

Saint Martin's Catholic Academy



Attendance Policy

*'Knowing the best that has been thought
and said and knowing that we are loved by God'*

Approved by:

Jim Connolly

Date: 17/11/2020

Last reviewed on:

Next review due by:

STUDENT LOW ATTENDANCE PROCEDURE

<p>FORM TUTOR Pre-Phase 1 96% - 94%</p>	<p>Form tutor intervention shown on fortnightly spreadsheet on Network Shares. Conversation with tutor group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Refer to spreadsheet to identify which pupils the Form Tutor is to verbally liaise with. - Form Tutor to use student's attendance doc to highlight %, patterns, and to discuss ways to improve or identify concerns. - Conversation with whole tutor group to discuss importance of regular attendance and expectations at St Martins - Form Tutor to issue achievement points for 100% / improved attendance.
<p>Close monitoring. If no significant improvement after 2 weeks → Phase 1</p>		
<p>Phase 1 <94%</p>	<p>Attendance Letter 1 (informal notification)</p> <p>Invite student for a face to face meeting with form tutor.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLT refer to weekly spreadsheet for % on Tuesday morning in HOY meeting. - HOY Liaise with Form Tutors about interventions. Tuesdays. - HOY liaise with CWh of names for Phase 1 letters by end of day Tuesday - CWh sends Phase 1 letter by Thursday. - Spreadsheet updated <p>Key Meeting to be held by Form Tutor with individual student to set targets on improving attendance and explore ways we can further support student and parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Form Tutor to update Parent/ Carer and SIMS of meeting under initiatives. - Form Tutor to issue achievement points for 100% / improved attendance.
<p>Close monitoring. If no significant improvement after 2 weeks → Phase 2</p>		
<p>Phase 2</p>	<p>Attendance Letter 2</p> <p>Invite Student & Parent/Carers to have a face to face meeting with HOY.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLT refer to weekly spreadsheet for % on Tuesday morning in HOY meeting - HOY liaise with Form Tutors about further interventions. - HOY liaise with CWh of names for Phase 2 letters by end of day Tuesday. - CWh sends Phase 2 letters by Thursday. - Spreadsheet updated - If no significant improvement, please refer to wellbeing officer / appropriate department. <p>Key Meeting to be held by HOY/ Student and Parents to set further targets on improving attendance and explore ways we can further support student and parents.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - HOY to update SIMS of meeting under initiatives. - HOY mentor to meet regularly as a supportive check in.
<p>Close monitoring. If no significant improvement after 2 weeks → Phase 3</p>		
<p>Phase 3</p>	<p>Attendance Letter 3 Informing Parents of Referral to Court Team.</p> <p>SLT invite parents in for further meeting.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - SLT refer to weekly spreadsheet for % on Tuesday morning in HOY meeting. - HOY Liaise with Form Tutors about Court Referral and report back to SLT. - SLT liaise with CWh of names for Court Referral - CWh sends Phase 3 letter by Thursday. - CWh sends Court Team Referral via secure link by Friday. - Spreadsheet updated - SLT Mentor to meet regularly as a supportive check in.
<p>Continue to monitor attendance and discuss further Court Team informing HOY/SLT of developments.</p>		

The Law

School attendance is a legal requirement and this information about our attendance expectations is in line with the 2013 Department for Education expectations as well as subject to requirements contained in The Education Act 1996.

The legal duty is on parents/carers to ensure that their children are educated, either at school or 'otherwise'.

Education is therefore compulsory. In terms of 'otherwise' children may be educated by their parents/carers at home, by a private tutor or in establishments other than schools, i.e. – FE colleges from the age of 14, special units, hospitals or in alternative educational programmes or work experience.

The law does allow parents/carers to choose the alternative options, provided they can demonstrate to the Local Authority that the education is full-time and 'suitable' to the child's education needs, up until the relevant leaving-date for all young people.

The Government expects schools to promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence, ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled to. Therefore, at Saint Martin's, we act early to address patterns of absence.

The Local Authority expectation on attendance is 95%. At Saint Martin's Academy, we have an aspirational attendance target of at least 97% to support outstanding progress for all of our students. A student will fall below 97% if they miss as little as half a day over a 2-week period.

Parents/carers are expected to perform their **legal duty** by ensuring their children, of compulsory school age, who are registered at Saint Martin's Catholic Academy, attend regularly and arrive to school on time (8.50am).

It is also important to note that even though a parent may not live in the same home as the student, that parent is still responsible for ensuring the child attends school every day.

The Context

This policy is founded upon Saint Martin's Catholic ethos in which all members of the community are valued for the contribution, which they can bring for the good of the whole. Ensuring pupils are in school is fundamental to their success. Therefore we place great emphasis on ensuring close care is given each individual child, especially those with attendance issues, making sure their families and the children themselves are supported in being in school.

Saint Martin's Academy therefore places a high priority on achieving excellent levels of attendance and punctuality enabling all students to achieve their maximum potential by taking full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them. There is a proven link between high Academy attendance and academic success; therefore, it is essential that Saint Martin's Academy, parents/carers and students, consistently work together in order to achieve this. Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind.

