

St Paul's CE Academy



Attendance & Punctuality Policy

Person responsible for the policy	Maria Kiniari & Tom Glenn
Date reviewed and shared with staff	March 2024
Date to next be reviewed by staff	March 2025
Date ratified by the Governing Body	

Signed by Chair of Governor:	Signed by Head Teacher:
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Our School Vision

To create a Christian school which ignites a thirst for knowledge in every individual, where curiosity and talent are cultivated, and children are empowered to channel their love of learning to achieve their God-given potential.

The School's Expectations

Children must attend school every day unless they have a valid reason to be absent; registration takes place in the classroom at the beginning of the morning and the afternoon session. The only exceptions are the ones set out in the legislation: sickness, unavoidable causes, religious observance, authorised absences, local authorities' failure to make statutory travel arrangements, where the child has no fixed abode or the parent's need to travel for business (subject to certain conditions). There is no statutory requirement for children to attend nursery however if there is frequent non-attendance or late attendance this will be discussed with the parent or carer to support the child to attend. If the child is EYEE funded, then non-compliance over a sustained period could result in the funding being revoked. There is a clear connection between regular attendance and achievement. As attendance deteriorates, so does performance, achievements, friendship circles and self-esteem.

Annual Returns

Absence figures are sent to the Diocese of Chichester Academy Trust each half term. Attendance figures are also collated annually and included in the School Census; details of absences are included on reports to parents.

Removal of Names from Registers

Pupils' names must only be removed from registers when it is confirmed that they have started at another school. If the whereabouts of a family is unknown, this is reported to County as a child missing education. Any child who has been missing for 4 weeks without notification will be removed from the academy roll and reported to the Local Authority.

Sickness

When a child is absent due to sickness, the parent should advise the school/nursery office on the morning of the first day of absence and every subsequent day of absence. A dedicated line for parents to record a child's absence is *the first* option of the school's telephone system or contact can be made via the School Gateway. When the school office is notified, the office staff record the child's absence accordingly. Parents are asked to send in an explanatory note when the child returns to school. Parents can be asked to provide evidence of medical absence.

When a child is absent and we have not received notification by the parent or carer, a member of the office staff will attempt to contact the family to ascertain the child's whereabouts using the contact telephone numbers given by the parents and kept on the Arbor system. Initial contact is usually via email message.

The registers are checked regularly by the school office. If no explanation is given for the child's absence, this will be marked as unauthorised.

Medical Appointments

If a child has to attend a medical appointment during school hours, a copy of the appointment notification should be given to the school office and placed on the child's records. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, children should attend school before or after the appointment; half a day is permitted for medical appointments. Failure to attend school, will result in an unauthorised mark on the register. Parents/carers who have children in the Nursery, are advised to inform the Nursery Manager of non-attendance due to a medical appointment.

Attendance Monitoring

St Paul's has adopted the Hastings Attendance Charter (please see Appendix A) until further notice.

Attendance figures are regularly checked by the Assistant Head and the Attendance Officer and discussed with teachers as well as the pastoral team to establish any other issues that may be affecting the family. These are then actioned appropriately either through attendance procedures or other pastoral means. In cases where habitual absences may be a cause for concern, a computer record is generated by the school office to see whether the absences form any pattern which may give an understanding for the absences. The Assistant Headteacher takes attendance and punctuality issues to the Co-Headteachers. Medical evidence may be requested for some pupils with higher than average absences or where the absence is more than 3 days. Persistent absence is reported to the Education Support, Behaviour and Attendance Service and a penalty notice requested to be issued to each parent. All copies of letters sent to parents should be placed in the pupil's record file or attached to Arbor.

Persistent Absence

A persistent absentee is defined as a student who has 10% or more absence, and who is aged 5 - 15 (inclusive) at the beginning of the current academic year (31 Aug).

