



St. Katherine's School

Attendance For Learning Policy
Policy Number SKP A014

Next Review: January 2022

Signed : Justin Humphreys Dated : 14 January 2020
Headteacher

Signed: William Harding Dated : 14 January 2020
Chair of Governors

1. Introduction

1.1 Regular school attendance is essential if children are to achieve their full potential. We recognise that good attendance at school is essential for progress. We also know that a student missing from school is a possible indicator of a variety of safeguarding concerns including abuse and the risks of Child Sexual Exploitation. Missing from school is also a risk indicator for the threat of radicalisation and the new Prevent Duty for schools makes clear that we must be alert to this threat.

1.2 St. Katherine's School believes that regular school attendance is the key to enabling children to maximise the educational opportunities available to them and become emotionally resilient, confident and competent adults who are able to realise their full potential and make a positive contribution to their community.

1.3 As set out in this policy, we will work with all families to identify the reasons for poor attendance and try to resolve any difficulties.

1.4 St. Katherine's School recognises that attendance is a matter for the whole school community. Our Attendance For Learning Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, anti-bullying, behaviour and inclusive learning. This policy also takes into account the [Equalities Act 2010](#), the [Human Rights Act 1998](#), the [Disability Discrimination Act 1995](#) and the [Race Relations Act 2000](#). It is written in accordance with the Department for Education Guidance - [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#)

2. Legal framework

The school will adhere to section 2 of the [Education Act 1996](#) as set out below.

2.1 Section 7 of the 1996 Education Act states that parents/carers must ensure children of compulsory school age receive efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability and aptitude regardless of any special educational needs they may have, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

2.2 A child is of compulsory school age at the beginning of the term following their 5th birthday. A child ceases to be of compulsory school age on the last Friday in June of the school year in which they reach the age of 16.

2.3 Under the Education Act 1996, the local authority has a statutory responsibility to ensure that parents/carers secure education for children of compulsory school age.

2.4 The Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session.

- 2.5 The register must record whether the student was:
- present;
 - absent;
 - present at approved educational activity; or
 - unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

2.6 In April 2017 the Supreme Court clarified the definition of regular attendance to be attendance 'in accordance with the rules prescribed by the school' therefore if an absence is not authorised by the school, the pupils attendance is deemed irregular.

3. Categorising absence

3.1 Where students of compulsory school age are recorded as absent, the register must show whether the absence is authorised or unauthorised.

3.2 Absence can only be authorised by the school and cannot be authorised by parents/carers. All absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the student's absence has been received.

3.3 Parents/carers should advise the school by telephone on the first day of absence and provide the school with an expected date of return. This should be followed up in the form of a written note from the parent/carer, though verbal explanations may be acceptable where this is considered appropriate. Alternative arrangements will be agreed with non-English speaking parents/carers.

3.4 The national codes used in the register enable the school to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for absence. The codes are listed in [School attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities](#)

3.4 Absence will be categorised as follows:

3.4.1 **Illness** In most cases a telephone call or a note from the parent/carer informing the school that their child is ill will be acceptable. Parents/carers may be asked to provide medical evidence where there are repeated absences due to reported illness. This will usually be in the form of an appointment card, prescription etc.

3.4.2 **Medical/Dental appointments** Parents/carers are advised where possible to make medical and dental appointments outside of the school day. In rare cases where this is not possible, students should attend school for part of the day. Parents/carers should show the appointment card to school.

3.4.3 **Other authorised circumstances** This relates to occasions where there is cause for absence due to exceptional circumstances, for example family bereavement or part-time timetable agreed as part of a reintegration package.

3.4.4 Excluded (No alternative provision made) Exclusion from attending school is counted as an authorised absence. The school will make arrangements for work to be sent home.

3.4.5 Family Holidays and Extended Leave The school follows the directives given in The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013. This law prohibits the Headteacher granting leave of absence to a pupil in Years 7-11 except where an application has been made in advance and the Headteacher considers there are **exceptional circumstances** relating to the application.

