



ST PAUL'S HIGH SCHOOL, BESSBROOK

PUPIL ATTENDANCE POLICY

Revised May 2016

Mission Statement

St Paul's High School is a Catholic community, committed to providing high quality education in an atmosphere of mutual respect where each individual is valued as an important member of our school family. We value the personal, moral, social and spiritual development of each student, encouraging respect for self and others including the core values of truth, kindness, integrity and compassion.

Rationale

Regular school attendance is crucial in raising standards in education and ensuring that every child can have full access to the school curriculum and reach their potential. We believe pupils will be happy members of the school community if they attend school every day.

The Governors and staff of St Paul's are committed to providing a full and effective education for all our pupils to ensure they achieve their full potential in all that they do. As a Catholic School, we work together to engender in our pupils positive attitudes and behaviours based on respect for self and others. We will strive to promote an ethos and culture which encourages good attendance and where each pupil will feel valued and secure. Pupils, parents and teachers work together to maintain high standards of attendance. Our school aims to achieve good attendance by implementing a Pupil Attendance Policy within which staff, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service can work together in partnership.

DE's Policy for School Improvement '***Every School a Good School***' April 2009; states that every school should ensure that '***...a culture of achievement, improvement and ambition exists – with clear expectations that all pupils can and will achieve to the very best of their ability***'.

DE's Circular on '***Attendance Guidance and Absence Recording by Schools***' 2015/02 states that '***pupil attendance and educational achievement are inextricably linked.***'

This policy, therefore, emphasises the important link between good attendance and educational achievement. All staff have a responsibility for pupil attendance in school. The Pastoral Leader, Ms C Fearon, Year Heads and Form Teachers liaise with home and other

agencies about pupil's attendance when appropriate. There is also a strong link with the Educational Welfare Service, via our assigned EWO Oliver Houlihan, who is an invaluable member of our Pastoral Team.

Aims

We aim to foster positive attitudes towards education and encourage pupils to value the importance of good attendance and punctuality in line with Article 29 of UNCRC ***'The role of education is to encourage children to reach their potential'***;

- To improve the overall attendance of pupils in St Paul's;
- To recognise good attendance with awards, termly draws; end of year draw;
- To develop a framework that defines roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance;
- To promote good attendance through positive home school partnerships;
- To provide advice, support and guidance to parents/guardians and pupils;
- To promote and develop effective working relationships with the Education Welfare Service.

Expectations on Attendance:

To ensure regular attendance and punctuality, St Paul's has the following expectations from pupils and parents:

Role & Responsibilities of the Pupil

- To be in school each day
- To be on time for AM class registration at 9.00am
- To be on time for PM class registration at 2.00pm
- To attend weekly year group assemblies for class registration (Monday Year 12; Tuesday Year 11, Year 13; Wednesday Year 10; Thursday Year 9, Year 14; Friday Year 8)
- To attend all classes required by his/her timetable
- To remain in school the full day and never leave school during the day without permission
- To provide medical notes and/or parental notes in Pupil Planner, requesting release from school during the day
- To get absence pro forma in Pupil Planner signed by parent/guardian, explaining any period of absence to form teacher
- To catch up on all work missed during any absence

Role & Responsibilities of the Parent/Guardian

Parents have a legal duty to ensure:

'Every child of compulsory school age shall receive efficient full time education suitable to age, ability and aptitude and to any special educational needs she may have, either by regular school attendance or otherwise'.

(Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 1986)

- To value the importance of a good education
- To support the school's Pupil Attendance Policy
- To ensure that their child is in school every day and on time
- To use the Pupil Planner to correspond with the form teacher regarding any request for their child to leave school during the day (funeral, medical appointment)
- To use the Pupil Planner to correspond with the form teacher regarding any explanation for absence
- To provide, where possible, an accompanying medical note in the event of absence
- To provide information to the school if their child will be absent for a prolonged period of time
- To collect work from the school if their child is off for a prolonged period of time
- To take holidays during holiday time and not to book family holidays during term time
- To arrange dental/medical appointments out of school time, where possible
- To contact the Form Teacher or Year Head if their child is reluctant to attend school
- To work in partnership with the school and EWS in promoting good attendance

Role & Responsibilities of the School

To enable our school to accurately record and monitor attendance in a consistent way we will adhere to the guidance provided in the Department of Education Circular 2015/02, which can be found at the following link:

www.deni.gov.uk/index/support-and-development-2/school-attendance/recording-pupil-absences.htm

- To implement the Pupil Attendance Policy, including a Pupil Attendance Strategy (Every Day at St Paul's Counts!)
- To have attendance included in the School Development Plan
- To record and monitor attendance and punctuality in a consistent way in line with DE guidance (Department of Education Circular 2015/02)
- To have attendance on the agenda at each Pastoral Team and Year Group Pastoral Team meetings
- To develop strategies to encourage good attendance (£20 gift voucher draw each term for those with 98% plus attendance, end of year £100 cash prize draw for those with 100% attendance)

