



## Attendance Policy

**Principal: Mrs Rhodes**

**Assistant Principal: Mrs Sukonik**

**Chair of Governors: Mrs J Joynes**

This policy was adopted: September 2023

The policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2025

**‘As children of God at St Paulinus, we strive to create a happy, caring place where everybody is valued, respected and safe so we learn and grow to our very best.’**

*“Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them” (Romans 12,6)*

**NURTURE: Knowledge, Curiosity, Resilience, Respect, Spirituality, Creativity & Love**

### Section 1: Aim

St Paulinus seeks to ensure that all its pupils receive a full-time education which maximises opportunities for each to realise his/her true potential. The school will strive to provide a welcoming, caring, Christian environment, whereby each member of the school community feels wanted and secure. It is the aim of all staff at St Paulinus to work in partnership with pupils and their parents/carers to enable all pupils to achieve the best possible attendance and punctuality throughout the academic year.

### Section 2: Principles and Objectives

The aim of the Attendance and Punctuality Policy reflects the aims and recognises that regular attendance has a positive effect on the motivation and attainment of pupils and staff. There is a clear link between poor attendance and lower academic achievement.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To improve the overall percentage attendance of pupils at the school.
2. To encourage pupils to take full advantage of their educational opportunities by attending regularly.
3. To provide an effective and efficient system for monitoring attendance and punctuality.
4. To recognise the external factors which influence pupils' attendance and work with parents/carers to address difficulties.
5. To implement a system of rewards to promote good attendance and punctuality.
6. To promote effective partnerships with other Services and External Agencies, where appropriate, to promote good attendance.
7. To recognise the needs of the individual pupil when planning reintegration following significant periods of absence.

### Section 3: Procedures

### **3.1 Registration**

Schools and academies by law have to register pupils twice a day; first thing in the morning (by 8:55 am) at the start of the school day, and again in the afternoon session (at 1:00 pm). If a pupil fails to attend or arrives late, they can be marked as absent for that session. Class teachers will mark the registers within 20 minutes of the morning and afternoon sessions starting. After this time, registers will be closed.

### **3.2 Parent/Carer Responsibility**

It is the parent/carers' legal responsibility to ensure that their children attend the school where they are registered regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of children and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them. Once a child is registered at the school, attendance is compulsory.

If a pupil is unable to attend the school, parents/carers are expected:

- To contact the school before 8.30am every day of a pupil's absence by email or telephone. A reason for absence must be given. This is a safeguarding issue so that all parties know that the child is safe.
- To contact the school when the period of absence runs longer than originally advised giving a reason and new date of expected return to the school.
- To provide a letter (or written note) explaining the absence on the day the pupil returns to the school.
- To provide supporting evidence if requested, to enable informed decisions to be made by the school when authorising absence

If a child is absent and the parent or carer has not contacted the school, then as part of our safeguarding policy, staff will:

- Send an email and/or text reminding them to make contact.
- If there is no response, the office will try and contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts. This is so that we can check on the safety of the child.
- If it has not been possible to contact either the parent, carer or emergency contacts then school will give due consideration to making a home visit based on their knowledge of the child. If no contact has been made after 3 days, then a home visit will definitely be made.

Parents/carers should contact the school if they are concerned about their child's attendance, or if their child is experiencing difficulties either in or outside the school which are affecting their attendance. The school aims to work in partnership with parents/carers and will discuss ways to support a pupil and family to ensure improved attendance.

### **3.3 Role of the School Staff**

The Principal (Mrs Rhodes) has overall responsibility for attendance and has to report termly percentages to the local authority and Governors. The Attendance Officer monitors attendance together with the members of the Senior Leadership Team (Mrs Rhodes, Mrs Sukonik and Miss Hobin-Brady) responsible for attendance.

Class teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. Teachers/Office Staff mark pupils present or mark as an 'N' if a child is absent. The Office Staff will mark late or absent children in the morning and telephone or email the parents of any absent children if they have not already made contact. It is the responsibility of the Office Staff to ensure:

- Attendance and lateness records are up to date
- If no reason for absence has been provided:
- parents are contacted on the first day of absence.