3.4.5.1 All requests for leave for exceptional circumstances will be considered on an individual basis by the Headteacher. The expectation of the school is that requests for leave of absence should not be planned or booked as a matter of course as they are likely to be unauthorised. However, examples of 'exceptional circumstances' include:

- Forces personnel on leave from a foreign posting
- Parents'/carers' employment restrictions
- Exceptional significant family events or circumstances

3.4.5.2 When considering any request for leave under exceptional circumstances these examples of requests would not be considered exceptional:

- Overlap with the beginning or end of term (e.g. if holiday accommodation is rented from a Friday or travel day is arranged)
- To celebrate a child's birthday
- Relatives coming to visit
- Availability of cheap or surprise holidays (including when other family members such as grandparents may wish to take children out of school).
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Cheaper holidays in England and abroad
- Family day trips
- Visiting family/friends that have different half terms or holidays
- Because a child has excellent school attendance above 97%

3.4.5.3 Making a request for a leave of absence.

Parents/carers requesting leave under exceptional circumstances during term time must always fill in a request for leave using the North Somerset Pupil Absence Request For Exceptional Circumstances Form. Retrospective requests will not be considered and therefore will result in the absence being categorised as unauthorised. Each request will be considered individually and will take the following factors into account:

- Length of the proposed leave
- The student's general absence/attendance record
- Proximity of Controlled Assessments and public examinations
- The student's ability to catch up the work missed
- The student's educational needs
- General welfare of the student
- Circumstances of the request

- Purpose of the leave
- Previous term-time holidays taken
- When the request was made

3.4.5.4 All requests for a leave of absence for exceptional circumstances will be responded to in writing. Where a request has been granted the letter should state:

- The expected date of return
- That parents/carers must contact school should any delays occur
- That the child's place may be withdrawn if the family do not return as expected

3.4.5.5 **Penalty notices**

Penalty notices may be issued without warning where the parent/carer has chosen to take the child on leave during term time without the agreement or authorisation of the school or is subsequently found to suggest a child was away from school with the knowledge of the parents/carers and does not meet the statutory defences:

- The child was absent for medical reasons
- The LA failed to provide transport when required to do so
- The absences were due to religious observance
- Permission of the school was granted or there was an unavoidable cause.

3.4.5.6 Penalty Notices require each parent/carer of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory, to pay a penalty. If a Penalty Notice is not paid the parent/carer will be automatically summoned to appear in court for an offence under Section 444 (1) Education Act 1996 and can result in a criminal conviction.

3.4.5.7 **Failure to return to school**

If a student fails to return and contact with the parents/carers has not been made or received, school may take the student off the school's roll in compliance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. This means that the child will lose their school place.

3.5 **Religious Observance**

St. Katherine's School acknowledges the multi-faith nature of British society and recognises that on some occasions, religious festivals may fall outside school holiday periods or weekends and this necessitates a consideration of authorised absence or special leave for religious observance.

3.5.1 For reasons of religious observance, it is reasonable for a parent/carers to allow their children not to attend school if recognised by the parent's/carer's religious body. Parents/carers are requested to give advance notice to the school if they intend their child to be absent.

3.5.2 However, in the interests of fulfilling the academic requirements of the school and limiting the authorised absence rate of the school, it is identified as reasonable that no more than one day be designated for any individual occasion of religious observance/festival and no more than three days in total in any academic year. Any further absence will be categorised as unauthorised.

3.6 Study Leave

The school does not operate a Study Leave period for Year 11 students except in exceptional circumstances and authorised by the Headteacher

3.7 Traveller Absence

The aim for the attendance of Traveller children, in common with all other children, is to attend school as regularly and as frequently as possible.

3.7.1 To protect Traveller parents/carers from unreasonable prosecution for non-attendance, the Education Act 1944, section 86, states that a Traveller parent/carer is safe from prosecution if their child accrues 200 attendances (i.e. 200 half days) in a year. This is only when the family are engaged in a trade or business that requires them to travel and when the child is attending school as regularly as that trade permits.

3.7.2 It does not mean that part-time education for Traveller children is legally acceptable, nor does it relieve parents/carers of their duties to ensure that their children are receiving suitable education when not at school.

3.7.3 When in or around Bristol, if a family can reasonably travel back to their 'base school' (see below) then the expectation is that their child will attend full-time.

3.7.4 St. Katherine's School will be regarded as the base school if it is the school where the child normally attends when they are not travelling. However, the pupil must have attended in the last 18 months. Traveller children can register at other schools temporarily while away from their base school, in such cases, the pupil's school place at St. Katherine's School will be kept open for them whilst travelling. This is to protect them from unfairly losing their place at their school of usual attendance.

3.7.5 St. Katherine's School can only effectively operate as the child's base school if it is engaged in on-going dialogue with Traveller families. This means that parents/carers must:

- Advise of their forthcoming travelling patterns before they happen; and
- Inform the school regarding proposed return dates

3.7.6 St. Katherine's School will authorise absence of Traveller children if we are satisfied that a family is travelling and has given indication that they intend to return.

