

Attendance Policy

April 2023

Last Review Date:	April 2023
Next Review Date:	April 2024
Governor's Signature:	



**St
Aloysius'
College**

Hornsey Lane,
Highgate,
London
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ATTENDANCE POLICY

(Statutory Policy)

Policy agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee Autumn 2022

To be reviewed Autumn 2024

(every 2 years)

To be monitored by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee

INTRODUCTION

At St. Aloysius RC College, we aim to encourage and assist all young people to reach outstanding levels of attendance and punctuality. Underpinning this commitment is the belief that only if children attend school regularly and punctually will they be able to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and achieve as well as they can. This correlation is borne out in our own data; at St. Aloysius RC College, our level of attendance is higher than the national average.

The Assistant Headteacher, Behaviour and attitudes (Akila Garrib – Acting), has responsibility for ensuring excellent attendance across the school.

The Department for Education's publication 'The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4' published February 2015, p5 states "Specifically, students with no absence are 1.5 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent and 2.8 times more likely to achieve 5+ GCSEs A*-C or equivalent including English and Mathematics than students missing 15-20 per cent of KS4 lessons. The difference in achievement is also evident with the English Baccalaureate, where students with no absence are around 10.2 times more likely to achieve the English Baccalaureate than students missing 15-20 percent of KS4 lessons".

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data

Grade	Excellent	Good	Poor	Cause for Concern
Percentage attendance	96-100%	93-95%	90-92%	85-89%
Number of days absent per term	3.5	5	6.5	10
Number of days absent per year	10.5	15	19.5	30

The government classifies students with attendance below 90% as 'persistent absentees'. Whilst 90% may appear to seem a reasonable level of attendance to some, it means almost 20 lost teaching days over the year, which equates to 4 out of 39 weeks of lost learning.

The school aims to work in partnership with families and carers to promote and encourage excellent attendance.

PROMOTING REGULAR ATTENDANCE

How can parents help ensure their child's excellent attendance?

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children of compulsory school age receive an efficient education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and any special needs that they may have. Most parents fulfil this responsibility by sending their child to school. Parents whose children are registered at a school are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. The school promotes and rewards good attendance as it is closely linked to pupil progress. Parents and pupils are reminded of this regularly through letters home, academic reports, parents evenings, one to one meetings with parents.

Parents can help with their child's attendance by:

- Ensuring their children arrive at school on time, appropriately dressed and ready to learn; establishing a good routine in the morning and evening so that children are prepared for the school day ahead.
- Ensuring their child attends school regularly. Absence should only happen when a child is significantly ill and therefore unfit to attend school, or if there is an avoidable / unforeseen reason or circumstance which is causing difficulty / period of difficulty.
- Ensure they are aware of the Attendance policy of the school.
- Impress on their child the need to observe the school's code of conduct.
- Taking truancy seriously – if a child is not attending school as expected are they putting themselves at risk - question them: Where are they? Who are they with? What have they been doing?
- Not taking family holidays during term time.
- Talking to their child about school and taking an interest in their school work.
- Attending Parents' Evenings and school events.
- Working in partnership with the school to resolve any issues, which may lead to non-attendance.
- Praising and rewarding children's achievements at school.
- Discussing problems or difficulties with the school – staff are there to help and support.
- Telephoning or emailing on the first morning of any absence to give the reason and tell us when the child is likely to return to school. To continue to contact the school on each day of absence.
- Arranging all non-emergency medical and dental appointments out of school hours or during school holidays.
- Providing medical evidence in the case of frequent absence.
- Providing appropriate medication to support their child's attendance at school.
- Keeping the School updated by telephone, email or letter if the child has any extended period of absence.
- Making sure we always have current contact numbers of parents; this includes all telephone numbers; child care arrangements and emergency contact details.