When a child has been identified as a persistent absentee by the school's attendance tracking system, we will act as follows:

1. Parents/Carers are sent a letter of concern highlighting their child's attendance.
2. The child's attendance is tracked weekly
3. If there is no improvement in attendance, parents/carers are invited to meet with the Assistant Headteacher and the Attendance Officer to discuss any concerns. The parent/carer is asked to sign an attendance contract. If there are 10 or more sessions of absence within the next 10 school weeks, further action is taken.
4. In cases of serious concern, home visits will be made.
5. If there is still no improvement in attendance the family will be referred to the Education Support Behaviour and Attendance Service for further action.

We work hard to forge strong links with our families and try to assist them where there are barriers to regular attendance.

Safeguarding

A child going missing from education is a potential sign of abuse or neglect, particularly on repeat occasions. A Child Missing in Education (CME) is defined as a child or young person of compulsory academy age who is not attending school, not placed in alternative provision by an LA, and who is not receiving a suitable education elsewhere. This definition also includes children who are receiving an education, but one that is not suitable; this could include children who are not receiving full-time education suitable to their needs, e.g. age, ability, aptitude, special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).

Children go missing from education for a number of reasons including:

- They don't start school at the appropriate time and so they do not enter the educational system
- They are removed by their parents
- Behavior and/or attendance difficulties
- They cease to attend, due to exclusion, illness or bullying
- They fail to find a suitable school place after moving to a new area
- The family move home regularly
- Problems at home. The law requires all children between the ages of 5 and 16 to be in full time education.

All pupils who are on Child Protection Plans or are Looked After have a designated safeguarding team member assigned to them. The attendance officer will inform this member of staff by 9.30 am if this child is absent so the relevant outside agency can be informed. Safeguarding team members will take attendance data to any core group or professional meeting.

The academy will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend regularly, or has been absent without the **Academy's** permission for a continuous period of 10 educational establishment sessions (5 days) or more. Any such absence will also be logged by the Attendance Officer as a safeguarding concern with the DSL at the academy.

Our Safeguarding responsibilities mean that as a school we are acutely aware of the risks of FGM (female genital mutilation). Absences should be requested in advance, all travel during school time requires a meeting with the head teacher. Any unexplained holidays to countries of prevalence should be explored further so the school may ask detailed questions about the travel if we have concerns. It should be noted that any concerns around FGM will be reported to the local authorities.

Punctuality

Punctuality for the start of the school day is also monitored by the Attendance Officer. Children should arrive at school ready for when the bell rings at 8.40a.m. The register is taken at 9.00a.m., any child arriving after that time will be marked late (L), children arriving after 9.15a.m. will be marked as arrived after registration closed (U). If a child's punctuality is a cause for concern a letter will be sent home to the parent/carer. If persistent lateness continues, the parent/carer will be asked to make an appointment with the Assistant Headteacher. If there is still no improvement a warning letter will be sent to the parents and the matter will be referred to the Team around the student and school (TASS), 10 unauthorised 'lates' in 10 weeks can result in a Penalty Notice being issued. Those students identified as permanently arriving late for school will be informed by the school and will no longer be given the grace of registration opening and closing. The student will need to be in school by 9.00a.m. every day, failure to do this could result in a fixed penalty notice being issued.

Leave of Absence during Term Time

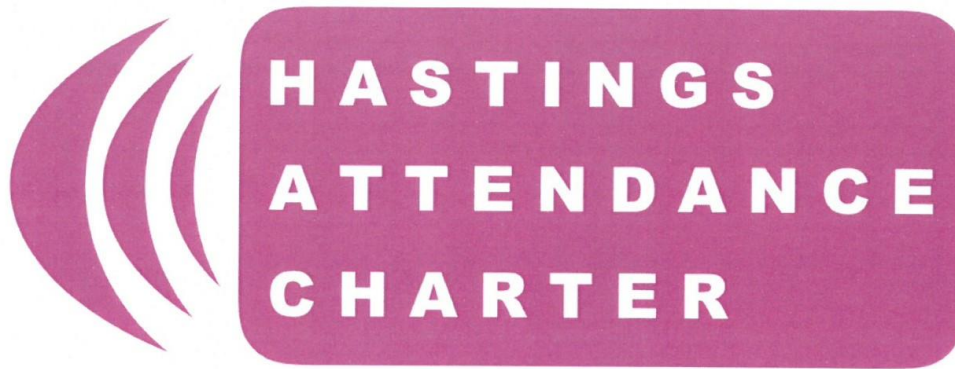
Holiday is not permitted during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances and this must be authorised by the Co-Headteachers. A Withdrawal from Learning form must be completed at least two weeks before the planned absence giving a valid reason why a child is being taken out of school during term time. Any absence 5 days or over, not authorised, will be referred to the ESBAS legal interventions team who will issue a Penalty Notice, this will be to each parent for each child.