- To contact the parent/guardian on the third consecutive day of absence or as and when required if the individual situation requires, via form teacher phonecall
- To use sanctions which will deter absences and truancy
- To record attendance every lesson via Lesson Monitor
- To contact parents/guardians to discuss any attendance concerns at various identified trigger points (See Pupil Attendance Strategy) (Form Teacher, Year Head, Head of Pastoral Care)
- To work in partnership with the Education Welfare Officer
- To attend Education Strategy Meetings, as arranged by EWO
- To provide work for the pupil if she will be off for a prolonged period of time (the parents must inform the school of the reason for this absence)
- To provide information on request for a pupil's attendance record to employers and other educational establishments.
- To review school attendance and targets and present to Board of Governors

Role & Responsibilities of the Local Authority Education Welfare Service

Local Authorities, through the Education Welfare Service, have a legal responsibility to make sure that parents meet their responsibility towards their child's education.

Regular attendance is an essential requirement for educational results and where attendance difficulties exist, or a pupil's attendance falls below 85%, Education Welfare Service (EWS) will support staff and parents in developing and implementing strategies to address or improve school attendance.

Monitoring Pupil Attendance - Lesson Monitor

Staff must monitor lesson attendance through the use of the computerised SIMS system 'Lesson Monitor'. This programme allows each class teacher to mark the attendance register at the beginning of each lesson using the following Coding System:

Code	Reason
/ \	Present: / = A.M. \ = P.M.
A	Artistic Endeavour (authorised ABSENCE)
B	Bereavement (authorised ABSENCE)
C	Suspended (authorised ABSENCE)
F	Family Holiday (agreed) (authorised ABSENCE)
G	Family Holiday (not agreed) (unauthorised ABSENCE)
I	Illness (authorised ABSENCE)
L	Late (present)
M	Medical/Dental Appointments (authorised ABSENCE)
N	Absent from Class without a Valid Reason (temporary code) (unauthorised ABSENCE)
O	Other Exceptional Circumstances (authorised ABSENCE)
P	Approved Sporting Activity (approved educational activity)
R	Religious Observation (authorised ABSENCE)
S	Study Leave (approved educational activity)
V	Educational Visit (approved educational activity)
W	Work Experience (approved educational activity)
Y	Exceptional Closure (attendance not required)
#	Holiday for all (attendance not required)
!	No attendance required (attendance not required)
1	AEP (ELB) (approved educational activity)
2	Home/Hospital Tuition (ELB) (approved educational activity)
4	Pupil Referral Unit (approved educational activity)
5	Another Mainstream School (under Entitlement Framework EF) (approved educational activity)
6	Training Organisation (EF) (approved educational activity)
7	FE College (SRC) (approved educational activity)
8	Intensive Support Learning Unit (approved educational activity)
9	CAMHS (approved educational activity)

The **recommended codes** to be used **to record attendance** at St Paul's should be **P V W 4 7 9.**

Absences should be recorded using the following codes **M I N B.**

Through SIMS, the form teacher must record the pupil's attendance/absence and class teachers should follow through by using the same code (eg **I** if the form teacher has used this code to indicate they have been provided with a reason for the pupil's absence). The form teacher must also use SIMS to note if a pupil will be leaving school during the school day, as requested by the parent. If this is a medical reason, then the class teacher must use the **M** code to acknowledge this. Code **N** is used by the form teacher, until they have been provided with a reason for the pupil's absence.

Through Lesson Monitor, teachers can check pupils' attendance from the previous lessons. A pupil should only be absent from class if the reason is an authorized one. As already stated, an authorised absence will be indicated by a comment on Lesson Monitor. If a pupil is absent from the current lesson, without a valid reason, the teacher will email the pupil's Form Teacher and record an **N** code in Lesson Monitor. The Form Teacher will follow up on this absence during AM/PM registration or by contacting the parent.

Form Teachers will record an **S** code (Study Leave) in Lesson Monitor for pupils who are doing Public Examinations in Years 12, 13 and 14 during the examination period. Study Leave (Code S) will not be used for internal examinations or in advance of the commencement of the examination timetable.

Positive Measures to Encourage Good Attendance

- Class registers will be completed accurately by staff at the beginning of each lesson
- Form Teachers will monitor pupil's attendance through Lesson Monitor
- Attendance will be closely monitored by Year Heads and addressed at assemblies
- Termly certificates presented at assemblies for those with 99-100% attendance; this will be celebrated on the school website and social media
- Termly draws take place for 98-100% attendance in each Year Group (£20 Gift Voucher)
- End of year £100 cash prize draw for all pupils with 100% attendance
- Attendance Awards at yearly Key Stage 3, GCSE, A Level Prizegiving Ceremonies
- Regular reviews are carried out and meetings with parents are arranged, where necessary
- An end of month letter from the Form Teacher is sent to parents if their child's attendance falls between 92-95%
- An end of month letter from the Year Head is sent to parents if their child's attendance falls to 90%
- A referral may be made by the Year Head to the EWO if a pupil's attendance falls to 85%; a parental meeting will be sought at this stage and home visits may follow
- A very good attendance record will merit a positive and supportive reference to future employers and other educational establishments.

