

ST. IGNATIUS COLLEGE
'Men and women for others'



Attendance Policy

November 2016

Admissions Committee

Next Review November 2019

This policy outlines the College's expectations regarding regular school attendance, which is crucial to raising and maintaining high attainment.

The strategies which will be employed to support pupils whose attendance falls below the required standard are detailed within this document.

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1.0 Introduction

It is the duty of parents/carers to ensure that their children attend school regularly (Education Act 1996 Section 7), with consideration of legal action against parents and carers who fail in this regard. It is the responsibility of schools to actively encourage pupil attendance and put in place robust processes to tackle unjustified absence and truancy. The Education Welfare Service will provide support and guidance to pupils, parents/carers and schools in facilitating optimum pupil attendance.

2.0 Aims

- St Ignatius College aims to create an inclusive, nurturing and welcoming ethos in which pupils are stimulated to grow in self-esteem and to experience success.
- We aim to encourage the educational development of all pupils by promoting the importance of school attendance.
- We will intervene when absence and punctuality fall below an acceptable standard.
- All staff aim to contribute to giving pupil attendance a high profile with clear procedures and expectations.
- Our school aims to ensure that the curriculum meets the needs of individual pupils and positively encourages them to attend.
- We aim to work in partnership with governors, parents and carers, the Education Welfare Service and other professionals to support pupils in achieving optimum attendance and punctuality at school.

2.1 St Ignatius College will ensure that:

- Pupils on roll are registered accurately and efficiently. Registers will be taken punctually at 8.35am. Pupils will be registered for afternoon registration during their Period 5 lesson.
- A pupil arriving late to school will be registered at Student Services.
- A pupil who arrives after 8.35 am will register as late unless a legitimate reason has been provided. A detention will be set if the reason for the lateness is not legitimate.
- If a pupil fails to register they will be marked as an unauthorised absentee and put forward for a detention that afternoon after school.
- Attendance targets are set for the school, year groups and individual pupils.
- Attendance and punctuality are monitored and sanctions imposed where appropriate. (See Appendix 1)
- Attendance at lessons is recorded by the teacher using Lesson Monitor, who will follow up the non-attendance of a pupil to a lesson with the attendance officer.
- The pastoral team monitors individual pupil attendance patterns. This is particularly important in KS4 and KS5 as it has implications for GCSE and A level coursework and will ultimately affect subject examination entries. Pupils may be refused entry for external exams if they have

not produced coursework and where non-attendance has disrupted study patterns and prevented completion of the course.

- School attendance and individual pupil attendance statistics are published.
- In the Sixth Form, registration is compulsory except where study leave has been granted.

2.2 Pupils will be:

- Encouraged to attend school regularly and on time.
- Rewarded for excellent attendance and punctuality through our rewards system.
- Expected to inform a teacher or parent if there is a reason which may lead to their absence from school.
- Expected to bring written notification that explains any absence from school.
- Given a late mark and attend detention if they arrive late for school without a legitimate reason.

2.3 Parents/Carers will be asked to:

- Encourage their child to attend school regularly and on time.
- Arrange for routine visits to doctors, opticians etc. to be organised outside of school hours, where possible.
- Inform the school by telephone or email on the first day of absence before 9.00am, and every day after, with an explanation.
- Pass any absence letters notes to their child's form tutor as soon as possible.
- Discuss unavoidable absences well in advance of the event. A holiday/leave of absence request should be requested in writing to the Headteacher.

3.0 Authorised Absences (accepted by the Learning Coordinator, SLT Link or the Headteacher)

Absence will be authorised for:

- Genuine sickness
- Unavoidable medical / dental appointments (whenever possible these should be made outside school hours and details should be given to Student Services on the day of absence)
- Exceptional family circumstances
- Formal exclusion from school
- Family bereavement.
- Homelessness.
- An interview with a prospective employer, higher education institution or at another school.
- Study leave granted by the Headteacher.
- Absence authorised in conjunction with Child Entertainment regulations, upon a licence being granted by the local authority.
- Religious observance (1 day only will be authorised)

3.1 Unauthorised Absence

Absence will not be authorised for:

- Truancy
- Arrival (without justified reason) after registration period has closed
- No explanation being provided by the parent/carer.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation for absence
- Looking after family members (except in exceptional circumstances)
- Staying at home to mind the house, await deliveries or look after sibling/siblings or other family members
- Birthdays or other similar events
- Any work (paid or unpaid) undertaken during school hours (except formal work experience approved by the school)
- Day trips or a family holiday during term time which has not been agreed.

3.2 Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

If a student is persistently absent and the school's efforts to affect an improvement (See attendance referral process Appendix 2) have been unsuccessful, the matter will be referred to the Education Welfare Service, through the Attendance Officer. The government currently define a pupil who is persistently absent as any student who has missed 10% or more of their own possible sessions. Persistent absence is monitored regularly in School alongside the Education Welfare Service. It is proven that students whose attendance regularly falls below national expectations of 96% have significantly reduced chances of achieving their full academic potential, often resulting in lower academic grades than that of their fellow students who attend School regularly and punctually.