The school shall:

- Follow up unexplained absences by phone calls, emails and letters as necessary.
- Let parents know if the school has concerns regarding a child's Attendance and Punctuality.
- Work closely with parents/carers by telephone/face to face meetings to help improve a child's attendance.
- If we continue to have concerns, we may have to involve the school Education Welfare Officer (EWO)
- Support the attendance of students and deal with problems the school has been alerted to which could lead to non-attendance.
- Ensure registers are taken. These are legal documents which can be required as evidence in court cases.
- Through registers, carefully monitor attendance across the School at KS3, KS4 and KS5. This is done by data analysis weekly of both attendance and punctuality. Both are a standing item on the SLT weekly agenda at which issues and actions are discussed.
- Write 'attendance letters' to those families whose children run the risk of attaining below 90% attendance.
- Use a range of interventions to help support families with children who have difficulties with attendance.
- Work closely with outside agencies to support full attendance.

TYPES OF ABSENCE

Every half day absence is classified by the school as authorised or unauthorised. An absence can only be authorised by the school. It is not possible for a parent to authorise an absence. An authorised absence are mornings or afternoons away from school for a good reason including but is not limited to:

- Illness;
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments;
- Religious observance;
- Emergencies.

Unauthorised absences are those that the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. This includes but is not limited to:

- Parents/carers keeping children off school unnecessarily;
- Truancy;
- Unexplained absence;
- Students arriving after 9.30am with no appropriate reason;
- Day trips and holidays taken without prior authorisation by the School.

Procedures:

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure full attendance at school. If your child cannot avoid being absent then they will need to follow the procedure below:

- Inform the School Office by telephone (020 7561 7800 – ext 201) or email (enquiries@sta.islington.sch.uk) by 9am on the first day of their child's absence from school and, where an absence goes beyond the first day, keep the school up to date regarding the absence each day by 9am.
- Where no advice of an absence is received, parents may expect the school to contact them on the first and every day of absence.
- Parents must provide an email upon the student's return giving reason for their absence. If no reason is given, the Attendance Officer will contact the parent/carers requesting the reason for absence.
- Provide medical evidence if the absence is longer than 5 consecutive school days, or when requested by the Attendance Officer.
- All absence notes are kept on record.
- Inform the School Office in advance of any medical appointments which could not be scheduled outside of school hours. Student must provide evidence of a medical appointment.
- Make any requests for any other type of absences that may be authorised e.g. religious festival, performing in music or drama events in reasonable time. Requests should be addressed to the Attendance Officer, who will consult the Pastoral Team.
- Please note requests for holidays are very strongly discouraged and will not normally be authorised. Requests can be made to the Headteacher regarding any mitigating circumstances which may mean term time leave within school time may be considered.
- In the event that any safeguarding concerns exist about students for whom contact has not been made, Head of Year and/or the DSL (Designated Safeguarding Lead) may be informed.
- If no reason or contact has been provided for a student's absence after 3 consecutive days, the local authority's Education Welfare Officer will be sent to the student's home address.
- If the school has knowledge that a student has been taken out of the country without seeking permission of the school, Letter A (Appendix A) will be sent.
- If a student's absence falls below 96%, an attendance update letter will be sent. Letter 1 (Appendix 1).
- Where attendance falls below 90%, Letter 2 will be sent (Appendix 2).
- Any student who receives Letter 2 will have their attendance monitored closely. In the event that improvement is not secured, a meeting will be held with the Attendance Officer, The Education Welfare Officer, the Head of Year and Assistant Headteacher who oversees attendance. Parents will be informed of this meeting by Letter 3 (Appendix 3). Targets will be agreed in the meeting and attendance closely monitored.
- In the event that improvement is not secured Letter 4 will be sent (Appendix 4) and the EWO will arrange a home visit. A discussion will be held on the reasons why attendance continues to be an issue and information will be given on legal proceedings and a Penalty Notice being issued by the local authority.

- If St. Aloysius RC College feels that a family is in need of more specialist support in relation to a student's continued pattern of poor attendance, a referral can be made to the Safeguarding Team at St. Aloysius' College (safeguarding@sta.islington.sch.uk)
- All the processes outlined above are at the discretion of the Assistant Headteacher (Akila Garrib) with responsibility for attendance and will be implemented according to the context of the individual student.
- If poor attendance continues, Letter 5 (Appendix 5) will be issued. This is a Formal Warning informing of a meeting to be held at the school to discuss any continued issues and approaching legal proceedings. Students returning to school after prolonged absence will be supported with their reintegration. This may involve a personalised curriculum.
- Should attendance continue to decline, Letter 6 (Appendix 6) will be issued. This is to inform parents that no further absences will be authorised unless medical evidence is provided and reminded of forthcoming legal action.
- Further decline in attendance will result in Letter 7 (Appendix 7) being posted. This is a Formal Reminder of the number of unauthorised absences and the school's intention of notifying the local authority to incur a penalty for non-attendance.

