



ST PHILIP'S SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY

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<i>Date of last review:</i>	15.03.23
<i>Date of next review:</i>	March 2025

Attendance policy

Introduction

St Philip's school is committed to providing outstanding educational opportunities for all our pupils/students. We recognise the importance of regular attendance in maximising the benefit of any educational opportunity. Encouraging and supporting excellent attendance is a crucial part of supporting our pupils/students to learn effectively.

This policy is written with reference to DfE guidance on ['Working together to improve school attendance'](#) and ['Keeping Children Safe in Education'](#) as well as ['Children Missing Education'](#).

Aims

The aim of this policy is to ensure that all members of the St Philip's School community including pupils/students and parents/carers understand the importance of regular attendance at school and their roles and responsibilities regarding attendance. Research has shown that there is a direct correlation between school absence and overall achievement. Poor attendance also affects young people's ability to make and sustain friendships and can interrupt the routine of school life, making it hard to settle when they do attend.

Parental responsibility

Parents/carers have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory school age (5 to 18 year olds) with a Statement of Special Educational Needs or an Education, Health and Care Plan attend an establishment authorised by their Local Authority (LA). This includes a legal obligation to ensure children attend regularly and on time. Ensuring regular attendance is essential; permitting absence from school without good reason is an offence by law and may result in prosecution.

St Philip's School will always seek to work collaboratively with families in order to support regular attendance.

Roles and responsibilities

The Local Governing Body (LGB)

The LGB is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos.
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties.
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data.
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school.
- Holding the Principal to account for the implementation of this policy.

The Principal

The Principal is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school.
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors.
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual pupils/students.
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies.
- Issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary.

Staff

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to pupils/students and families
- Monitoring and analysing attendance data
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the Principal
- Working with education welfare officers to tackle persistent absence
- Advising the Principal when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Andy Hill and can be contacted via 0208 397 2672 or Ahill@stphilips-chessington.org

Class teachers/form tutors

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office on the same day.

School admin staff

School admin staff will:

- Take calls from parents and/or students about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the head of year or key stage in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

Students

Students have a responsibility to attend school when they are well enough to do so.

Parents/carers

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day/timetabled session on time.
- Notify the school in the event of lateness e.g. delayed transport.
- Call or message (ParentMail) the school to report their child's absence before 9am on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence, and advise when they are expected to return.
- Provide the school with at least three emergency contact numbers for their child.
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day.

Recording attendance

Attendance register

We will keep an attendance register, and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the school day and once after lunch break. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made
- The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a pupil/student is attending an approved educational activity
- The nature of circumstances where a pupil/student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Pupils/students must arrive in school by 8.50am on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 8.55am and will be kept open until 9.15am. The register for the second session will be taken at 13.25 and will be kept open until 13.30.

Unplanned absence

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 9am or as soon as practically possible by calling the school office staff. A call must be made for each day of absence.

When a student is absent due to illness or a medical appointment, this will be marked as authorized unless the school has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness. Evidence may be requested e.g. appointment card, letter, prescription, prescribed medication packs or boxes with the pupil's/student's name printed on them. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Should school staff become concerned about the amount of school missed due to illness, information may be shared with external agencies such as social services (see 'Safeguarding', below).

Planned absence

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised as long as the student's parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Parents/carers should ensure that every effort is made to make or arrange medical appointments outside school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil/student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Please request a 'leave of absence' form from the school office.

St Philip's School recognises that students' additional needs may include significant health concerns and involve regular or unexpected medical support e.g. admission to hospital or attendance at specialist clinics. We will always seek to work with our students and their families to support good attendance and, where this is not possible, to support continued learning through initiatives such as home learning programmes.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil/student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code.
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code.

Following up unexplained absence

Safeguards in place to prevent children missing education at St Philip's School include:

- St Philip's School holds a minimum of three emergency contact numbers for each student, unless there is a genuine reason why this is not possible e.g. parent fleeing domestic violence.
- Any child going missing from education will always get immediate attention from the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff are trained to be alert to signs to look out for and the individual triggers to be aware of when considering the risks of potential safeguarding concerns such as travelling to conflict zones, FGM and forced marriage.
- When a student is absent without notification, the attendance administrator will record the absence in the register and the school will endeavour to contact the parents/carers and other emergency contacts in order to determine the reason for the absence. This will happen for every day of non-attendance where no call has been received informing the school of absence and reasons why.
- Any unexplained absence of a student with a Child Protection Plan will be reported to the student's social worker within one day.
- Where a student does not present for school as expected, the school will endeavour to ascertain that student's whereabouts and wellbeing without delay, using all available parent/carer and secondary/emergency contact details. Where no contact can be made with either the student or any named emergency contacts, a member of school staff should generally attend the student's home. If the student or a named contact still cannot be contacted, the school must report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where deemed necessary, the police. However, it is acknowledged that in some exceptional, local circumstances, such action may be counter-productive and it is for the school to risk assess such a scenario on the first day. Regardless of this, if a student is absent for a second consecutive day without notification from a named contact, the school **must** report this to relevant personnel in the Local Authority and, where necessary, the police.
- Staff will always report to the Local Authority the name of any child who has been newly registered to attend the school but does not arrive on the expected day.
- Staff will always report to the Education Welfare Service the continued absence of a child known or thought to have been taken overseas if the child does not return to school on the expected return date.
- St Philip's School maintains accurate attendance and admissions registers (all students are on both), in line with statutory requirements. This includes paying careful attention to off-rolling students in association with the Local Authority and knowing, and recording, student destinations consistently on the admissions register. Where a student destination is unknown, and unable to be established after significant follow-up, the Local Authority, Education Welfare Service and/or Social Care Services will be informed.
- Students will not be deleted from the admissions register. Staff will alert the child's Local Authority immediately if:
 - the student has been taken out of school by their parents/carers and is being educated outside the school system e.g. home education
 - the student has ceased to attend school
 - the student has been certified as medically unfit to attend school or is in custody.