It is the expectation of the school that all students will achieve at least 97% attendance.

Each year a school calendar is sent out via the school website which clearly indicates the days when your child is expected to be in school. If your child tells you that school is to be closed on a day not indicated on the school calendar, please check by telephoning the school and speaking to one of the office staff- 01455212386.

Attendance figures can be viewed by parents/carers through their school reports, Go4Schools and Sims App's. This allows parents/carers to be regularly informed of both their child's attendance and punctuality.

Parents are also informed about their child's attendance in the annual full report, at parent's evenings and in Progress Review meetings.

Please note, For oversubscribed inhouse events, school trips and visits, priority maybe given to children with attendance levels above 96%.

If Saint Martins Catholic Academy have referred your child to inclusion services / court team at Leicestershire County Council, your child may be exempt from / withdrawn from school trips and visits, this decision will be made by SLT.

Parent / Carer Expectations

It is the parent/carer's responsibility to ensure the following:

- Ensure the child attends Saint Martin's Academy daily and is punctual.
- Contact Saint Martin's Academy on each day of absence, by 9:00 at the latest.
- Arrange medical or dental appointments over the lunchtime period or outside of Academy hours
- Inform Saint Martin's Academy of any future appointments in advance
- Provide medical evidence by way of appointment cards or appointment letters or prescriptions of medications
- Attend meetings if requested with regards to attendance or lateness as appropriate

Monitoring

The following codes are to be used for absences on the register:

Code L: Late to school

School will mark a child as L if they arrive at school after 9:00am but before 10:59am. If your child arrives late, they must sign in at the main reception. Any students who are not in school when registers close and we have not been informed of the reason for absence, will receive a text home from the attendance officer.

Code U: Late

If your child arrives after 10:59am, they must sign in at main reception and will be given unauthorised late (U) which is counted as an absence by law.

Code I: Illness

Schools can request medical evidence from parents / carers if they feel the authenticity of an illness is in doubt.

If your child is absent due to illness for more than 3 consecutive days we require Parents / Carers to provide medical evidence. If no evidence is provided the child will be coded as O - Absent from school without authorisation.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Parents / Carers are encouraged to arrange appointments out of school hours but the school will authorise if confirmation of the appointment is provided.

Code C: Other circumstances

This code will be used for any authorised non-medical reasons for a child's absence from school, ie – family funeral.

Code D: Dual Registered

This code will be used if a student is registered at two schools.

Code J: Interview

This code will be used when it has been agreed that the student can miss school to attend an interview or entrance.

Code P: Approved sporting activity

This code will be used in times of approved sporting activities in school times, ie – training sessions, trials and sporting events, only at the discretion of the school.

Code R: Religious Observation

This code is used to cover major religious festivals during term-time. The school will only authorise one-day absence for religious events.

Code V: Educational visits and trips

Code G: Family holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of agreed period

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence and the parents/carers still take the child on holiday, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents/carers did not apply for the leave of absence in advance the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence.

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

We closely monitor your child's attendance. For the majority of students this will be monitored on a weekly basis. For small groups of children, attendance is monitored more regularly to ensure that parents/carers can be supported by the school to get their child to engage in school life.

Saint Martin's will alert you if we feel there is a cause for concern. The school undertakes a wide range of measures to support students where attendance at school is a concern. Where there may be an issue and we fail to see an improvement it may be necessary to take the next steps. For instance, we may make a referral to an appropriate external agency to ensure the student receives the support required.

Absence from school

Regular attendance at school is the responsibility of parents and carers. Under section 7 of the 1996 Education Act parents/carers are required to ensure their child receives a full-time education. Parents and carers commit an offence if the child does not attend school regularly. If your child cannot come to school because of illness, only the parent/carer must advise the school on the first day of absence by email, Attendance@saint-martins.net or via telephone, Attendance line, opt 1 before 9am. This must to be done for each individual day of absence.

Parent/carers should also ensure that their child arrives punctually to school each day.

Telephone messages must be left by parent / carer only, and stating the following details:

- -Parent / Carers name
- -Child's name and year group
- -Reason for absence

Categories of Authorised Absence

- Treatment for illness
- If your child is unwell and sent home from Saint Martin's Academy
- Hospital, CAMHS or Orthodontic Appointments *supported* by appointment letters or cards.
- Unavoidable emergency GP or dental appointments *supported* by cards or slips.
- Advance notice of days of religious observance.
- A student excluded for a fixed period while remaining on roll with Saint Martin's Academy
- Work / college interviews

The school will determine if the absence is to be *authorised* or *unauthorised*. The school will only authorise a medical absence if the circumstances are unavoidable. The school will request medical evidence

- medical appointment card with one appointment entered,
- letter from a professional, doctor's note,
- medication prescribed by a doctor, copy of prescription,
- print screen of medical notes, as well as letters concerning hospital appointments or any other relevant evidence.

The school will not authorise medical absence after the third consecutive day without evidence.

If your child is absent due to illness for more than 3 consecutive days we require Parents / Carers to provide medical evidence. If no evidence is provided the school will not authorise further absence and the child will be coded as O - Absent from school without authorisation.

