Attendance Policy
&
Attendance Procedures

Approved by:	PWG	**Date:** 5th March 2024
Last reviewed on:	13th June 2023	
Next review due by:	March 2027	
SLT Lead:	Marie Cordeiro	

Contents

1. Aims

1.1 St George Catholic College is in the Trusteeship of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Portsmouth and maintained by Southampton City Council Local Authority. Our school leaders and governors are entrusted by the Bishop with the ministry of school leadership and will always act in recognition of the love of Christ for all members of our College community and one another.

1.2 We share a vocation for the common good in our world and we are committed to working together as a family. All of our policies and procedures are formed to enable all members of our St George family to be safe and cherished, feel happy and fulfilled and be treated fairly in a positive environment founded on mutual respect and shared values. This policy is part of the foundation that enables everyone **to aspire to be all that God has created us to be.**

1.3 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 –

1.4 All staff should be aware that "children being absent from school for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues" (Keeping Children Safe in Education, September 2023).

1.4 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. Regular attendance is defined as above 95%.

2. Legislation and guidance

2.1 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
- Southampton City Council, *Reduced Timetable Protocol and Guidance for Schools and School Leaders.*
- Southampton City Council, *Elective Home Education Policy, Procedure and Guidance for Schools.* Southampton City Council*, Child Missing in Education (CME) Guidance for Schools.*
- Southampton City Council*, Code of Conduct for the use of Penalty Notices in Cases of Non-Attendance at School.*
- St George Catholic College *Child Protection Policy.*
- St George Catholic College *Safeguarding Policy.*
- St George Catholic College *Behaviour policy*

3.   Roles and responsibilities

3.1   The governing board, Chair of Governors - Mrs Anna McCormack **amccormack@stgcc.co.uk**

3.1.1 The governing board 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.

3.2   The Headteacher - Mr James Habberley
head@stgcc.co.uk   Tel 02380 322603

3.2.1 The Headteacher 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
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

3.3   The Deputy Headteacher - Ms Marie Cordeiro
mcordeiro@stgcc.co.uk   Tel 02380 322603
- The deputy headteacher is responsible for the strategic approach to attendance at the school.

The Attendance Officer - Mrs Sally Odam (Line Manager: Ms Marie Cordeiro)

Sally.odam@stgcc.co.uk   Tel 02380 322603

3.3.1 The school Attendance Officer:

> Monitors attendance data across the school and at an individual pupil level

> Liaises with parents daily

> Reports concerns about attendance to the Progress Leaders / Deputy Headteacher (Line Manager) / Headteacher

> Works with Education Welfare Officers to tackle persistent absence

> Produces termly an attendance report and reviews / discusses it with the EWO at Targeting Support Meetings (TSMs), which are an opportunity to strategically look at STGCC whole school's approach to attendance and discuss strategies for persistent and severely absent pupils

> Liaises with Progress Leaders / Deputy Headteacher (Line Manager) to organise / arrange calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues

> Advises the Headteacher / Deputy Headteacher (Line Manager) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

> Produces termly attendance reports for the Headteacher to report to governors

3.4   Progress Leaders

3.4.1 The 5 Progress Leaders:

- Meet with their tutor teams weekly and imperatively discuss attendance issues using the attendance tracker produced by the SIMS Officer and minute actions / delegate some phone calls to the tutors

- Liaise with the Attendance Officer: persistent absentees / vulnerable students / students on part timetable

- Work with EWO to tackle persistent absence

- Arrange calls / meetings with parents / carers to discuss attendance issues

- Ensure that students who are in interventions during tutor time are registered

- Monitor students arriving consistently late to school

- Reward good attendance in assemblies and in termly reward assemblies

3.5   Tutors and Class teachers

See appendix 2 – Structure of St George Catholic Day as from September 2022.

3.5.1 Tutors and Class Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information on SIMS. Registers must be taken within the first 10 minutes of tutor time and this applies to the 5 daily lessons. Registers are taken in tutor time between 8:30 and 8:40 and at the beginning of each 5 lessons – within 10 minutes of the start of each lesson. Should SIMS not be working, then a paper register must be produced and sent to the Attendance Officer as soon as possible.

