# St Alban's RC High School
# Attendance Policy & Procedure

| ORIGIN: | Governing Body |
|---|---|
| COMMITTEE RESPONSIBLE: | Wellbeing, Equality & Inclusion |
| LEAD MEMBER: | Assistant Head |
| DATE APPROVED: | 26/10/2022 |
| CHAIR OF GOVERNORS NAME: | Chris Evans |
| CHAIR OF GOVERNORS SIGNATURE: | *Chris Evans.* |
| REVIEW DATE: | 26/10/2023 |

*St Alban's RC High School is a voluntary aided school and the governing body is the employer of the staff who work there. The contract of employment is between the school's governing body and the employee. The governing body has all the employment responsibilities that this entails including the appointment and dismissal of staff.*

**Mission statement**

St Alban's RC High School is committed to providing a full and efficient education to all pupils and embraces the concept of equal opportunities for all.

We will provide an environment where all pupils feel valued and welcomed and are committed to the the fundamental principle that early intervention and partnership working is crucial in ensuring the attendance, protection and well-being of all children and young people.

The school will follow the All Wales Child Protection procedures and local protocols in relation to specific and identifiable welfare issues that prevent a child or young pupil from accessing education, or where there are safeguarding concerns.

For a pupil to reach their full educational achievement a high level of school attendance is essential. We will consistently work towards a goal of 100% attendance for all pupils. Every opportunity will be used to convey to pupils and their parents or carers the importance of regular and punctual attendance.

School attendance is subject to education law and guidance and this school attendance policy is written to reflect this legislation and the guidance produced by the Welsh Government (WG).

The legislation makes provision for a school day which is to be divided into two sessions with a lunch break in the middle and to be available for at least 190 days in any school year.

The school will review its systems for improving attendance on an annual basis to ensure that it is achieving its set goals and targets as identified by the Governors, Local Authority (LA), South East Wales Consortium (SEWC) and the WG.

This policy will contain the procedures that the school will use to work towards meeting its attendance targets.

**Promoting attendance**

The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and pupils.

We will ensure that our pupils are made aware of the importance of good attendance and how this will benefit them; we will use a variety of strategies to intervene at an early stage to encourage improved attendance of individual learners.

The home school agreement will contain details of how we will work with parents and carers and our expectations of what they will need to do to ensure pupils' achieve good attendance.

**Leave of absence/holidays in term time**

Leave of absence during term time will be discouraged. Parents and carers do not have the automatic right to withdraw their children from school for an annual holiday and will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a pupil's potential achievement.

Parents and carers must apply in advance for permission for their child to have leave of absence. The school will consider any application for leave of absence, taking into account factors such as the time of year and overall attendance pattern of the pupil. It is good practice to invite parents to school to discuss any proposals, prior to an application being made.

The Head Teacher may only agree to an extended leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. Examples of exceptional circumstances include:

- Parent working abroad for a fixed, medium term period;
- Family are returning to country of origin;
- Parent returning from active tour of duty.

**School procedures**

Any pupil who is absent from school at the morning or afternoon registration period will have their absence recorded as being authorised, unauthorised or as an approved educational activity (attendance out of school). Only the Head Teacher or a member of staff acting on their behalf can authorise absence.

If there is no known reason for the absence at registration, then the absence will be recorded in the first instance as unexplained (code N) and promptly followed up by the school, as part of its early intervention and safeguarding strategies.

The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the guidance provided by the WG.

**Lateness**

Morning registration will take place at the start of school at 8.40am. The registers will remain open for a maximum of 30 minutes, in accordance with WG guidance.  Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation i.e. school transport was delayed. In cases for example, where the absence at registration was for attending an early morning medical appointment, the appropriate authorised absence code will be entered.

Pupils arriving after the start of school but before the end of the registration period will be coded as late (L).

Afternoon registration will be at 2.20 pm and any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having an unauthorised absence (code U) unless there is an acceptable explanation.

Pupils arriving after the start of afternoon registration period will be coded as late.

Parents and carers are reminded that The LA may issue a FPN for persistent lateness after the close of the register in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct, if in excess of 10 sessions.

**First day absence**

School will endeavor to ascertain the specific reason for non- attendance as soon as possible on the first day of absence, after both morning and afternoon registration. This may include a telephone call or message via the school app. Once the specific information is received, the register will be amended to reflect the appropriate absence code (Appendix 1).