Punctuality/Lateness

St Paul's places a great deal of importance on the need for all pupils to be punctual and to arrive in school on time. It makes for a good start to the school day and does not interrupt the learning and teaching in the classroom. Any pupil who arrives late to school **must** immediately go to the assigned member of office staff to get registered and then make their way to class. This will be recorded as a code **L** (present, but late) in Lesson Monitor.

Pupils who come to school late on a regular basis in any one week (without a valid reason) will be monitored by their Form Teacher. If the lateness continues the pupil's Form Teacher will contact the parent/guardian to alert them to lateness and if the late coming continues the parent/guardian will be invited for a meeting with the Form Teacher and/or Year Head.

Leaving School during the day

As already stated, it is the role and responsibility of the parent to communicate with the Form Teacher if they need their child to be released from school during the day; this permission will be recorded by the Form Teacher on SIMS. For health and safety and safeguarding reasons, the pupil must then wait at reception and must be collected from school by a parent/guardian/other relative. **This adult must enter the school and sign their name/details with assigned member of office staff in the 'Signing out Log.'**

Advance notice of appointments should be given and appointment cards must be presented.

For safety and security reasons a pupil must:

- During Registration, present Pupil Planner note from his/her parent/guardian to the Form Teacher and show appointment card if he/she has a medical/dental/other appointment which cannot be arranged after school. The Form Teacher will sign the note. The Form Teacher will record a code **M** in Lesson Monitor.
- The parent/guardian must collect their child from Reception and sign their name and details in the 'Signing out Log'. Pupils are encouraged to return to school after the medical or dental appointment.

Telephone requests – In an emergency a parent may phone the school requesting that their child be allowed out of school. Such calls will be checked before permission is given and the parents will be asked to collect their child from Reception and to complete the Signing out Log.

Parental Request for a Family Holiday during Term-Time

Parents are requested **NOT** to book a family holiday during term-time. It is recognised that the pupil's learning would be disrupted and it can result in them falling behind in their learning.

Family holidays during term-time can only be granted in exceptional circumstances. We do recognize that the holiday is important for the well-being and cohesion of the family unit following a serious or terminal illness, bereavement or other traumatic event (Code **F** will be recorded on Lesson Monitor)

We adopt an 'Every Day at St Paul's Counts' Pupil Attendance Strategy in school. A summary of the strategy is provided below:

'EVERY DAY AT ST PAUL'S COUNTS'

100%	0 days missed	Excellent
95%	9 days absence 1 weeks & 4 days of learning missed	Satisfactory
90%	19 days absence 3 weeks & 4 days of learning missed	Poor
85%	28 days absence 5 weeks & 3 days of learning missed	Very Poor
80%	38 days absence 7 weeks & 3 days of learning missed	Unacceptable
75%	46 days absence 9 weeks & 1 day of learning	Unacceptable

90% attendance sounds good and most parents would be very pleased if their child achieved this

However, it means missing one whole day of school every fortnight.

We reinforce 'Every Day Counts' to promote good attendance.

If a pupil fails to attend school regularly, the following steps will be undertaken, as per the strategy outlined in Pupil Attendance Strategy/Joint Operational Practice document.

Use of External/Support Agencies







We acknowledge the importance of a range of external support agencies in promoting and supporting good attendance within the school, but also the importance of ensuring that such agencies adhere to the values and ethos of our school.

Current external / support agencies include:

- EWO Service
- Social Services
- School Counsellors
- School Age Mums (SAM)
- PSNI
- Kinnego
- EOTAS
- Training for Business Programme (STEPS and VEP)
- Behaviour Support Team

Related School Policies

This policy is set within the broader school context of Pastoral Care and, as such, should be implemented in conjunction with the following school policies:

-  Pastoral Care Policy
-  Safeguarding Policy
-  Promoting Positive Behaviour Policy
-  Inclusion Policy
-  SEN Policy
-  Homework Policy

Dissemination of the Policy

Pastoral Policies are shared annually with Year 8 parents at our Parental Induction Evening and are available on the school's website. A Pastoral Policies overview is emailed to all parents at the start of each academic year.

Pupils are reminded about their roles and responsibilities in relation to attendance during induction at the end of August and reminded throughout the year.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review:

The Head of Pastoral Care, Ms C S Fearon and the Pastoral Team are responsible for monitoring, evaluating and reviewing the implementation of the Pupil Attendance Policy. Ms Fearon will revise the policy and procedures in light of any further DE guidance and legislation as necessary and review it annually. This will be done in consultation with governors, staff, pupils, parents and the Education Welfare Service. On-going evaluation will ensure the effectiveness of this policy.