When pupil absence becomes a concern, parents will be contacted and informed that any future absence will not be authorised unless medical evidence can be provided e.g. copy of a prescription or medication and on occasions a formal letter from the family GP/Medical practitioner may be required.

3.3 If your Child does not arrive at School

It is the parents' responsibility to notify the School that their child is absent from school on that day. The school operates a first day response to absence and we will text/telephone you if we have not heard from you. This is because we believe that the safety of your child is paramount and it is the school's responsibility to work in partnership with parents to ensure your child's safety. Please ensure you inform the school if your contact details change.

3.4 Holidays in Term Time

1. Leave of absence during term time will not be granted unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Head Teacher will determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted and only the Head Teacher can authorise the absence. Leave of absence requests must be made prior to booking the time away from School and on occasions, you may be required to meet with a member of the senior leadership team to justify your request.

2. Parents will be informed that any absence taken without permission will be unauthorised and a Penalty Warning Letter will be issued when rejecting the request. In the event that your child does not attend School during the specified period, a Penalty Notice will be issued by the local authority with immediate effect. The initial Penalty will be £60 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days. If not paid, the Penalty will increase to £120 per parent per child. In the event that the £120 is not paid, the matter will be referred to the magistrates' court without further warning.

3.5 Attendance Target

The school attendance target is 96% each year.

3.6 Absence reporting

Reports are produced on a weekly basis to highlight pupils with less than 92% attendance or prolonged unexplained absences. This is overseen by the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care.

3.7 Working with the Educational Welfare Officer

The Education Welfare Officer (EWO) undertakes preventative (clinic) work and caseload (formally referred) work with and on behalf of the school. If the student's attendance continues to deteriorate, the school may refer the child to the Education Welfare service at the Local Authority. He/she will try to resolve the situation by agreement but, if other ways of trying to improve the child's attendance have failed and unauthorised absences persist, the Education Welfare Officer can use sanctions such as Penalty Notices or prosecutions in the Magistrates Court on the advice of the Head Teacher.

Parents or children may wish to contact the EWO themselves to ask for help or information. They are independent of the school and will give impartial advice. Their telephone number is available from the school office or by contacting the Local Education Authority.

3.8 Penalty Notices (PNs) Section 23 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003

The Local Authority (LA) has set out a code of conduct with regard to imposing PNs as a strategy to deal with parents who appear unwilling to meet their parental responsibility by ensuring the regular attendance of their children.

This will include:

- Overt truancy.
- Parentally condoned absence.
- Excessive holidays in term time and or delayed return.
- Persistent late arrival at school, after the register has closed.

Parents at risk of a Penalty Notice will receive a warning letter from the school. Should there not be an immediate improvement, a referral will be made to the EWS and a formal warning letter will be issued advising of a period of 15 days within which the pupil must have no unauthorised absence, to include lateness after registration has ended.

Should there be an improvement; a formal notice will not be issued. Failure to improve will result in the LA issuing a Penalty Notice.

The notice carries a fine. The penalty is £60.00 per parent, per child if paid within 21 days of receipt rising to £120.00 if not paid. Parents are given a further 7 days to pay the £120.

If this £120 fine is not, the Educational Welfare Service will proceed to the Magistrate Court for prosecution under the education act 1996 section 444(1) in relation to the original absence, not the unpaid fine. The penalty in court will be greater than the original fine alongside additional court costs and the incurring of a criminal conviction.

The LA has set out a code of conduct with regard to imposing PNs as a strategy to deal with parents who appear unwilling to meet their parental responsibility by ensuring the regular attendance of their children at school.

4.0 Review and Monitoring

The Attendance Officer provides regular data on attendance, persistent absenteeism and punctuality for the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care and the Head of Sixth Form.

Form Tutors monitor the daily attendance and punctuality of their form class and pass on any concerns to the relevant Learning Coordinator.

Absence reports are run on a weekly basis so that Learning Coordinators can monitor the weekly attendance of their year group, plan appropriate interventions for pupils causing concerns and pass on any persistent issues to the Assistant Headteacher Pastoral Care.

Half-Termly attendance reports allows analysis by the different vulnerable groups of SEN, EAL, Pupil Premium and Ethnicity so that the attendance of pupils within these groups can be regularly analysed and appropriate interventions planned if necessary.

The Headteacher includes the attendance figures in the termly report to Governors.

The Local Authority undertakes an annual check on attendance and reports back to the school and to the Department of Education.

5.0 Equality statement

The governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all students, regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background, by ensuring high levels of school attendance and full access to the curriculum for all.

Appendix One

Example of letter sent to all parents and guardians

Dear Parent/Guardian

St Ignatius College always strives to maintain the highest standards in all areas. Ensuring high levels of attendance is no exception.

Education provides a means of advancement for all young people. By law pupils need to attend regularly to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them and irregular attendance undermines the educational process and leads to educational disadvantage.