3.7.7 Traveller children will be recorded as attending an approved educational activity when:

- The child is on roll and attending another visited school
- Undertaking supervised educational activity under the jurisdiction of another local authority's Traveller Education Service
- The child is undertaking computer-based distance learning that is time evidenced

3.7.8 Where Traveller children are registered pupils at a school and are known to be present either at a site (official or otherwise) or in a house and are not attending school, the absence will be investigated in the same way as that for any pupil.

3.8 **Late Arrival**

Registration begins at 8.35am, students arriving after this time will be marked as present but arriving late. The register will close at 10.00am, students arriving after the close of register will be recorded as late using a U code in the register, this will not be authorised and will count as an absence for that school session.

3.8.1 When students arrive late to school after 9.00am , they must immediately report to the Student Support Office to ensure that we can be responsible for their health and safety whilst they are in school.

3.9 **Unauthorised absence.** Absence will not be authorised unless parents/carers have provided a satisfactory explanation and that it has been accepted as such by the school.

3.9.1 Examples of unsatisfactory explanations include:

- A student's/family member's birthday
- Shopping for uniforms
- Having their hair cut
- Closure of a sibling's school for INSET (or other) purposes
- "Couldn't get up"
- Illness where the child is considered well enough to attend school
- Holidays or other leave taken without the authorisation of school that does not constitute exceptional circumstances

4. **Deletions from the register**

4.1 In accordance with the Education (Student Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, students will only be deleted from the register when one of the following circumstances applies:

- The school is replaced by another school on a School Attendance Order
- The School Attendance Order is revoked by the local authority
- The student has ceased to be of compulsory school age
- Permanent exclusion has occurred and procedures have been completed
- Death of a student
- Transfer between schools
- Student withdrawn to be educated outside the school system
- Failure to return from an extended holiday after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- A medical condition prevents their attendance and return to the school before ending compulsory school-age
- In custody for more than four months (in discussion with The Youth Offending Team) and if the student is not expected to return to school

- 20 days of continuous unauthorised absence and both the local authority and school have tried to locate the student
- Left the school but not known where he/she has gone after both the school and the local authority have tried to locate the student
- Notification is given that the family has moved to an address that would make it difficult for them to attend St. Katherine's School

4.2 St. Katherine's School will follow North Somerset Council's Children Missing Education Protocol when a students' whereabouts is unknown.

5. Roles and responsibilities

5.1 St. Katherine's School believes that improved school attendance can only be achieved if it is viewed as a shared responsibility of the school staff, governors, parents/carers, students and the wider school community.

5.2 The governing body will:

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers
- Annually review the school's Attendance For Learning Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy
- Identify a member of the governing body to lead on attendance matters
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Agree school attendance targets and, where appropriate, link these to the performance management of senior leadership within the school
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at governing body meetings
- Ensure that attendance data is reported to the local authority or Department For Education as required and on time
- Ensure there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance
- Ensure the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site
- Ensure there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions

5.3 The Headteacher will:

- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Assume overall responsibility for the Attendance For Learning Policy
- Ensure the policy is implemented, monitored and reviewed
- Ensure attendance is an integral part of long-term school action planning.
- Liaise with the local authority at a strategic level on issues relating to behaviour and attendance.
- Act as a signatory for legal proceedings.

5.4 The Deputy Headteacher (Behaviour and Attitudes) will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Meet daily with the Attendance Coordinator
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance For Learning Policy and evaluate its impact
- Scrutinise and authorise in consultation with the Headteacher, requests for absence in exceptional circumstances
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Advise the Headteacher and governors regarding target-setting for improving attendance
- Be responsible for policy development and review
- Provide leadership and direction to the attendance team.
- Provide leadership and advice to Heads of House in ensuring that agreed policies and procedures are followed in their team
- Support Heads of House regarding levels of attendance, trends in data and strategies employed
- Ensure that Heads of Faculty and their teams carry out appropriate attendance routines and respond to issues raised by post-registration data
- Report regularly on attendance to the governing body
- Manage the policy and operational links with the local authority and EWS.
- Ensure the governing body, teaching staff, parents/carers and students are fully informed of attendance patterns and trends
- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers
- Form positive relationships with students and parents/carers
- Ensure there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance; with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve
- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance For Learning Policy and ensure the policy is reviewed annually
- Ensure all staff are aware of the Attendance For Learning Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues
- Ensure the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with
- Return school attendance data to the local authority and the Department for Education as required and on time
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off-site, are implemented
- Ensure attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated

5.5 The Deputy Headteacher (Teaching and Learning) will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Ensure that Heads of Faculty and their teams carry out appropriate attendance routines and respond to issues raised by post-registration data

