

## Attendance Policy

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## Mission Statement

### Our girls will change the world

- We are a Catholic community inspired by the vision of our founders and passionate about shaping a better future.
- We empower pupils with outstanding results, a love of learning and an alternative way of thinking.
- Augustinians are ethical leaders sowing joy, truth and courage.
- In this school freedom and generosity of spirit flourish. We seek a sustainable and prosperous future for all the world's communities.
- We cherish love for our neighbour, welcoming different faiths and cultures. Learning through dialogue we have hearts open to the whole world.

## Rationale

For pupils to benefit fully from the educational opportunities provided by the school, they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality. Ineffective registration or poorly executed follow-up procedures can increase the risks of truancy and educational under-performance, which can negatively affect personal or/and social development among pupils. A child going missing from school is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect or in itself may indicate that a pupil is at risk of significant harm. Consequently, attendance and registration arrangements are hugely important and must be seen to be regarded as such by pupils, parents and staff.

According to [government advice](#), a pupil is considered persistently absent if they miss 10% or more of their time in school. Where the school identifies pupils with severe absence (attendance below 50% - exceptionally rare at this school) or persistent absence

(attendance below 90%) the pastoral team works closely with the student and the parents to create a plan that supports improved attendance.

In this policy the word parent can be taken to mean anyone who has parental responsibility for one of our students. St Augustine's requires that each student has more than one emergency contact number for each pupil so that it is easy to make contact with regard to attendance issues. It is particularly important that parents inform school if they are away overnight or longer and let school know who has parental responsibility in their absence.

## Statutory Framework

This school policy has been drafted in line with [Working together to improve school attendance \(2022\)](#) (WttISA) and [School attendance parental responsibility measures: statutory guidance \(2015\)](#). The school also complies with guidance published by the Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) and advice published by the London Borough of Ealing.

## Responsibilities of Parents

Parents with a child of compulsory school age have a legal duty to make sure that their child receives effective full-time education. Children must be in some form of education or training from the term after a child's fifth birthday up to their eighteenth birthday. Parents have an additional legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and 'this means their child must attend every day that school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.' (WttISA)

Parents are responsible for informing the school on any occasion when their child is unable to attend due to illness, or a medical appointment, providing the reason for their child's non-attendance. This should be done by emailing [attendance@sapriory.com](mailto:attendance@sapriory.com) or by telephoning 02089972022. This should be done as far as possible in advance and at the very latest by 8.40am on the morning of the absence, by which time pupils must be on site. Parents may not make the decision to take a pupil out of school for any part of the school day without a valid reason and parents are expected to offer an explanation at the outset.

If, for any reason a pupil needs to leave the school site during the school day, their parent must contact the Form Tutor or the attendance email address [attendance@sapriory.com](mailto:attendance@sapriory.com) in advance of this or their child must bring in a note from their parents requesting this absence and giving the reason why. This should be handed to their Form Tutor during morning registration. The Form Tutor or School Office will then update SchoolBase regarding the absence. The School Office will not allow any pupils/students to exit school during school time, without prior consent from the parents and a valid reason.

Diarrhoea and/or vomiting commonly affects children and staff and can be caused by a number of different germs, including viruses, parasites and bacteria. Infections can be easily spread from person to person (by unwashed hands), especially in children. I

General guidance is that any staff member or child with diarrhoea and/or vomiting symptoms must stay away or be excluded from the school or early years setting until they have been free of symptoms for 48 hours (the '48 hour rule') and feel well. Personal hygiene whilst ill must be very strict.

If your child is sick at school, we will ask you or your emergency contact to take your child home. They should not return for 48 hours to the school premises. The school appreciates that this may cause some inconvenience. However, it is not possible to distinguish between causes, and therefore it is essential that the same rule of exclusion applies in all cases of vomiting or diarrhoea in order to reduce the risk of infection for all children in school. As an example, if your child is sick at lunchtime on a Tuesday, they should not return to school until after lunch on Thursday, provided there have not been any further episodes of vomiting and/or diarrhoea.