Promoting Good Attendance

The school has a number of schemes in place to promote good attendance. These include regular items in the newsletter and on the school noticeboards. An Early Years/KS1 attendance bear and a KS2 attendance bear are awarded to the classes with the best attendance each week. These are presented during Golden Galleon assembly. Every Friday, any child who has had 100% attendance for the week has their name placed in a random draw. One winner from each class receives a special reward such as hot chocolate or ice lolly, with the Assistant Headteacher in the afternoon.

Contact with Parents

- The school prospectus clearly sets out the time of the school day and expectations of full attendance.
- Contact with parents may be informally through the class teacher, text message via the School Gateway, emails, phone calls, parent consultation meetings or by letter.
- Individual letters are sent to parents where their child's attendance is a concern.
- Letters of praise for improved attendance are sent to encourage those whose attendance is improving.



HASTINGS WIDE CHARTER FOR PROMOTING GOOD ATTENDANCE FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE



Department
for Education



The Charter is a collaborative approach to promote good attendance at school across Hastings, so that all children and young people can fulfil their potential. Set out below is a set of principles that those signing the Charter agree to uphold.

School leaders and governors who have signed this Charter agree to work together to implement it. East Sussex Local Authority has agreed to support schools to implement it.

St Paul's CE Academy agrees to:

- 1** Elect a senior leader as an Attendance Champion responsible for implementing the attendance strategy, and elect and train a Governor responsible for overseeing attendance;
- 2** Have in place a clear attendance policy whose effectiveness is regularly monitored and reviewed by the senior leadership team and reported to Governors;
- 3** Appoint a member of staff who is responsible for managing attendance across the school and liaising with appropriate safeguarding leads;
- 4** Implement a robust approach to track and monitor pupil attendance, so that action can be taken swiftly for pupils whose attendance is causing concern and so that patterns and themes in respect of student absence can be analysed;
- 5** Implement an enriched and engaging curriculum and enrichment programme for all pupils, that inspires children to attend school every day;
- 6** Implement suitable interventions aimed at pupils and families at risk of poor attendance, alongside monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of these;
- 7** Engage and involve parents / carers and the community in developing attendance approaches, particularly those parents whose children are most at risk of ongoing or persistent absence issues;
- 8** Commit to multi-agency working to address underlying issues facing families and communities;
- 9** Share and implement 'best and emerging practice' in respect of what is working to improve attendance, particularly for those children and families most at risk of persistent absence; and
- 10** Review the ESCC Attendance Guidance; taking note of the best practice recommendations around safeguarding pupils and following all off-rolling expectations.



For the duration of the Hastings Opportunity Area project

East Sussex County Council agrees to:

- Assess any fixed term penalty notices received from schools within 2 weeks and inform schools of the outcome of this process – to include whether parents have paid the fixed term penalty notice, whether parents will be taken to court for failure to pay and the outcome of any court judgement;
- Support schools to deliver fast track prosecutions for parents/carers for those children with 90-95% attendance and who have had 10 unauthorised school absences in 6 school weeks and who have not responded to school based action in response to this;
- Implement a simple referral form for schools to request early intervention support and fast track prosecutions for families with emerging attendance issues who are not engaging with school based support or sanctions;
- Provide an enhanced core training and intervention offer to identified schools in the project.

In addition, East Sussex County Council agrees that it will continue to deliver its existing offer of support for schools.

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Independent Chair
Hastings Opportunity Area

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Education Support, Behaviour
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Department
for Education