expect parents/carers to help us by not taking children away in school time. Penalty notices can be issued by the Local Authority for periods of unauthorised absence as there is no automatic right to any leave or holiday in term time.

The Principal may not grant any leave of absence, or holiday in term time, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Where an absence request is authorised the Principal will determine the number of days a student can be absent.

- Where an absence is approved it will be registered as authorised
- Where an absence is declined it will be registered as unauthorised (if taken)
- Each request for absence will be judged on a case by case basis
- Any leave of absence must be requested and agreed by the Principal in advance of the absence

In deciding whether or not to grant the request for leave of absence the following should be taken into account;

- overall pattern of attendance;
- age of the child(ren)
- phase of education;
- time of the year and examinations;
- length, destination and purpose of the leave and whether it is likely to be a rare event in the life of the child;
- family circumstances and the parents'/carers' reasons for wanting to take their annual holiday during term time.

Should the school decide to grant leave of absence but, the child **does not return to school at the time s/he was expected to** (i.e. following the expiry of the granted leave of absence period) and, no information is available to the school to explain/justify the continuing absence or make known the whereabouts of the child, **his/her place at the school could be lost.**

A child's name can be removed from the register if the student has been granted a leave of absence and after absence:

- s/he has not returned by the agreed date;

- s/he has continued to be absent for a further twenty school days;
- the Principal is not satisfied that this is because s/he is ill or the absence is unavoidable.

Before a student is removed from the school roll their case will first be referred to the Education Investigation Service.

Where necessary, and in line with WCC guidelines, should the School decide **not to grant leave of absence** and parents still take their child out of school, the absence will be recorded as **unauthorised** which may be subject to a Holiday Penalty Notice fine of £60 per parent per child. If not paid within 21 days, this fine increases to £120 per parent per child. Failure to pay the £120 fine within the period 22 to 28 days may lead to Court proceedings. This fine will be issued to both of the child's parents e.g. Child A is taken from school without authorisation from the Principal. This equates to Parent 1 being fined £60 and Parent 2 being fined £60. Should there be two children involved, Parent 1 is fined £120 and Parent 2 is fined £120 and so on if more children are taken out of school without authorisation.

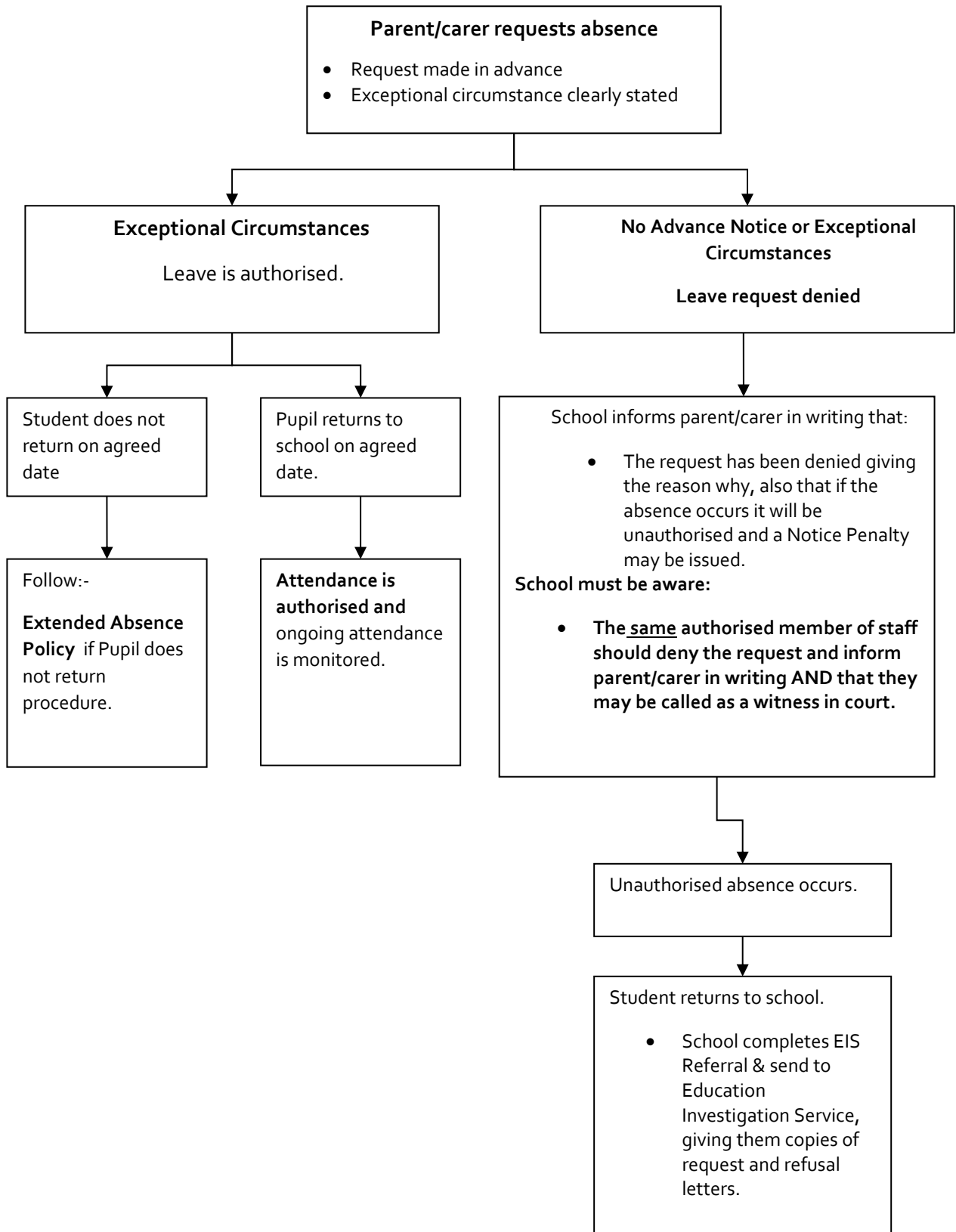
School Targets

The School Attendance target is set annually. For 2020-2021 the target is 96%.

Summary

The school has a legal duty to publish its absence figures to parents and to promote attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend. All school staff are committed to working with parents and students as the best way to ensure as high a level of attendance as possible.

Absence in Term Time Authorisation Procedure



Absence in Term Time: Student Does Not Return Procedure