The evidence shows that pupils who attend regularly are more successful, gain better qualifications and higher grades. Good attendance is a habit that is life-long and an essential employment requirement. Parents and teachers have a legal and moral responsibility to ensure children attend school. With this in mind we are writing to you to ask you to help us in making sure your child gets the best education possible whilst they attend St Ignatius College.

All schools are expected to closely monitor the attendance and punctuality of Pupils. At St Ignatius, form tutors, Learning Coordinators and our attendance officer have responsibility for monitoring attendance and working with pupils and parents to raise, and maintain, high levels of attendance.

Every child should aim to have attendance of at least 95%. Whether 95% is reachable or not in the short term, it must always remain a long term goal for all Pupils. We understand that some pupils will have genuine reasons for a period of short-term or prolonged absence for medical reasons and these are commonly known to the school and will not result in the school taking any action other than to provide ongoing support. However, should a concern arise with frequent repeated instances of absence from school or persistent absence then we have to notify Enfield Local Authority and may arrange a meeting with parents.

The school has a qualified First Aider, so should your child feel unwell they will be looked after and sent home with your agreement if necessary. Some children wake up in the morning feeling a little unwell. Please send them in because most young people feel better once they are in school. We understand that there will be occasions when your child is unable to attend school and would ask you to report their absence from school on a daily basis by calling the school on **01992 717835** and leaving the details on the school absence line before 9.00am.

The steps outlined in this letter are those to reduce persistent absenteeism and to improve the attendance of those pupils for whom this is a concern. We are sure that you will appreciate that the school must do everything to ensure that pupils receive the education they are entitled to at all times possible in the interests of their achievement, welfare and future economic wellbeing.

Thank you in advance for your support

Yours sincerely

Mrs M O'Keeffe
Headteacher

Appendix Two

Referral process

Step 1:

A letter will be issued to inform you of the school's concern over your child's attendance. This will be sent if your child's attendance figure is below 92% in any term during an academic year. There may be legitimate reasons for this absence (e.g. a period of illness). Should the letter not lead to an improvement in attendance in the subsequent term then the school will move on to Step 2.

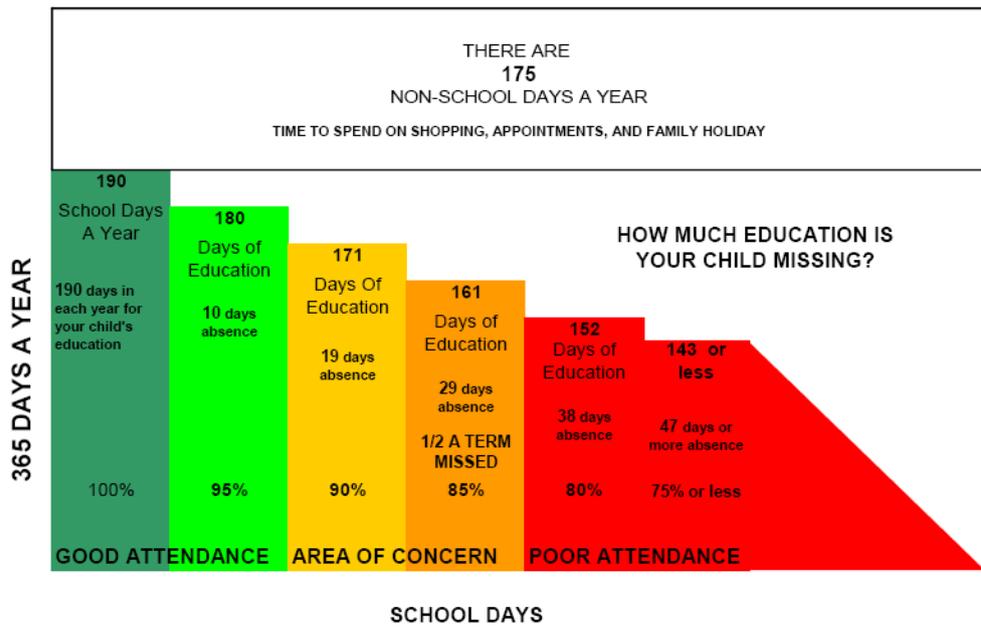
Step 2:

A meeting will be called and you will be invited to explain the reasons for the regular absence of your child. The meeting will aim to agree a way forward and an attendance improvement plan will be devised to ensure your child is in school on time and as much as possible. Should this not lead to an improvement then the school will move on to Step 3.

Step 3:

A further meeting will be called involving the Attendance Officer or any representative, parents and the Education Welfare Officer from the Enfield Local Authority. During this meeting an Enfield Early Help Form will be completed indicating that there are concerns over your child's education due to poor attendance or late arrival. The Education Welfare Officer, together with the school, will then regularly monitor any improvement in the attendance or punctuality of your child.

NB. Those Pupils with attendance below 80% will be requested to attend a meeting at the school to discuss the reasons for absence and an attendance improvement plan (as outlined in step 2)



REFERENCES

DFE School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities November 2016

Enfield Education Welfare Service Education-Related Penalty Notices Code of Conduct. September 2015

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		school target attendance rate	
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