Keeping Local Authorities up to date is crucial so that they can check if children of compulsory school age are missing education, and might therefore be in danger of not receiving an education and be at risk of abuse or neglect.

On the rare occasions that St Philip's School students are excluded for a fixed term, the school will confirm this in writing to both the family (and the placing Local Authority where this exclusion exceeds five days). While staff will provide the student with work to complete during their external exclusion, St Philip's School is not responsible for the student's safety and welfare during their time at home.

Reporting to parents/carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels through parents meetings and annual review meetings.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

If a child is reluctant to attend school, parents/carers must communicate this as soon as possible to their school's Senior Leadership Team in order that support strategies can be put in place.

Parents/carers can support their child's attendance by:

- Ensuring regular and early bed times, appropriate to the age of the child.
- Having uniform and equipment prepared the night before.
- Reporting any academic or social concerns promptly.
- Retaining open and honest communication with the school.
- Having a positive attitude towards school attendance.

Legal sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a Principal, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

Attendance monitoring

Monitoring attendance

The School will:

- Monitor attendance and absence data half-termly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual student level.
- Identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern.

Student-level absence data will be collected each term and published at national and local authority level through the DfE's school absence national statistics releases. The underlying school-level absence data is published alongside the national statistics. The school will compare attendance data to the national average, and share this with the governing board.

Analysing attendance

The school will:

- Analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify students or cohorts that need additional support with their attendance, and use this analysis to provide targeted support to these students and their families.
- Look at historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence, and then develop strategies to address these patterns.

Using data to improve attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to class teachers/form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

Reducing persistent and severe absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is where a student misses 50% or more of school.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of persistent and severe absence.
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students who the school (and/or local authority) considers to be vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school.
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance.

Safeguarding and confidentiality

St Philip's School has a duty to effectively safeguard all our pupils/students. Supporting regular attendance is part of this safeguarding duty. Poor attendance and unexplained absence can indicate a possible safeguarding concern including (but not limited to) physical, emotional or sexual abuse, neglect, female genital mutilation (FGM), child sexual exploitation, radicalisation, substance misuse or peer on peer abuse.

St Philip's School staff will always seek to work with families to minimise absence and ensure clear communication regarding any absence that might occur. Where safeguarding concerns are raised, these will be managed in accordance with the Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy.

Monitoring arrangements

This policy will be reviewed annually by the Principal and approved annually by the Local Governing Body.

Related policies and procedures

Anti-Radicalisation Policy
Child Protection Adult Protection & Safeguarding Policy
Exclusions Policy
Positive Behaviour Policy
Remote Education Policy
Safeguarding and Wellbeing Offer
Supporting Students with Medical Conditions in Education Policy

Appendix 1: attendance codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Pupil/student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Pupil/student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Pupil/student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Pupil/student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Pupil/student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Pupil/student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Pupil/student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Pupil/student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Pupil/student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
Authorised absence		
C	Authorised leave of absence	Pupil/student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances

E	Excluded	Pupil/student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
H	Authorised holiday	Pupil/student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
I	Illness	School has been notified that a pupil/student will be absent due to illness
M	Medical/dental appointment	Pupil/student is at a medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance	Pupil/student is taking part in a day of religious observance
S	Study leave	Year 11 pupil/student is on study leave during their public examinations
T	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Pupil/student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
Unauthorised absence		
G	Unauthorised holiday	Pupil/student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
N	Reason not provided	Pupil/student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
O	Unauthorised absence	School is not satisfied with reason for pupil's/student's absence
U	Arrival after registration	Pupil/student arrived at school after the register closed

Code	Definition	Scenario
X	Not required to be in school	Pupil/student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend

Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	School site is closed, there is disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or pupil/student is in custody
Z	Pupil not on admission register	Register set up but pupil/student has not yet joined the school
#	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day