Priority will be given to children who are deemed to be particularly vulnerable, eg. those known to child protection/safeguarding services or are looked after (LAC). The locality children services team will be notified of unexplained absences of more than two days of a pupil on the child protection register, or one day following the week-end.

**Third day absence**

On the third day of absence and if school has not received an adequate explanation, a letter/message will be sent to the parent or carer via the school app requesting this information. The absences will remain unauthorised, until an adequate explanation is received.

**Absence notes**

Notes received from parents explaining absence will be kept for an academic year. If there are attendance concerns about the pupil, that may require further investigation, then the notes should be retained in line with education retention schedule. Parents and carers are aware that only the Head Teacher or their representative can authorise an absence and that further information such as a letter from a GP or Consultant may be required to support reasons given for absence.

**Continuing and frequent absence**

Within the school it is the responsibility of the class teacher/registration tutor or attendance officer to be aware of and bring attention to the Head Teacher (or person to whom they have delegated responsibility for attendance), any emerging attendance concerns.

In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the school will try to resolve the problem as soon as possible, before a referral is made to the Education

Welfare Service (EWS). This will involve inviting the parents or carers and the pupil into school for a meeting.

For unauthorised absences of 10 sessions or more in a rolling 12 week period (there are two sessions in a day, morning and afternoon) and following a period of monitoring, the school can request that the LA issue a FPN in accordance with the Local Code of Conduct.

**Persistent absence**

Welsh Government defines persistent absence as pupils whose absence level is more than 20% (80% attendance). These pupils will be subject to an action plan to support their return to full attendance.

The action plan will include engagement with relevant agencies that can support the pupil's attendance and could include the schools Education Welfare Officer (EWO).

**Absence related to discrimination**

A pupil's absence from school may be due to bullying, which can take many forms and can be direct (either physical or verbal) or indirect, for example, ignoring a pupil or not talking to them. Some of this bullying may be discriminatory.

It is against the law for a school, governing body or the LA not to take action where this type of bullying takes place between pupils.

As a school, we are required to monitor and report on discriminatory incidents each term and if the reason for a pupil's absence is related to any of the above issues, must take action to deal with the situation.

**A welcome back**

The school will welcome back all pupils on return from an absence. This will include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date on any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

**Attendance awards**

The school will use an awards system to reward pupils who have good or improving attendance.

Any reward system must be meaningful to the children. The timing of rewards needs to be taken into account to ensure that the children can make the link between their attendance and any rewards

**Categorisation of absence**

All pupils who are on role but not present in the school must be recorded within one of these categories.

- Authorised Absence
- Unauthorised Absence
- Approved Educational Activity

**Unauthorised absence**

This is for those pupils where no reason has been provided, or whose absence is deemed to be without valid reason.

**Authorised absence**

This is for those pupils who are away from school for a reason that is deemed to be valid; only the Head Teacher can authorise an absence.

**Approved educational activity**

This covers types of supervised educational activity undertaken off the school site but with the approval of the school and or the LA.

This would include:

- Work experience placements
- Field trips and educational visits
- Sporting activities
- Link courses or approved education at another venue
- Education arranged by the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS)

**Education Other Than At School (EOTAS)**

The provision where the pupil is expected to attend is responsible for accurately recording the pupil's attendance and chasing up non-attendance.

Arrangements are in place to identify pupils who are absent from providers of EOTAS, in order that the school where the pupil is registered can reflect any absences and apply the appropriate code.

**Retention of records**

Attendance regulations stipulate that attendance records should be retained for at least three years; however it is good practice to extend this period in line with the education record retention schedule.

**Register checks**

The LA will formally check the registers on a regular basis to ensure there is compliance with legislation. It should be noted that registers are legal documents and it is an offence not to maintain accurate records.

**Attendance targets**

Each year the school and governing body, will set absence targets and submit to the Local Authority by no later than 31st December in every school year.

A system for analysing performance towards the targets will be established and the Head Teacher or senior school manager will be responsible for overseeing this work. The school and Governing body will make use of the attendance data available from the SEWC and the LA when setting its targets.

**Our school targets are:**

**2018/2019:95.5%**
**2019/2020:95.6%**
**2020/2021: TBC – this is due to the COVID outbreak**
**2021/2022: TBC – this is due to the COVID outbreak**
**2022/2023: 92.5%**

**Action Plan**

The school will produce an action plan to show how the school will set about achieving its attendance targets.