Further guidance on infection control may be found on the [Public Health England website](#). Parents wishing to take their child out of school for exceptional reasons, must seek authorisation for the absence from the school by writing to the Head or Deputy Head Pastoral. The Head or Deputy Head Pastoral will confirm whether the circumstances meet the definition of 'exceptional circumstances' for which leave of absence may be granted by the school. Parents are asked to complete the online form found on the St Augustine's App.

### **Exceptional circumstances include:**

- When a family needs to spend time together because of an immediate family members bereavement, crisis or serious illness
- Funeral of immediate family member
- Religious observance
- Children of service personnel about to go on deployment (permission would be considered as long as the request is accompanied by a letter from the Commanding Officer)
- One day of absence could be authorised for a wedding of an immediate family member and the invitation has been provided as evidence
- One off sporting events/performing arts competitions, if the child is participating and is at county standard or above and a letter has been provided from the performing arts/sports regional governing body as evidence
- One day of absence could be authorised for an immediate family members graduation ceremony/passing out parade
- Medical appointments (parents/carers should be encouraged to arrange non-urgent medical appointments outside of school hours when possible. If the medical appointment is during the school day, evidence must be provided. Schools should

not authorise a whole day's absence for a medical appointment that occurs in the morning – the child would be expected to return to school in the afternoon, and vice versa.

- Absence to attend interviews at educational establishments such as a University open day may be requested, and permission will depend on the individual circumstances, for example whether the pupil's attendance is already impacting on their studies

### **Absence will not be authorised for reasons such as the following:**

- To care for other family members
- Birthdays
- To interpret for other family members
- No school uniform/shoes
- Bullying
- Friendship problems
- Head lice
- Learning difficulties
- Family or other holiday
- Weddings abroad – regardless of whether it is for immediate family members
- Family Anniversaries
- Death of a pet
- Travel problems
- School refusal

*(The immediate family is a defined group of relations, used in rules or laws to determine which members of a person's family are affected by those rules. It normally includes a person's parents, spouses, siblings and children. It can contain others connected by birth, adoption, marriage, civil partnership, or cohabitation, such as grandparents, grandchildren, siblings-in-law, half-siblings, adopted children and step-parents/step-children, and cohabiting partners)*

When parents/guardians are to be away from home overnight during term, they are required in line with the contract with the school to inform the school of the name and contact number for a temporary guardian. This information should be provided to the Form Tutor and should be copied to the relevant Head of Year.

Parents can see their child's attendance on the school portal, SchoolBase, and the school will contact parents directly if attendance patterns are causing concern. Best practice means we establish warm relationships which allows us to work collaboratively with parents.

## Responsibilities of Pupils

Pupils have a responsibility to attend school when they are fit and well and to arrive at school in time for registration (morning and afternoon) each day during term time.

Failure to attend school regularly or punctually or failing to attend registration without good reason may lead pupils missing key messages or learning. Pupils - especially those in GCSE and A Level year groups - must take responsibility for catching up work and / or missed, to stay on top of their studies.

## Responsibilities of the School

The Deputy Heads of the Senior School have responsibility for attendance in the Senior School, and the Head of Preps and Pre-Preps, has responsibility for attendance in the Prep School.

A member of the office team generates daily reports on attendance that is shared with staff.

St Augustine's has a culture which promotes the benefits of high attendance, both in terms of the social health and wellbeing of students and also their academic attainment. It has a responsibility for taking and maintaining an accurate School Register of all pupils twice each day throughout term time: once at the beginning of the morning session and once in the second (afternoon) session. Every entry in the School Register must be preserved for a period of three years after the date on which the entry was made and this is done on our MIS system. Likewise, a back-up copy of the School Register will be retained for three years.

Academic staff in the Senior School also take registers of each academic lesson.

The pastoral team and Safeguarding Committee regularly monitor and evaluate patterns of poor attendance so that the school can work together with parents and students to improve attendance. Attendance data is discussed in pastoral meetings to identify pupils and families who may need additional or targeted support.

Each term at the Governors' Safeguarding Committee meeting attendance is discussed looking at broader patterns and trends along with strategies to improve/maintain good rates of attendance.