- If no reason is provided, then the absence will be marked as 'unauthorised' following the absence.
- Where there has been no communication, communications are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence. When a reason has been provided the Office Staff will ensure that the appropriate attendance code is entered into the register (National Attendance Codes – see appendix 1)

#### Absence Authorisation

If a pupil of compulsory school age is absent, the register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised. Only the Principal, SLT or Office Manager, can authorise a pupil's absence. Additional evidence such as proof of appointments, or letters from GPs confirming illness, may be required before an absence is authorised.

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from the school for a good reason, such as illness or another unavoidable reason which have been authorised by the Principal, or designated staff.

Unauthorised Absences are those that the Principal, or designated staff, do not consider reasonable and for which no 'leave' has been given. These are an offence by the parent and can include (not an exhausted list):

- Keeping pupils away from the school without a good reason
- Absences that have never been properly explained or evidenced
- Pupils who arrive at the school too late to get a mark
- Taking holidays that have not been approved by the school in advance
- Absences where evidence has been requested, but not provided by the parent/carer

Absences immediately before or after school holidays will only be authorised with supporting evidence.

### **3.4 Term Time Holidays and Arrangements for Requesting Exceptional Leave of Absence**

From September 2013 the Department for Education amended the Pupil Registration Regulations, removing the Principal's ability to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

The Principal may authorise absence in "exceptional circumstances" but this must be requested in advance and agreement to each request is at the discretion of the Principal, acting on behalf of the Governing Body (Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006). Each case will be judged on its merits and the Principal's decision is final. Once the decision not to authorise leave is taken, it cannot be authorised retrospectively.

The Principal is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. If absences are not authorised, parents will be notified.

A written application must be made to request a leave of absence in advance, with supporting evidence. (see appendix 2) The Principal will give due consideration to the circumstances and the child's past attendance history. The application for leave of absence must include a return date. Authorisation and length of leave is at the Principal's discretion. If leave is taken without authorisation, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised, and the matter may be referred to the Local Authority. Children who return 10 days or more after the expected date will be reported to the local authority as a 'Child Missing in Education' and may be taken off the school roll. A Penalty Notice may also be issued.

Notes regarding exceptional circumstances:

- Absence during term time for holidays/vacations is not considered an exceptional circumstance
- Absences to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time if they could be scheduled for holiday periods or outside school hours. Pupils may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives

- Absence for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave
- Absences for important religious observances are often considered but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one-off situations rather than regular or recurring events

The legal framework governing pupil's leave of absence from school during term time is set out in the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The school recognises different pupils may have specific needs and this will be taken into consideration under the Equality Act 2010 and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

### **3.5 Medical and Dental Appointments**

Where such appointments in school time are unavoidable, staff should be informed in advance if possible. A 'present' mark may still be awarded if the pupil attends for as much of the session as they can. It is always better to attend for some of the time, rather than missing the whole day. Evidence of the appointment may be requested before the absence is authorised.

- Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside school hours.
- An appointment card or verification by the doctors/dentist/hospital is required for medical appointments
- If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.
- If a child is absent due to vomiting and/or diarrhoea then they should not return to school for the next 48 hours after the last time that the child is sick. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at the school.
- For more than three days of absence or where there is repeated absence due to illness, the school will request medical evidence (this can take the form of an appointment card or a copy of a prescription)
- Where there are concerns about a child's attendance (particularly when it drops below 90%) the school will request medical evidence for any absence

### **3.6 Punctuality**

The school day starts at 8.55am. All pupils are expected to arrive at the school between 8.40am and 8:55am and go directly to their designated areas. Registers close at 9.15am. Pupils arriving after 8.55am must enter school via the main school entrance and report to the office staff who will record their name and reason for lateness. The pupil will be recorded as late when registration has closed; those arriving after 9.30am will be recorded as unauthorised absence.