**The registration system**
The following national codes will be used to record attendance information.

| CODE | DESCRIPTION | MEANING |
|------|-------------|---------|
| / | Present (AM) | Present |
| \ | Present (PM) | Present |
| B | Educated off site (NOT Dual registration) | Approved Education Activity |
| C | Other Authorised Circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description) | Authorised absence |
| D | Dual registration (i.e. pupil attending other establishment) | Approved Education Activity |
| E | Excluded (no alternative provision made) | Authorised absence |
| F | Extended family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| G | Family holiday (NOT agreed or days in excess of agreement) | Unauthorized absence |
| H | Family holiday (agreed) | Authorised absence |
| I | Illness (NOT medical or dental etc. appointments) | Authorised absence |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **J** | Interview | Approved Education Activity |
| **L** | Late (before registers closed) | Present |
| **M** | Medical/Dental appointments | Authorised absence |
| **N** | No reason yet provided for absence | Unauthorised absence |
| **O** | Unauthorised absence (not covered by any other code/description) | Unauthorised absence |
| **P** | Approved sporting activity | Approved Education Activity |
| **R** | Religious observance | Authorised absence |
| **S** | Study leave | Authorised absence |
| **T** | Traveller absence | Authorised absence |
| **U** | Late (after registers closed) | Unauthorised absence |
| **V** | Educational visit or trip | Approved Education Activity |
| **W** | Work experience | Approved Education Activity |
| **X** | Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school-age pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Y** | Enforced closure | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **Z** | Pupil not yet on roll | Not counted in possible attendances |
| **#** | School closed to pupils | Not counted in possible attendances |

**Legislation and guidance**

The Education Act 1996 Part 1, Section 7 states:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable:
(a)     to his age, ability and aptitude and
(b)     to any special needs he may have either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

For educational purposes the term parent means natural parents and includes any person who has parental responsibility or has day to day care of the child.

Section 444 1, 1(a) and (ZA) contains the details of when an offence is committed if a child fails to attend school or alternative provision arranged by the Local Authority.

The Education (Penalty Notices) (Wales) Regulations 2013 set out the framework for the operation of the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme.

The Equalities Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011

**Registers and Admission**

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (Wales) Regulations 2010

- The Education (School Day and School Year) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006

**Attendance targets**

- The Education (School Performance and Unauthorised Absence Targets) (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2006.

**Guidance documents relating to attendance**

- All Wales Child Protection Procedures
- Keeping Learners safe
- The All Wales Attendance Framework
- The National Assembly for Wales Circular 47/2006 Inclusion and Pupil Support.
- South East Wales Consortium's Attendance Strategy
- Local Code of Conduct relating to the Fixed Penalty Notice scheme
- Welsh Government Guidance on penalty notices for regular non-attendance at school
- Welsh Government Guidance on attendance codes