The majority of low attendance is related to medical factors, and in those circumstances the wellbeing of the student is more important than improving attendance statistics as stated in WttISA: '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.' Where appropriate St Augustine's will seek advice from ECIRS (Ealing Children's Integrated Response Service) for advice and work with the local authority to remove barriers to attendance where this seems necessary.

The school is required to inform the LEA of any pupil who fails to attend school regularly without the school's permission or where a parent does not provide adequate medical or

professional evidence for prolonged absence. It is the school's responsibility to enquire about pupil absences and parents should expect to be asked about a child's absence, and even a home visit where appropriate.

The school will also inform the relevant LEA and/or Children's Social Care (CSC), as appropriate, **immediately** if:

- A single absence raises child protection concerns (see Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy)
- A pupil has any unexplained **prolonged unauthorised** absence.
- A pupil of compulsory school age is to be deleted from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, the school is required to report the circumstances, as soon as possible after the grounds for deletion are met, to the LEA in which the pupil lives and in any event before the pupil's name is deleted from the register.

If all avenues of support have been facilitated but severe absence for unauthorised reasons 'it is likely to constitute neglect' (WTtISA) and a referral will be made to ECIRS if not made already.

Lateness is managed through the school disciplinary policy and students receive a late mark if they are late for morning or afternoon registration without good reason provided by parents. This encourages punctuality and also flags up persistent lateness with Form Tutors and Heads of Year very quickly. Persistent lateness will result in a Friday detention.

## Registration Procedure

In the morning, pupils should be at school by 8:20, so that they are punctual for morning registration at 8:35 in their Form Rooms. Before entering the school building, all Senior pupils should sign in electronically with their lanyard ID badge in the Preps playground.

The Form Tutors have primary responsibility for registering their tutees in the morning and following up absenteeism and lateness. Form Tutors will take the attendance register at the start of each session of each school day during the AM Registration Period and during the PM Registration Period.

Senior Pupils arriving late (after 8.40am) should go directly to Reception to be signed in by the office staff. Prep and Pre-Prep pupils arriving after the gate closes at 8.55 should go directly to reception to be signed in.

If no contact is received from parents to explain the absence, a phone call will be made to the parents by a member of the school office staff, and if there is still no contact, they will

inform the Deputy Head Pastoral. The register for the morning session closes by 9am. Pupils and students arriving after this time will be marked absent for the morning session.

The Office will contact parents on the day of absence, and again within 24 hours if a pupil/student is missing without an explanation and if the parent has still not responded to the school. The relevant Head of Year may also become involved in clarifying the reason for the absence.

If a pupil is not present but parents believe them to be in school, Missing Child Protocols are followed.

The school registration codes are as follows:

- / \ Present am/pm
- B Educated off site - Approved Educational Activity.
- C Other authorised circumstances (including public performances licensed by the local authority, family bereavements, exceptional special occasions) - Authorised Absence.
- D Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) - Approved Educational Activity.
- E Excluded (no alternative provision made) - Authorised Absence.
- F Extended family holiday (agreed) - Authorised Absence.
- G Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess of agreement) - Unauthorised Absence.
- H Family holiday during term-time (provided this has been agreed by the school) – Authorised Absence.
- I Illness (not medical/dental appointments) - Authorised Absence.
- J Interview - Approved Educational Activity.
- L Late (before registers close) - Present.
- M Medical/Dental appointments - Authorised Absence.
- N No reason yet provided for absence - Unauthorised Absence.
- O Unauthorised Absence.
- P Approved Sporting Activity - Approved Educational Activity.
- R Religious Observance - Authorised Absence.
- S Study Leave - Authorised Absence.

- T Traveller child travelling - Authorised Absence.
- U Late after registers close without an acceptable explanation - Unauthorised Absence
- V Educational visit or trip - Approved Educational Activity.
- W Work Experience - Approved Educational Activity.
- Y Enforced closure – not counted in possible attendances.
- Z Pupil not yet on roll - not counted in possible attendances.
- # School closed – not counted in possible attendance. All staff completing an attendance register must only enter / or \ if a student is present, N if they are absent or L if they are late. Other coding will be maintained by Office or Senior Staff; therefore, it is vital that any notes from parents are passed from the Form Tutor to Office Staff as soon as they are received.