

Attendance Policy



Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure the effective promotion of education to our students and for all students to achieve their full potential.

St Helena School's ethos demonstrates that students feel that their presence in school is important for them to achieve their potential, that they are missed when they are absent or late and that when necessary, appropriate action will be taken to improve attendance.

Aims

- To encourage maximum attendance for all students.
- To make attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the school.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform policy and practice.
- To identify, monitor and support students whose attendance is a cause for concern.
- To work closely with and make full use of support from external agencies.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance.
- To encourage parents/carers to take responsibility for their child's attendance by working in partnership with the school to maintain high levels of attendance.

Target for Attendance

- Each year challenging targets will be set by the school. The school's targets will be discussed and agreed by our senior leadership team in line with Essex County Council guidance.

Registration

- Registers are a vital legal document. Staff are required by their contractual duties to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and once at the start of the afternoon session.
- Registers are completed on SIMS. Where SIMS is unavailable an emergency register must be completed and sent to the Attendance Officer.
- Registers must be completed carefully and accurately, as they provide a record of student attendance. Failure to complete a register accurately leaves the school vulnerable to truancy, safeguarding concerns and constitutes a risk if an emergency evacuation has to take place.

Role of Attendance Officer

- To provide the relevant staff with relevant attendance data.
- To alert the Pastoral Team of any unexplained absence.
- To liaise with the appropriate member of staff (usually the Year Leader) regarding work to be sent home for students who are expected to be absent for an extended period due to illness and to be the collection point for this work. Certified medical evidence must support any extended period of absence due to illness.
- To contact parent/carers of students with unexplained absence.
- To generate attendance letters as required
- To complete the DFE return as required
- The School's Attendance Officer will meet at least fortnightly with the senior member of staff in charge of attendance to monitor and evaluate students' attendance. In addition to the rigorous analysis and evaluation of attendance data, they undertake meetings with students and parents/carers, home visits.
- They are the School's link with the Attendance Solutions Essex with regard to Penalty Notices.

Role of the Form Tutor

This includes:

- Vigilance in monitoring the attendance of their tutees. The Head of Year or another member of the Pastoral team must be informed immediately of any concerns.
- Checking the list of names with regard to accuracy of spelling during the first registration of the academic year.
- Responding promptly to any issues raised in the regular analysis of data by the Year Leader and the School's Attendance Officer.
- Ensuring that their tutees know their percentage attendance. In addition that their tutees understand the importance of good attendance and what it means in terms of supporting good progress.
- Implementing early intervention strategies to support students whose attendance is a cause for concern, including regular contact with parents/carers.
- Implementing the appropriate sanction for persistent lateness to school.

- **The Role of the Year Teams:**

This includes:

- Regular liaison with the school's Attendance Officer on to ensure the effective monitoring of attendance in the Year Group and identification of those where intervention is necessary.
- Reviewing attendance data with the School's Attendance Officer in order to monitor and agree early intervention strategies for implementation with regard to individuals and cohorts.
- Rewarding good/improved attendance through the Reward System.
- Liaising with the Form Tutor regarding the attendance of their tutees.
- Scheduling and attending attendance meetings with students and parents/carers to discuss support and set targets for those experiencing attendance difficulties. This will be done in consultation with the school's Attendance Officer and Attendance Solutions Officers.
- The identification of students to be discussed at Learning, Attendance, Behaviour and safeguarding meetings (LABS).
- The monitoring of identified students discussed at LABS meetings with regard to attendance.
- Where appropriate working in conjunction with the Safeguarding Lead, Special Educational Needs Co-ordinator and outside agencies to support students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
- Ensuring that medical evidence is received quickly and then termly to enable the school to authorise persistent absence due to illness.
- Where appropriate devising a reintegration programme for students who have been absent for an extended period.
- Where appropriate create a One-Plan for students with regular concerns around attendance.
- Liaising with the relevant staff regarding work to be sent home for students who are expected to be absent for an extended period through sickness supported by medical evidence. The Year Team will request and collate work from teaching staff. This will then be emailed or passed to the School Office for collection by parents.
- Communicating with parents/carers regarding any concerns about their child's attendance. Standard letters may be used, along with a copy of the attendance certificate. Phone calls and emails may also be used.
- Analysing the half termly data, including the 'vulnerable groups' in consultation with the senior member of staff in charge of attendance.

The role and responsibilities of parents/carers and students are shared with parents in a variety of ways including end of term letters and the Attendance Policy.

Attendance data will be reported and discussed at the Governing Body Meetings.

Attendance Solutions Essex LTD

- **Attendance Solutions support the school in rigorously monitoring attendance and punctuality. In addition they are authorised by Essex Police to issue Penalty Notices on behalf of the school.**

Notification of Absence

- Parents/carers are asked to contact the school on the first day of absence and everyday thereafter unless the absence is due to be long term and supported by medical evidence if an absence continues into a new school week.
- The final decision with regard to authorisation of student absence rests with the school, not the parents/carers.

- If any member of staff is concerned about a reason for absence, the appropriate Year Leader and the Attendance Officer should be informed.
- The Attendance Officer will inform the Year leader, Head of School and Home School Liaison Officer if an unauthorised absence causes concern to see if a home visit is advisable.
- If a student has a block of **5** days or more unauthorised absence this will be a cause for concern and the Attendance officer will inform the Year leader, Head of School and Home School Liaison Officer to see if a home visit is advisable.
- Persistent absence due to illness must be authorised by current medical evidence.

Holiday during term time

- Parents/carers should not normally take students on holiday during term.
- If parents/carers wish to apply for holiday absence, they should complete a Leave of Absence form, which is available from the school office and the school website. This should be returned to the school and the request will be considered by Deputy Head Teacher who will respond to the parents/carers in writing.
- Holidays during term time will not be authorised, except in exceptional circumstances.
- Unauthorised holidays taken during term time could result in the issue of a Penalty Notice.
The school follows LA guidance when issuing Penalty Notices.

Illness, medical and dental appointments

- Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is an authorised absence. Parents/carers are requested to provide written confirmation of these appointments.
- Parents/carers and students are encouraged to make all medical appointments out of school hours.

Truancy

- If a member of staff suspects that a student is truanting, he/she should inform the staff in the school office. The register will then be checked, as will the student's lesson. If the student is not registered or in their lesson, the Pastoral Team or office staff will contact the parents/carers. If a student is found to be truanting, then this is an unauthorised absence and sanctions will be applied by the appropriate member of staff.

Lateness

- Students arriving late, i.e. after the register has been called, but before 9:00am must go to registration or assembly immediately. The form tutor will then mark them late and punitive action will be taken as appropriate. However, if this is due to the lateness of designated school transport, the student is classified as being late to school but punitive action will not be taken.
- All students arriving to school after **9:00am must go directly to reception** to sign in the late book and fill in a late slip. A note from parents/carers should be produced for a register in order that the late arrival can be authorised. If the student does not have a note of explanation, this will be followed up.
- Action to address lateness will be taken in line with the school's strategy to improve punctuality.

Reporting

- All absences, both authorised and unauthorised lates are reported to the parents/carers on the termly reports.

Extreme cases

- Extreme cases will be referred by the Pastoral Team and jointly managed by the Pastoral Team, School Attendance Officer, Attendance Solutions and the senior member of staff in charge of attendance.
- Any student with attendance **at or below 90%** is classified as a Persistent Absentee (PA) by the **Department of Education**. The school will adhere to its duty to investigate reasons for absence and address individual cases accordingly.