

## **School Student Attendance Procedure**

**This procedure supports the implementation of the Teaching and Learning Policy, provides information about authorised and unauthorised absence and outlines procedures for reporting and reviewing absence in school.**

### **BACKGROUND**

The purpose of this procedure is to:

- Maintain high attendance rate to maximise engagement, inclusion and achievement.

The whole school community takes responsibility for attendance in aiming to ensure that students understand the importance of excellent attendance to the continuity of their learning and to their overall success at school.

### **PROCEDURE**

#### **Reasons for absence**

Parents and carers are asked to contact the class teacher at school via telephone if their child needs to be absent from school at the earliest possible opportunity. It is to be stressed throughout the procedure that a student should only be absent from school as an absolute last resort as continuous attendance is of the utmost importance to learning, attainment, achievement and overall success.

#### **Authorised absence**

Authorised absence means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Authorised absences include

- Sickness (including seizures)
- Hospital appointments
- Dentist appointments
- Religious observance where a specified days is exclusively set apart for religious observance
- Clinic for essential medical appointments for the duration of the appointment only

- Funerals of close family members.

Medical and dental appointments should be arranged if possible, outside the school day.

### **Unauthorised absences**

Unauthorised absence is where the school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence.

If an absence is unauthorised and/or unexplained, the school will write to parents for an explanation. If no reason is forthcoming a telephone call will be made. Any absence considered not to be a justified reason will remain unauthorised. A series of unauthorised absences will trigger a meeting with the Head of School.

Where students have persistent unauthorised attendance problems the Principal will invite parents/carers into school to a formal meeting.

If any child has not been registered or the school has not been notified about a child's absence, the School office will contact the parent/carer on the first day. If the parent notifies the school of a child's reason for absence, but the child continues to be absent for more than a week then an update check will be made by the school in the form of a telephone call. If the child continues to be absent then details will be passed to the Head of School who will decide on further action which will be to either write to the parent/carer or consider a referral to the Local Authority.

### **Procedure for Unauthorised Absence**

#### Day students

When no communication has been received from the parents for non-attendance, the Class Teacher will ring the parents to ascertain the reason.

Where there is no response, or a negative response, then the Class Teacher will ring the Local Authority Children's Service to make enquiries as to the absence.

#### Residential students

There should be no unauthorised absences once the resident student is back on site after time at home. When a student's whereabouts are not known after a break, this should be treated as unauthorised absence.

When this occurs, a telephone call will be made to parents and/or other contacts. If the absence is still unresolved or when instructed by funding authorities, contact is made to the Local Authority Children's Service.

All attendance must be recorded in the school office.

In terms of attendance reporting, Day students are treated as any other student, and should follow the DfE guidelines.

### **Lateness**

School starts at 9.30 am and registration closes at 10.00 am. Lateness is classed as any child coming into school after registers have closed. Some students at St Piers School may have periods of lateness due to seizure activity during the night or in the morning.

Lateness is monitored monthly. Where students have persistent lateness the Principal will investigate as to the reasons why and contact people as appropriate.

Throughout the year parents will be kept informed of school expectations and procedures through information, flyers and newsletters. The school will employ a range of strategies to encourage good attendance.

Registers of all classes are kept and monitored by the office staff daily.

There is a log kept of all students who arrive late.

There is a log kept of all students daily for whom no notification for absence has been received and of telephone calls made to parents.

### **Guidance notes**

<b>Reason for absence</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Illness, medical and dental appointments	<p>Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is authorised absence. Parents should be encouraged to make appointments out of school hours.</p> <p>If a pupil is present for registration but has a medical appointment later, or returns home because of illness, no absence need be recorded for that session.</p>
Days of religious observance	Absence to take part in any day set aside exclusively for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong, including religious festivals.

	<p>Parents should be encouraged to give advance notice.</p>
<p>Family holidays during term-time</p>	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term.</p> <p>Each request for holiday absence should be considered individually, taking account of: the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature and parental wishes; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress.</p> <p>If a school does not agree absence and the pupil goes on holiday, absence is unauthorised.</p> <p>If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.</p> <p>Schools may delete from roll a pupil who fails to return within 10 school days of the agreed return date unless there is a good reason for the continued absence, such as illness.</p> <p>Schools should only, exceptionally, agree absence of more than 10 school days in a school year (and should not regard 10 days as the norm).</p> <p>Holiday taken but not authorised by the Principal would constitute an unauthorised absence.</p> <p>The school supports the view that every lesson counts and discourages parents from taking holidays in term time. However, there may be circumstances when this is unavoidable. Up to ten days in the academic year may be granted as holidays at the Principal's discretion. All holiday requests must be made in writing to the Principal at least four weeks prior to the holiday being taken. This is to ensure that preparations can be made to ensure that the child misses as little learning as possible.</p>

<p>Family bereavements or child caring for a sick or disabled family member (young carers)</p>	<p>Schools should respond sensitively to requests to attend funerals or associated events and have discretion to authorise such absences.</p> <p>Similarly, schools may authorise limited duration absence for young carers until other arrangements can be made.</p>
<p>Special occasions</p>	<p>Schools should consider each request individually. Only exceptional occasions warrant leave of absence. For example, attending the wedding of a family member would be acceptable, but a day's absence for a birthday or a shopping trip in school hours would not.</p> <p>Schools should consider: the nature of the event; its frequency (is it a one-off, or likely to become a regular occurrence?); whether the parent gave advance notice; the pupil's overall attendance pattern.</p>
<p>Public performances</p>	<p>The Local Authority must license a pupil to take part in a public performance.</p> <p>Agreed participation should be treated as authorised absence.</p>

Authorised/Unauthorised absences will be shown on the register by the use of symbols below:

- / Present - in for whole session
- L Late - before reg. closed
- U Late - after reg. closed
- H Annual family holiday (agreed) - authorised absence
- M Medical/dental - authorised absence
- P Approved sporting activity
- V Educational visit
- C Other authorised circumstances
- O Unauthorised absence



N No reason yet provided for absence - unauthorised absence

**Good attendance is rewarded through Certificates of Achievement, Kind Deeds and Student of the Week Awards.**

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**This procedure is agreed by the Principal and will be implemented by St Piers School.**

**Signed:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Richard Gargon**  
**Principal**

Date of next review: 1st December 2021