Parents/carers are responsible for ensuring their child arrives promptly. Parents/carers of pupils who arrive persistently late will be contacted and if no improvement is observed, further action will result, which may include the local authority issuing a fixed penalty notice warning.

## **Section 4: Monitoring Attendance & Lateness**

Improving attendance is a whole School responsibility. Helping to create a pattern of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility including parents, pupils and all members of school staff.

The diagram below highlights the whole school approach to attendance monitoring and intervention.

The school has an escalating approach to reinforcing high levels of attendance and intervening in respect of attendance concerns. Our expectation is that a child's attendance is 96% or above at the end of the school year. The school will carry out regular register checks and contact parents/carers when a pupil's attendance or punctuality is under target. Parents/carers may be invited to attend meetings to the School to discuss issues affecting a pupil's attendance.

Each pupil will be considered individually before any action is taken. Actions will be agreed by the School Attendance Officer and the member of Senior Leadership Team with responsibility for attendance. Actions may include

- Staff speaking to parents and carers as and when concerns arise
- The Attendance Officer contacting families whose attendance is below average to try to find ways to improve
- Writing to parents when attendance or punctuality does not improve

The school monitors children's attendance when it drops below 96%. A series of letters is sent when attendance does not improve, approaches or drops below 92%. Class Teachers will also contact parents/carers, on a termly basis, of those pupils whose attendance is between 90% and 95% to offer any support in order to improve attendance.

Letter 1 – advising parent or carer that attendance is low and requesting that every effort is made to ensure attendance improves.

Letter 2 – raising concerns that attendance is low or has not improved and setting the expectation that all future absences need to be accompanied by medical evidence. This may be accompanied by a telephone call from the Attendance Officer

Letter 3 – either a meeting with a member of the Senior Leadership Team and the Attendance Officer to review attendance or an attendance panel meeting with the LA Educational Welfare Officer (EWO)

<b>Green</b>	Attendance is <b>97% - 100%</b> . This means your child is on track for an excellent year. You are ensuring your child's school success and setting them off to a good flying start. Well done!
<b>Amber</b>	Attendance is between <b>92% and 96.9%</b> . This is a less than expected level of attendance; and school is monitoring your child's absence. Less than 97% attendance over the school year indicates that at least two weeks' learning is lost.
<b>Brown</b>	Attendance is between <b>90.1% and 91.9%</b> . This is worrying; your child has less chance of success and their non-attendance is making it harder for them to progress in their learning and development. Less than 90% attendance over the school year indicates that at least four weeks' learning is lost.
<b>Red</b>	Attendance is <b>90%</b> or below. This is very worrying; there are serious concerns regarding your child's attendance and they are a persistent absentee. This means the Education Welfare Service is involved and you may be <b>legally prosecuted</b> , if there is no improvement.

Pupils who miss 10% of school days are called 'Persistent Absentees' (PA) by the Department for Education whatever the reason for their absence (authorised or unauthorised). Special procedures will be applied to pupils who fall into this category.

What your child's attendance percentage means

Child's Attendance	Action
96%+	<b>Excellent</b> attendance
94%-95.9%	<b>Good</b> attendance – well done! Strive to build on this
90%-93.9%	<b>Concern</b> – Attendance is below average and they are missing out on what other children are learning and doing. School and parents need to work closely to improve the situation. Attendance will be carefully monitored
Below 90%	<b>Possible Penalty notice / legal proceedings.</b> Children whose attendance is in this bracket is regarded nationally as a child who has persistent absence (PA). The government has invested heavily to monitor the attendance of these children as it is a major cause for concern. Schools have targets to reduce the level of PAs and the school and local authority work very closely together along with families to support them in getting the children in school every day. However, if attendance does not improve, the next steps could be penalty notices and possible legal proceedings.