LATENESS

- Students should attend school and remain in school attending all timetable lessons. This means that students should arrive in time for registration (8.30am). In the case where buses and public transport have incurred delays resulting in the students being late to school, students should sign in at the side gate before 9am and the School Office after 9am. Our attendance officer (Lorna Jones) is the contact about attendance on a day to day basis.
- Students who have not been marked present by their form tutor are required to sign in at the Office. They will be asked to explain their late arrival when signing in.
- Avoidable lateness beyond 9.30am constitutes as unauthorised absence and can legally be the basis of an offence by the parent/carer.
- A distinction is drawn between students who arrive late but at the first reasonable opportunity, eg after a medical appointment or where there has been genuine transport difficulties and those who are persistently late.
- Those who are late but who arrive before 9.30am will be counted as present and their attendance will be indicated by an 'L' in the register.
- Those who are late but who arrive after the registration has closed (after 9.30am) will be marked with code 'U'.
- If we believe the reason for lateness is not genuine, we will contact the parent for clarification of lateness.
- Parents/carers whose children are experiencing difficulties should contact the school at an early stage and work together with staff to resolve any problems. If the lateness continues, the parent/carer will be contacted by the Form Tutor/Head of Year. The parent/carer will be called in for a meeting to discuss the students lack of punctuality where strategies will be discussed and implemented.
- If lateness remains poor over time following the school's work to improve it in collaboration with parents/carers, a critical meeting will be held with a member of the leadership team.

ILLNESS IN SCHOOL

Students taken ill during lessons should request permission to report to the First Aid office, where they will be seen by the First Aid Officer on duty at that time. On no account should students telephone their parents requesting that they be collected from school because they are unwell. The School First Aid Officer will decide if a student should go home, in which case they will contact the parents to arrange this.

When parents come to collect their child from school, they must report to Reception from where the child can be collected. Parents should not collect their child from school without signing their child out.

LEGAL ACTION

Parents have a legal duty to ensure the regular and fulltime attendance at school of registered students (Education Act 1996). This policy is based on the law and on Best Practice guidance produced by the DfE and the Local Authority. The School aims to work with families to promote

good attendance and avoid legal action. However, in some cases, parents are prosecuted (taken to court) or have to pay a Fixed Penalty (fine) if these absences continue.

Fixed Penalty Notice:

If a child is absent from school without the necessary authorisation, the school can apply to the Local Authority, who will then issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

The Penalty Notice requires a fine of £60 to be paid within 21 days. If this fine is not paid within the time limit the penalty rises to £120 which must be paid within 28 days. If a parent is issued with a Penalty Notice it enables them to discharge their potential liability for an offence under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 of failure to secure their child's regular attendance at school.

If the fine is not paid, they will be liable for prosecution for this offence.

Next steps:

If a student, who is registered at a school, fails to attend that school regularly without a legitimate reason and attempts by the Attendance Improvement Officer and the School fail to secure that student's return to regular attendance, the Local Authority will take legal action.

A complaint may be laid against the parents in the Magistrates' Court under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996, or an Education Supervision Order relating to the student under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 will be applied for. Any exceptional mitigating circumstances relating to the student's absence will be taken into account, when considering legal action.

'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' will be determined by the Central Attendance and Employment Support Team Manager on behalf of the Local Authority. 'Exceptional mitigating circumstances' might include the death of a close relative, certain medically recognised conditions, awaiting SEN placement, specific child protection concerns, change of provision.

Legal proceedings can be considered at any stage if no progress has been made and no exceptional circumstances are deemed to exist.

If, after legal action has been taken, the child still fails to attend school regularly the Local Authority will keep the case open and will, if appropriate, take further legal action at a subsequent date.

This policy is shared with staff, pupils and parents at the start of each academic year. It is also on the school's website.