3.5.2 Only students present in the classroom can be marked present. Any student seen in the school but not present in the classroom at the time of the register must be marked absent and an email must be sent to the Attendance Officer / ECO so that the student can be identified on the premises.

3.5.3 Students on planned interventions / support sessions in Trinity / meetings / 1:1 sessions during tutor time must be registered by the member of staff responsible for the student at that time. This can be done by directly registering the student on SIMS or by liaising with the Attendance Officer. Should the Attendance Officer be away then liaise with the Progress Leader.

3.6   School staff: reception/office

3.6.1 Staff in reception / office are expected to take calls from parents about absence and pass the information on to the Attendance Officer.

3.6.2 Staff in reception / office are expected to direct students who are late in school to the Attendance Officer.

3.6.3 This information must be passed on to the students when opening the gate - students come to reception and then go to the Attendance Officer.

3.7   Parents / Carers

3.7.1 Parents / carers have a responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually. Equally, parents / carers have a right to be provided in good time the necessary information from the school which will enable them to meet these obligations. We expect parents to contact the school when their child is absent to explain the reason on each and every day their son/daughter is not in school.

3.7.2 Parents have a responsibility to give the college more than one emergency number so that the college has additional options to make contact with a responsible adult

3.7.3 The school will advise parents / carers of dates in the school calendar through regular communication via letters, newsletters, website calendar / notifications, emails and text messages.

3.7.4 Should a parent or legal guardian wish to contact the school regarding their child's attendance they can contact the attendance officer or their son/daughter's progress leader on 02380 322603.

4.   Recording attendance

4.1   Attendance register

4.1.1   Please see Appendix 2 for the structure of the college day. This outlines the expectations of pupils including the start and end of the school day and what times the register is taken. We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

4.1.2 We will take our attendance register at the start of tutor time in the morning and at the beginning of our 5 daily lessons. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present

- Attending an approved off-site educational activity

- Absent

- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

4.1.3 See Appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

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

4.1.6 Students must arrive in school for 8:30am on each school day.

4.1.7 The register for the first session will be taken between 8:30am and 8:40am and will be kept open until 9:00am.

4.2   Unplanned absence

4.2.1 The student's parent/carer must notify the school on the first day of an unplanned absence by 8:30am or as soon as practically possible (see also section 5) by ringing the Attendance Officer on 02380 670102.   Should the line be engaged, then parents have the option to leave a message. The Attendance Officer listens to all the messages before sending truancy calls.

4.2.2 We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

4.2.3 If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student'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.

4.2.4 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

4.3.1 Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment. Parents / carers must send a note / email to the Attendance Officer.

4.3.2 However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

4.3.3 The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence.

4.4   Punctuality

o   School starts at 8.30am.

o   A student that arrives inside the school gate after 8.30am is late unless they are on a school bus.

o   A member of staff will meet all students on arrival from 8:30am – 9.00am, record their name on a spreadsheet stored on our T&L drive for the member of staff in charge of lunchtime detentions.

o   Students receive a 10-minute detention on the same day in our lunchtime detention room. Students to go to detention **first** and then lunch.

o   **Repeated lateness or failure to attend lunchtime detentions will result in an after-school 45-minute detention.**

o   Member of staff in charge of lunchtime detentions will update the detention log/SIMS.

o   Student runners/staff on emergency cover period 4 to deliver note to remind students of their detention.

o   If a student fails to turn up to a lunchtime detention, 50% of the detention time is added on to the next day's lunchtime detention. .

o   If a student receives three detentions in a week, a 90-minute pastoral will take place on the Friday of that week. The member of staff in charge of lunchtime detentions informs the Progress Leader to set the pastoral detention.

- o   If a student is late after 9:15am, the student will attend a **45-minute** detention the next day.

- o   **Students arriving after 9:00am must report to reception**.

4.5   Following up absence

4.5.1 Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, the Attendance

Officer will

> Follow up on their absence with their parent/carer to ascertain the reason on the same day of the absence through a truancy call. A follow up phone call on the same day will be made if the parent /carer does not reply to the truancy call.

> Ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary by liaising immediately with the DSL

> Identify whether the absence is approved or not

> Identify the correct attendance code to use

4.6   Reintegration and strategies for students with low attendance

> Potential attendance concerns in year 7 should be identified from primary records and liaison

> Progress Leaders should always seek to identify if there is an underlying cause for poor attendance. The school can then provide support via a range of strategies – referral to our Individual Pathway, bespoke timetable, 1:1 mentoring or off-site provision as well as referrals to outside agencies.

> In line with Southampton City Council guidance, the school will implement reduced timetables for students where this can help to improve attendance. Reduced timetables will be monitored with regular reviews meetings / communication.

4.7   Reporting to **parents / carers**

4.7.1 Students' attendance is included in their termly academic reports and sent daily via the App.

4.7.2. Low / erratic attendance is always reported to parents via phone calls, emails, App or meetings

5.   Authorised and unauthorised absence

5.1   Approval for term-time absence

5.1.1 The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to students during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion.

In order to request a leave of absence the parent or legal guardian must request a leave of absence form from the Attendance Officer Mrs Sally Odam well in advance of the requested dates or date. Once the parent or legal guardian has completed the form it must be handed in to the Head Teacher. The head teacher will then make a decision regarding the request, and record this on the form. It will then be given to the attendance office who will notify the Parent or Legal guardian of the outcome.

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

5.1.3 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 student's parents belong. If necessary, the school will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart

> ❯ Traveller students 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 student is attending educational provision

5.2 Reducing persistent absence

5.2.1 The school monitors closely unauthorized absence: phone calls home, letters and meetings (in school meetings and online meetings), safeguarding home visits. When necessary the school works with wider support services including the Education Welfare Officer, Children's Resources Services -CRS - , Children and Families First and the Virtual School to improve attendance.

5.3 Legal sanctions

5.3.1 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.

5.3.2 If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 (£80 from 1st September 2024) within 21 days or £120 (£160 from 1st September 2024) within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

5.3.3 Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

5.3.4 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 student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

5.3.5 If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

6. Strategies for promoting attendance

6.1 The importance of good attendance is always promoted in tutor time and weekly assemblies.

6.2 Progress Leaders acknowledge and reward best tutor group attendance in weekly assemblies with prizes.

6.3 Students who have good and improved attendance are always rewarded at the end of each term with rewards including 100% attendance certificates.

7. Attendance monitoring

7.1 The attendance officer at our school monitors student absence on a daily basis.

7.2 A student'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).

7.3 The student's parent/carer is expected to call the school each day their child is ill.

7.4   If a student's absence goes above **3** days, the school will contact the parent/carer of the student to discuss the reasons for this and/or will perform a home visit if necessary to ascertain the reason of the absence. The same will apply for our vulnerable students within 1 day of absence.

7.5   If a student's absence continues to rise after the school contacts their parent/carer, we will consider involving an education welfare officer.

7.6   The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a student's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the student will be classified as a persistent absentee.

7.7   Student-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 with the national average, and share this with the governing board.

7.8 Attendance data is stored in our electronic system – SIMS – and is used to:

> Track the attendance of individual students

> Identify whether or not there are particular groups of students whose absences may be a cause for concern

> Monitor and evaluate those students identified as being in need of intervention and support

> As part of our strategy of using data to improve attendance we have established weekly attendance trackers which are given to all tutors so that they can monitor students on a weekly basis across the year.

8.   Monitoring arrangements

8.1 This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum every 3 years by the Deputy Headteacher, Marie Cordeiro. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

9.   Links with other policies

9.1 This policy links to the following policies:

> Child protection policy and safeguarding policy

> Behaviour policy and statement of behaviour principles

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

Appendix 2:

Structure of St George Catholic College day as from September 2022

Time	Activity	Register
8:30am - 9:00am	Tutor time	8:30 to 8:40
9:00am – 10:00am	Period 1	9:00 to 9:10
10:00am – 11:00am	Period 2	10:00 to 10:10
11:00am – 11:20am	Break Time	
11:20am – 12:20pm	Period 3	11:20 to 11:30
12:20pm – 1:20pm	Period 4	12:20 to 12:30
1:20pm – 2:00pm	Lunch Time	
2:00pm – 3:00pm	Period 5	2:00 to 2:10