#### Persistent Absence (PA)

Your child will be considered as a PA pupil using the following criteria:



Term	Number of sessions missed since beginning of the academic year (1 session is half a day)
Autumn 1	7 or more
Autumn 2	14 or more
Spring 1	20 or more
Spring 2	25 or more
Summer 1	31 or more
Summer 2	38 or more

Persistent unauthorised absence may result in the matter being referred to the Local Authority for a Penalty Notice to be issued or for investigation which could result in prosecution. It is a criminal offence under Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act to fail to secure regular attendance of a registered pupil at the school. Magistrates can issue fines of up to £2,500 per pupils, impose Parenting Orders and impose a period of imprisonment of up to 3 months. The legal framework governing Penalty Notices is set out in the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007, amended 2013.

Pupils whose attendance and punctuality are outstanding, or is most improved, will be recognised with certificates and considered for further rewards which include prizes and whole class treats.

#### Appendix 1 – Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance and used on Brom Comm:

Mark	Mark Name	Mark Description	Active Subcodes	Physically Present	Protected Mark	Enable for Teacher Registers	Display Colour	Active	Export Mark
	Cancelled (C)	Cancelled	0	No	No	No		Yes	
#	SchoolClosure (C)	Planned whole or partial school closure - not counted in possible attendances	0	No	No	No		Yes	
/	Present (P)	Present	0	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	/
?	Precreated (?)	Precreation Mark	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	
B	Ed. Off Site (E)	Educated off site (NOT dual registration)	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	B
C	Other Auth (A)	Other authorised circumstance	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	C
D	Dual Reg (C)	Dual registration	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	D
E	Excluded (A)	Excluded	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	E
F	Ext. Family Hol (A)	Extended family holiday	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	F
G	Fam Hol NA (U)	Family holiday (not agreed)	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	G
H	Fam Hol Agreed (A)	Family holiday (agreed)	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	H
I	Illness (A)	Illness	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	I
J	Interview (E)	Interview	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	J
L	Late (P)	Late before reg. closed	0	Yes	No	Yes		Yes	L
M	Med/Dental (A)	Medical/dental	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	M
N	No Reason (U)	No reason yet provided	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	N
O	Unauth Abs (U)	Unauthorised absence	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	O
P	Sporting Act (E)	Approved sporting activity	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	P
R	Religious Obs (A)	Religious observance	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	R
S	Study Leave (A)	Study leave	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	S
T	Trav Absence (A)	Traveller absence	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	T
U	Late Reg Closed (U)	Late after reg. closed	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	U
V	Ed Visit (E)	Educational visit	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	V
W	Work Exp (E)	Work	0	No	No	Yes		Yes	W

## Application for Pupil Leave of Absence

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 make clear that Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. Principals should determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Exceptional circumstances are defined as:

- Leave for a bereavement of a close family member is usually considered an exceptional circumstance but for the funeral service only, not extended leave.
- Leave to visit family members are also not normally granted during term time. Pupils may however need time to visit seriously ill relatives.
- Leave for important religious observances but only for the ceremony and travelling time, not extended leave. This is intended for one off situations rather than regular or recurring events.
- Leave which takes the needs of the families of service personnel into account if they are returning from long operational tours that prevent contact during scheduled holiday time.
- Leave which makes reasonable adjustments for pupils with special educational needs or disabilities.
- Leave for families who may need time together to recover from trauma or crisis.

The Principal will consider a pupil's previous record of attendance when making decisions. It is important to note that the Principal can determine the length of the authorised absence as well as whether absence is authorised at all.

This form should be completed to enable the Principal to decide whether to authorise the application for leave. Authorising leave from school is at the discretion of the Principal. If the leave is taken without the authorisation of the Principal, a Penalty Notice may be issued.

Pupil/s Details



Name/s	
Class/es	
Address:	

Absence Details

I request permission for the above named pupil/s be granted leave of absence from St Paulinus

From:	(first day of absence)
To:	(last day of absence)
Number of school days:	

It is necessary to take my child/ren out of school because:


Parent/Carer Details

I have read and understood the information overleaf.

Parent/Carer Name/s:	
Parent/Carer Contact Number :	
Signature:	Date: