
SAINT NICHOLAS SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Note: This policy applies to all sections of the school including EYFS

Reviewed October 2016

Review Date October 2017

1. INTRODUCTION

At Saint Nicholas School's we see education as a partnership between the family and the school. We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for our pupils, and we look to parents to support this objective.

2. SCHOOL DAY

All pupils are required to be in school by 8.45 am. The school day ends at

- Years R to 2 – 15:30
- Years 3 to 5 – 15:45
- Years 6 to 11 – 16:00

3. NOTIFYING THE SCHOOL OF ILLNESS

If your child is ill, please e-mail or telephone the school before 9:00 am each day of absence. If we have not heard from a parent or guardian we will always telephone in order to make sure that your child has not suffered an accident.

We ask that you make contact with us each day your son/daughter is going to be absent in order that we can keep our records updated and importantly, so that we can keep abreast of their progress to full health and anticipated return date.

4. LATE ARRIVAL

Our administrative systems electronically register the pupils and by 8.45 am all pupils will be marked present, late or absent. It is therefore essential that if a pupil arrives late, they sign in at Reception so our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the school is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

Our systems are again updated at 9:00 am to take account of late arrivals due to traffic etc. At this point, if parents have not contacted the school by telephone or email this will generate a 'phone call by our Reception team to the parents. At 9.30 am we compile a final Registration for the morning and a list will be generated of pupils who are not present.

5. LEAVING SCHOOL DURING THE DAY

Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture.

If a pupil has to leave the school during the day for illness or you are collecting them for a medical appointment, they are required to sign out at Reception.

6. REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE

6.1 Request for Absence Form

The Request for Absence Form can be downloaded from the Parent Area by copying this link to your browser - <https://sites.google.com/a/saintnicholasschool.net/saint-nicholas-school---parent-area/home/pupil-absence>

6.2 Appointments

Requests for absence (e.g. medical or dental appointments, visits to sixth forms) must be made to the Headmaster on the Request for Absence Form.

6.3 Compassionate grounds or exceptional circumstances

Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing to the Headmaster well in advance of the proposed absence.

7. AUTHORISING ABSENCE

The High Court has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the school will authorise absence are given below.

7.1 Illness

Where schools accept that a pupil is ill they must authorise the absence.

7.2 Appointments

Dental and doctors' appointments are authorised absences.

7.3 Holidays

The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law you must ask permission for your child to miss school.

Schools have discretion to allow up to ten days absence in a school year for a family holiday if circumstances warrant it. Term dates are published over a year in advance in order that parents can arrange holidays without disrupting their child's education. Please note that it is the Governor's policy to discourage holidays during term, unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Holidays which are taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:

- availability of cheap holidays
- availability of desired accommodation
- poor weather in school holiday periods
- overlap with the beginning or end of term

7.4 Exceptional Circumstances / Unavoidable Causes

These could be catastrophic events at home or pupils held in custody rather than shopping trips or birthday treats. There may be extenuating or compassionate reasons for authorising an absence such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

8. POOR ATTENDANCE

The Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) 2009 expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 93% and above

8.1 Attendance and levels of achievement

Poor attendance is normally defined as anything below 90%.

There is clear evidence of a link between poor attendance at school and low levels of achievement:

- Of pupils who miss more than 50 per cent of school, only three per cent manage to achieve five A* to Cs including English and maths.
- Of pupils who miss between 10 per cent and 20 per cent of school, only 35 per cent manage to achieve five A* to C GCSEs including English and maths.

- Of pupils who miss less than five per cent of school, 73 per cent achieve five A* to Cs including English and maths.

8.2 Persistent Absentees

The Department for Education has changed the definition of "persistent absence" to deal with the reality of pupil absenteeism in schools and its impact on their learning. The Department has reduced the threshold at which a pupil is defined as "persistently absent" to 10 per cent.

Pupils whose attendance is below 90% are now officially classed as Persistent Absentees. The school will be obliged to contact Essex CC Investigation Officer from the Missing Education and Child Employment Service where absence is persistent.

8.3 Meetings with parents/carers and pupils

Analysis of the attendance data will identify those pupils whose attendance is at a level which causes concern. Form teachers will need to make a judgment as to whether it is necessary to invite parents/carers and pupils to a meeting. If the meeting takes place then the following will need to be the focus of the meeting.

- Reasons for the poor attendance.
- Strategies to address improving the attendance.
- Targets to achieve.
- A date for a review to take place.

9. SUMMARY OF THE LAW TAKEN FROM THE GUIDELINES FOR ISI INSPECTION

All Independent schools - Regulation 3(17) "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that admission and attendance registers are maintained in accordance with the Education(Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006".

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the "School Roll", and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

10. ATTENDANCE REGISTRATION SYSTEM

The school uses Engage, an electronic register system, which enables the school to record, report and monitor pupil and pupil attendance and absence.

11. MAINTAINING RECORDS AND REPORTING TO THE AUTHORITIES

The schools' attendance register kept by means of a computer is backed up in the form of an electronic copy not less than once a month which are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question.

There is no longer a requirement for independent schools to return absence data to the DfE, therefore absence statistics are not published in the DfE Achievement and Attainment Tables or in the annual Statistical First Release.

All schools in membership of ISC take part in that organisation's annual census of pupils, staff and expenditure etc. From January 2009 it has been mandatory to include pupil ethnic monitoring data using the same methodology as the maintained sector.

Local authorities have a legal responsibility to identify children of compulsory school age who are not in education. Schools may therefore receive an enquiry about whether they are educating a specific child. Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has

- been absent without authority for 10 consecutive days, or
- fails to attend school regularly, or
- is removed from the school roll without his or her next school being known.

Daily	School receptionist	Form Teachers
8:30 am	Check answer-phone and emails and enter known absences on Engage	
8:45 am		Electronically register all pupils marking them present, late or absent using the appropriate codes
8:55 am	Mark late arrivals as they sign in at Reception	Close register Forward any absence notes or emails to office immediately – please date and initial these
9:00 am	'Phone parents of pupils with unexplained absence and update Engage registers	
9:30 am	Final list of absences drawn up	
3:50 pm		Electronically register all pupils marking them present, late or absent using the appropriate codes
4:00 pm		Close register
<i>Absences marked 'reason unknown' must be followed up until the parents provide a reason and the Engage entry must then be amended.</i>		

Weekly on-going monitoring	Form Teachers	Head of section	Head
<i>Accuracy of Registers</i>	Monitor attendance carefully and ensure that the Engage register is accurate		
<i>Attendance rate</i>	Check attendance rates for all pupils		
<i>Attendance falls below 95%</i>	'Phone parents to talk about the desire to ensure that attendance remains above the school's expectation of 95% Inform Head of section	Monitor pupils with low attendance	
<i>Attendance falls below 95% - with no improvement</i>	If there is no improvement in the following weeks refer to Head of section	'Phone parents to talk about the desire to ensure that attendance remains above the school's expectation of 95% - explain that poor attendance could result in the child being asked to leave the school. Inform head of outcome of conversation.	
<i>Persistent absence -Attendance falls below 90%</i>	Inform Head of Section and Head		Write to parents to inform them that the school is obliged to contact Essex CC Investigation Officer from the Missing Education and Child Employment Service.
<i>Persistent absence -Attendance falls below 90% - no improvement</i>			Consider option of serving notice to leave the school at the end of the next term

Registration categories

Code	Description	Statistical Meaning	Physical Meaning
/	Present - am	Present	Present for whole session
\	Present - pm	Present	Present for whole session
B	Educated off site - not dual registration	Authorised educational absence	Out for whole session
C	Other authorised circumstance	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
E	Excluded - no alternative provision made	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
f	Funeral	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
F	Extended family holiday	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
G	Family holiday (not agreed) - or days in excess of agreement	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
H	Family holiday (agreed)	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
I	Illness - not medical/dental appointment	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
J	Interview	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
L	Late (before registration has closed)	Present	Late for session
M	Medical/Dental appointment	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
O	Unauthorised absence - not covered by another category	Unauthorised absence	Out for whole session
p	Present elsewhere in school	Present	Present for whole session
P	Approved sporting activity	Authorised educational absence	Out for whole session
R	Religious observance	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
S	Study leave	Authorised absence	Out for whole session
U	Late (after registration has closed)	Authorised absence	Late for session
V	Educational visit or trip	Authorised educational absence	Out for whole session
W	Work experience	Authorised educational absence	Out for whole session
Y	Enforced closure	School closed - unforeseen reason	Out for whole session