# Monitoring Attendance and Punctuality

| Class Teacher | Form Tutor | Head of Year | Attendance officer/ Assistant Head | Head |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| • Take register every lesson<br>• Inform Tutor and HOY of pupils who are marked present but missing with no valid reason<br>• Pupils who are late to lessons should be given a detention.<br>• Pupils who are persistently late should be reported to the HOY | • Take register every morning in Form Period<br>• Make sure that all session marks are entered correctly for pupils in the form and check and amend marks daily<br>• Ensure that absences are accounted for and notes sent to the office for filing<br>• If no reason for absence is provided, contact home by email, telephone, the school app or letter and inform the HOY if there is no response<br>• Inform the HOY of any attendance concerns<br>• Monitor patterns of non-attendance and truancy and report to HOY<br>• Counsel pupils with attendance concerns and investigate the cause, report to HOY<br>• Pupils who are late to registration should be given a detention. Tutors should also counsel pupils to investigate the cause of lateness.<br>• Pupils who are persistently late should be reported to the HOY. | • Ensure that Form Tutors complete registers fully and accurately<br>• Monitor attendance weekly and report poor attendance and action taken at Pastoral Team Meeting<br>• Contact parents of pupils whose attendance is a concern including<br>  1. truancy<br>  2. unaccounted for absence<br>  3. attendance which falls below 93%<br>  4. Repeated medical absence without a doctor's note.<br>• Ensure that unaccounted for absences are followed up;<br>• Implement strategies to improve attendance<br>• Refer pupils to relevant support services such as EWO where necessary<br>• Work with parents and support services to reintegrate those pupils with poor attendance<br>• Make regular half termly checks on absence notes;<br>• Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up and dealt with;<br>• Make reports to the DH on the efficiency of the system;<br>• Liaise with the DH over training needs.<br>• Contact parents of pupils whose punctuality is a cause for concern.<br>• Implement strategies to improve punctuality. | • Monitor attendance weekly and monthly and provide statistics to EWO<br>• Develop strategies along with HOYs to improve attendance<br>• Deal with issues of inadequate registering;<br>• Arrange appropriate training for staff;<br>• Keep the Head informed of the progress of the policy; and<br>• Advise the Head on any strategies that could be initiated or improved.<br>• Liaise with the LA over persistent absentees<br>• Liaise with the LA and police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truants to return to school | • Set attendance targets;<br>• Monitor progress;<br>• Ensure that strategies are in place to promote and implement the policy throughout the school.<br>• Determine (in collaboration with the AH and Head of Year) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested on the school's official form, or absences which have taken place for which no request was made;<br>• Notify parents as appropriate that if a pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly his/her parents commit an offence;<br>• Initiate, with appropriate staff. strategies to improve attendance<br>• Make an annual report with statistics to the governing body |

Appendix 1

COVID attendance guidelines from Torfaen and WG

The Operational Guidance for the Autumn Term has been published on the link below, the section on Attendance starts on page 31.

https://gov.wales/operational-guidance-schools-and-settings-autumn-term-covid-19

The codes shown below are the codes that we will be monitoring as part of a directive from the Welsh Government.

With regards to the use of the C code for pupils who are unable to physically attend the school due to medical/health risks, if a child has been advised by a doctor not to return to school due to the risk of Covid-19 then they can be marked using the C code.

**What code should be used?**

| Code | Meaning | Statistical category |
|------|---------|---------------------|
| / | Attending school in the am. | Present |
| \ | Attending school in the pm. | Present |
| C | Unable to physically attend the school due to medical/health risks or caring responsibilities agreed with the school. Also for a staggered return in the first 14 days when some age groups return. | Authorised absence |
| # | Planned school closure for all pupils which may take place in the first 14 days, e.g. planning days. | Not required to attend |
| Y | Not expected to attend due to unexpected school closure (in the event of subsequent forced school closures). | Not required to attend |
| I | Illness, including COVID-19. | Authorised absence |
| All other codes apply as per the guidance on school attendance: | gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2018-03/guidance-on-school-attendance-codes.pdf | |

## Λ: The code for learners who attend school

All children in the expected intake for that day or in a priority group (children of critical workers and vulnerable children) should be recorded as present / \ upon arrival at their school or education setting.

## C: The code for learners who are unable to attend

This includes learners who are unable to physically attend school for reasons understood and agreed by the school. They should be recorded as **code C** (Other authorised circumstances (not covered by another appropriate code/description)).
This code would be used for learners who have medical or health reasons preventing them from physically attending or they may have exceptional circumstances such as caring responsibilities.

This code would be used for learners who are self-isolating as set out in the preventative section of this guidance.

This code will also be used during the first 14 days of term when some year groups will have staggered returns.

This code should not be used if the learner is unwell with COVID-19 symptoms where the I code should be used.

Schools must engage with parents/carers to understand why they are not attending and ensure there are not any concerns about their well-being or alternative support options that could be arranged to enable them to attend. Any concerns should be followed up by the school or education setting and where relevant the local authority.
The school should review the situation with the learner and parents or carers on a regular basis to avoid any prolonged absence.

**#: The code for planned school closures for all learners**
**Code #** should be used for planned days where learners are not required to attend such as planning days in the first weeks of term.

**Y: The code for enforced school closure**
**Code Y** should be used for enforced school closure in the event of further requirements due to COVID-19.

**Using other authorised absence and attendance codes**

Where other specific authorised absence and attendance codes are more appropriate schools should these as usual.

Updated Covid guidance November 2020

The 2 new codes are:

[ Remote learning due to Covid-19
; Illness due to Covid-19

Code Y should be used for "School directed absence due to Covid-19".

Any queries relating to the use of the new codes should be directed towards your EWO is the first instance