Categories of Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. These are an offence by the parent/carer. Such circumstances include but are not limited to:

- Truancy through the school day
- Parents or carers keeping children off school unnecessarily
- No reason for absence given
- Students who arrive at St Martin's after registration has closed (10.59am)
- Holidays and day trips in term time
- A student not attending school as it is her birthday or the birthday of a family member
- A student not attending school due to attending a hospital appointment for another family member
- A student not attending school due to the fact the family returned late in the previous evening from a family holiday
- A student not attending school as they are looking after younger siblings
- A student not attending due an alternative school timetable day
- A student attends a medical appointment in the morning but then fails to return to school for afternoon lessons

If no message is received, we will assume that your child is absent without your permission. We will then make every effort to contact you. In cases where we continue to be concerned we may make or request the police to undertake a 'Safe and Well' visit.

Leave of Absence in term time

Under the DFE 'Advice on School Attendance' parents/carers can no longer expect schools to authorise leave of absence for the purpose of a family holiday.

In addition, if the student does not return within 14 days of the agreed return date the school has the right to remove the student from the school register without parental consent. This would mean the student would lose their place at school.

Please note, for oversubscribed inhouse events, school trips and visits, priority may be given to children with attendance levels at or above 96%.

Penalty Notice – Unauthorised Holidays

Penalty notices were introduced by the Government under the Antisocial Behaviour Act 2003 S444A and the Education Act of 1996. These are issued by the Education Department to each parent in respect of each child where there is an unauthorised holiday. Please note that if your child has unauthorised leave of absence, you may either be issued with a Penalty Notice, or, your case may be referred by the Local Authority directly to the Magistrates' Court. The grounds for issuing a penalty notice include:

- Where the Principal has granted consent for exceptional leave between identified dates but your child does not return on the agreed date
- Where a parent does not request permission to take their child out of school for a holiday
- Where a parent takes a child out of school for a holiday even though permission has been refused by the Principal

As a school, if deemed appropriate, we may notify Leicestershire County Council of unauthorised holidays.

Safeguarding

Under the 1989 Children Act the Local Authority has the power to issue an Education Supervision Order (ESO) and place a child under their supervision on the grounds that the child is not being 'properly educated' and is in danger of 'significant harm'. The Local Authority can issue an order if the child is persistently absent from school. The Local Authority appointed 'Supervisor' can give 'directions' to the parents/carers on how the child should be educated and work with the parent to ensure the child attends school regularly. The Local Authority may use an ESO as an interim measure before moving directly to prosecution.

Under the 2003 Anti-Social Behaviour Act, if a student continues to have attendance issues after a parent has been convicted, the courts can also issue a Parenting Order. This legally requires the parents to participate in a programme of parenting support and counselling. If unauthorised absence continues, a new case will be brought against the parent/s but previous parental failure to engage with the school and local authority can be cited.

If a Penalty Notice Fine is issued by the court, the school will be required to continue to monitor the student's attendance and begin the intervention process again if the student has a further 20 sessions (10 days) unauthorised absence from the date the fine was issued by the court. This may result in further legal action taken against the parent if the student continues to have periods of unauthorised absence from school.

The school reserves the right to invite parents/carers into school to discuss any attendance issues that raise potential safeguarding concerns, i.e. – female genital mutilation, sexual exploitation, emotional abuse, neglect, domestic violence, forced marriage, radicalisation. In addition, if the school suspects that a student may be at potential risk as a result of their absence from school the safeguarding team reserve the right to refer these concerns to the appropriate external agencies, i.e. – social care, police. The school will inform parents / carers if a referral is to be made. However, this may not be appropriate in every circumstance depending on the nature of the safeguarding concern and a referral may be made without informing the parent / carer.

The school recognises that when a child goes missing from school it is a potential indicator of abuse or neglect, i.e. – sexual abuse or exploitation. The school follows section 8h of the Education Regulations Act (2006) the school will make 'reasonable' enquiries into the location of pupils with 10 days continuous unauthorised absence or for those who fail to return from leave of absence granted during term time. A referral will be made to the Local Authority and police where appropriate.

The school reserves the right, however, to contact relevant agencies to seek advice (Children's Social Care, Police)

If any child is absent from school for *more* than five days without confirmation from parents/carers. Every attempt will be made to communicate with parents/carers to ensure the child is safe and well, including home visits.

The school will contact relevant agencies after three consecutive days' absence without consent from parents / carers if the child is subject to a 'Child in Need' plan or considered vulnerable in other ways.

Home Education

If a parent/carer wishes to withdraw a child from the school, the child will be known as 'Electively Home-Educated'. Any parent/carer wishing to withdraw their child from the school will be required to confirm this in writing to the Principal, indicating the date of which the Home Schooling began.

The school will forward this letter to the Local Authority and the child will be removed from the Admission register at Saint Martin's Catholic Academy once we receive LA confirmation to do so. The Local Authority will then determine whether or not to accept this new arrangement or challenge it and the child's education will then be assessed by the Local Authority on an annual basis. However, parents/carers are unable to withdraw their child from school if they are subject to a 'School Attendance Order'.