5.6 The Attendance Coordinator will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Develop and provide attendance data to a range of staff to enable them to carry out their operational responsibilities
- Provide challenge and support to all staff on matters of attendance
- Support the Assistant Headteacher (Raising Standards) in developing and administering the Attendance For Learning Policy.
- Run non-attendance meetings as required throughout the academic year with students whose attendance lies under 90%.
- Issue a range of letters regarding non-attendance including formal warning letters
- Prepare referrals to EWS regarding issues of attendance
- Liaise with external agencies on issues relevant to promoting good attendance
- Ensure case histories are drawn up for irregular attenders
- Be a point of contact for parents/carers and to provide advice and support to them
- Be responsible for liaising with external agencies and securing their data needs
- Be available as a point of contact and work with parents/carers to assist them to promote their child's attendance at the school
- Support the Assistant Headteacher (Raising Standards) in liaising with the EWS and local police regarding truancy sweeps
- Will advise parents/carers in writing when a student's attendance is a cause for concern and immediate action is required to improve. This may be requesting medical evidence in order to continue authorising absence from illness.
- Will advise parents/carers when lateness is a particular problem that is affecting and disrupting learning

5.7 Heads of House will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Take responsibility for leading their tutor teams on attendance issues and supporting the work of tutors
- Be responsible for setting and monitoring levels of attendance in their year group, reporting to Assistant Headteacher (Raising Standards) .
- Be responsible for monitoring the quality of year group registers and ensuring that agreed guidelines and procedures are followed
- Work with the Attendance Coordinator in response to data provided; keep the Attendance Coordinator informed of student attendance issues raised by tutors.
- Check and liaise with Attendance Coordinator weekly actions and confirm the course of action.

- Be responsible for applying policies to support the reintegration of non-attenders, previously PEX students, students who transfer during the year and those on Negotiated Transfer.

5.8 Heads of Faculty will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Be responsible for ensuring that accurate lesson registers are taken each lesson and that agreed routines and procedures are followed across the team
- Be responsible for holding the team to account for the accuracy and timeliness of lesson attendance data captured by SIMS
- Ensure the team has access to appropriate data on lesson attendance and the team responds effectively to it
- Lead on the development of team policies and practices to effectively re-engage students returning from absence of varying lengths

5.9 The SENDCO will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Be responsible for ensuring that accurate lesson registers are taken each lesson for students in Engage and that agreed routines and procedures are followed across the team
- Be responsible for applying policies to support the reintegration of Engage students to mainstream lessons

5.10 Tutors will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Inform the Attendance Coordinator and head of year about issues of attendance
- Be responsible for maintaining accurate tutor registers and for implementing attendance routines
- Complete and save registers within the first ten minutes of the session.
- Work closely with families to challenge and support their tutees attendance
- Work closely with Heads of House and refer issues at the appropriate time and in the appropriate way
- Set improvement targets and monitor progress towards them
- Use data to monitor the attendance of individuals and whole tutor group and to respond to issues and patterns

5.11 Classroom Teachers will:

- Implement fully the school's agreed Attendance For Learning Policy.
- Promote, celebrate and reward good attendance
- Be responsible for maintaining accurate records of attendance to lessons using agreed procedures
- Complete and save registers within the first ten minutes of the session.

- Work closely with Heads of Faculty/Subject on issues of attendance to lessons
- Develop strategies with their teams to reconnect with and support students who have returned after absences of varying lengths and for varying reasons

5.13 Request that parents/carers will:

- Talk to their child about school and what goes on there. Take a positive interest in their child's work and educational progress
- Instil the value of education and regular school attendance within the home environment
- Encourage their child to look to the future and have aspirations
- Contact the school if their child is absent to let them know the reason why and the expected date of return. Follow this up with a note where possible.
- Try their hardest to avoid unnecessary absences. Wherever possible make appointments for the doctor, dentist etc. outside of school hours, but where these do occur ensure that the child attends for the time up to or after the appointment time.
- Ask the school for help if their child is experiencing difficulties
- Inform the school of any change in circumstances that may impact on their child's attendance
- Support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home
- Encourage routine at home, for example, bedtimes, homework, preparing school bag and uniform the evening before
- Not keep their child off school to go shopping, to help at home or to look after other members of the family
- Avoid taking their child on holiday during term-time. All requests for leave for exceptional circumstances must be made using the North Somerset Pupil Absence For Exceptional Circumstances Form.
- Send a written leave request to the Headteacher in advance of booking any holiday