

St. Augustine's Catholic College

Attendance Policy

St. Augustine's Catholic College sees every individual student as a gift from God with a unique mission for their lives. In order to prepare our students for their life of work and service in the wider world, their access to education must be consistent.

1. Aim

The aim of St. Augustine's Catholic College's attendance policy is to enable the College to provide a consistent practice that encourages and facilitates the regular attendance of all pupils. Regular attendance at school is key to steady pupil progress and enjoyment of learning, and for this reason the school is dedicated to ensuring its attendance policy is adhered to as much as is possible.

St. Augustine's Catholic College takes a whole-school approach to maintaining excellent attendance and it is the joint responsibility of parents, pupils and all staff members to ensure that students are attending school as they should be. We endeavour to work with families to make sure that any problems or circumstances which may lead or be leading to poor attendance are given the right attention and appropriate support.

This policy is supported by our policies on **safeguarding, bullying, behaviour** and **inclusive learning**.

2. Legal framework

The Education Act 1996 states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

Prescribed days are 31 August, 31 December and 31 March

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year (the last Friday in June) —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

St. Augustine's Catholic College is dedicated to complying with attendance laws set out by the legal framework and has set out this attendance policy accordingly.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents and staff
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents and children to implement the policy effectively

- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents, children and staff
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets
- take time at governors' meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents and staff
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future.

School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues

- ensure that legislation and government guidance on attendance is complied with and that they (the senior leadership team) are up to date with any legislative changes and how to implement them
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job
- report to the governing body each term on attendance records, data and provision
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy, legislation and government guidance, and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken morning and afternoon and **submitted for administration to process by 9.30am and 2.30pm** respectively
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed

- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at college
- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular college attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set procedure college for reporting the absence of their child from college (**see section 4**), and include an expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary college absences, such as making medical and dental appointments outside school hours
- use the college as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the college informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of college for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the head teacher (**see section 4.5**)
- sign the home–college agreement.

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the college's attendance policy, and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the college staff, parents and the school timetable
- speak to their form tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at college or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their college timetable
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- follow the correct set college procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.8**). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all pupils what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the college to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a college evacuation
- sign the home–college agreement.

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the College. Parents cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the College register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised. Where staff have concerns regarding absences they should follow the College's safeguarding procedures.

When a child is to be absent from college without prior permission, parents should inform the College by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence (3 or more days), this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

4.1 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the College on each day of absence. If parents have not called the College, when the student returns they should bring a note from their parent explaining the absence – this is for the College records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents may be asked to provide the College with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

4.2 Medical or dental appointments

Parents should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside college hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend for college as much of that day as possible.

4.3 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the college will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement.

4.4 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. Head of Year will arrange for work to be sent home.

4.5 Family holidays and extended leave

Parents should make every effort to ensure that family holidays and extended leave are arranged outside of college term time. Parents may request a leave of absence during term time. Requests for leave of this type must be made in writing to the head teacher 10 college days in advance of the leave being taken. In the case of unforeseen circumstances, such as a family bereavement that requires the child to travel to another country, this will be taken into consideration.

Retrospective applications will not be considered and this time taken will be processed as unauthorised absence. The head teacher may only grant such requests in exceptional circumstances and the head teacher's decision is final on whether the request is approved and the length of absence approved.

All requests for authorised absence will be responded to in writing, and will outline the details of when the child is expected to return to college. Parents should contact the College immediately if there will be a cause for delay from the stated date of return.

When deciding whether to authorise absence, the head teacher will take the following into account:

- Student's previous attendance history
- How close in time it is to public examinations
- Ability to catch-up on work missed
- Frequency of requests
- Attainment levels
- Purpose of the leave

If permission is not granted, but the child is still absent, the absence is classed as unauthorised and parents may be subject to further action by the College or prosecution by the local authority.

4.6 Religious observance

St. Augustine's Catholic College recognises that there may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of college holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

4.7 Study leave

The College has a period of study leave leading up to GCSE and A Level examinations where pupils are granted authorised absence to revise at home – where this revision can be guaranteed by parents. The College reserves the

right not to grant study leave to students who need full support in revision up to and including all applicable public examinations. The school operates study sessions at school within this time to help with revision and to reduce the amount of time spent out of school.

4.7/4.8 Late arrival

A warning bell sounds at 8.50am and **registration begins at 8.55am** Pupils who arrive after this time must sign the late arrival book at reception but within the registration period these students will be marked as late. **The registration period ends at 9.10am.** Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should sign the late arrival book at reception and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised. It is vital that pupils sign in at reception to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

A register is also taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action; the C2 Pastoral detention.

5. College action: following up absences

5.1 Class registers are passed to the office at the end of the registration period. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the College will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the form tutor will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

Form tutors will chase pupils for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon the pupil's return from being away. This is for the College records and is necessary no matter what the reason or length of the absence.

5.2 Where pupils have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter the College to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

When pupils are unable to attend school as a result of illness, the school does not normally expect them to carry out school work at home whilst ill. The school acknowledges that, in circumstances of illness, pupils are unlikely to be able to complete work to their normal standards and in any case may be unable to do so as a result of missing crucial aspects of a lesson.

It is school policy that pupils who have missed work are expected to take it upon themselves to catch up this work after their return to school. This includes copying up missed notes, and asking the teacher if there is anything in them that they don't understand.

In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils are not normally expected to do homework assignments missed through illness after their return. In Years 10 and above there may be homework that could usefully be attempted retrospectively, but teaching staff will give guidance on this upon return of the pupil to school.

In cases where a pupil is absent through illness for more than 3 school days, the Form Tutor will contact teaching staff for any work that the pupil can usefully attempt in order to lessen the amount of catching up that needs to be done upon his/her return.

Short-term absence (less than or equal to 3 days) through illness is very common and affects a large number of pupils during the course of the year. It is not practical for teaching staff to set work for these pupils on every such occasion.

Parents are therefore advised that we will only ask staff to set work for pupils to do at home when the absence through illness exceeds 3 school days.

Where a child has been absent from college for a period of more than 20 school days, and where the absence was unauthorised and the College has been unable to contact the parents, a Child Missing in Education Report

(CME1) will be submitted to the Local Authority WEO. At this point it is also within the powers of the head teacher to remove the student from role.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help. The school may take further action against the parents, including referral to the local authority to begin criminal proceedings against the parents.

This policy will be reviewed 2019

Date 1st February 2018