

Attendance and Punctuality

Why it really matters
to be present - and on time!



School Policy Statement

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How is school registration carried out? Form period lasts 20 minutes at the beginning of each day except on Fridays when it lasts 10 minutes. Afternoon registration takes place during the first lesson after lunch. Form period is set aside to say prayers, complete the register and pass on information. The register symbols comply with government guidelines in order to distinguish between different categories of absence.

What is considered to be "lateness" to school? The bell for morning registration goes at 8.45 am. If pupils arrive at school later they must report to the office to be marked in and given a late slip. Pupils arriving after 9.05am will be marked as late.

How does the school monitor short term absence? Mrs Shackleton checks the register information on a daily basis and liaises with Year Leaders when erratic attendance patterns become apparent. When there are concerns, pupils are placed on the "First Day Response" list. In these cases Mrs Shackleton will contact parents when their child is absent. Parents recognise the need for this service and tend to be very supportive when contacted.

How does the school monitor long term absence? Long term absence may require the involvement of external agencies. In such cases the relevant Year Leader, the AIW and the agency involved will work together to intervene and form reintegration plans to support the child and family concerned. However, in cases involving truancy and lack of cooperation with the school, prosecution may be necessary.

How does the school reward good attendance and punctuality? We celebrate those pupils whose attendance is excellent by celebrating this at our end of term assemblies.

Is there good attendance at St Augustine's? It is excellent - over 95% last year. But we have no grounds for complacency. We must work together to ensure this continues.

Any questions? Any concerns? Any comments you would like to make?

We are here to listen and help. Please phone Mrs Shackleton, our Attendance Improvement Worker, on 01254 823362. She will either answer your query or will forward you onto the relevant member of staff.

Sanctions which might affect parents and guardians

Parents and carers need to be aware that their responsibility to ensure their children attend school regularly may involve legal sanctions should the school have evidence of persistent absence other than for serious medical reasons for which there is clear evidence. Parents and guardians who neglect their responsibility risk the possibility of referral to the Local Authority's court officer. Sanctions range from fixed penalty notices through to custodial sentences. Examples of when fixed penalty notices are used include persistent late arrival at school, truancy, parentally condoned absence without good reason, excessive holidays in term time or excessive delayed return from an extended holiday without prior school permission. In every case a pupil must have had a minimum of five school days lost to unauthorised absence during the current term before a fixed penalty notice is considered. Parents will be given a written warning before a fixed penalty is issued. Year Leaders and our AIW work closely with parents and carers. We hope that these sanctions would only be triggered as a last resort.

Your future is already being shaped - by you!

Your attitude towards school attendance and being on time for lessons will shape your future prospects. Whatever career you go into, your employer will keep a check on your attendance and punctuality. Your record will be very important. And whenever you go for a promotion or a new job, your previous school or employer may be contacted to comment on your attendance and timekeeping.

Good employers treat illness and unavoidable lateness sympathetically, but they will be quick to identify patterns of absence and will see through weak excuses. Employers do not promote poor timekeepers or people who are often absent without a valid reason. They want to employ people who they know will be present and on time - all the time!

In school there is a clear link between attendance and success. Excellent attendance and punctuality are essential for thorough exam and assessment preparation. Pupils with excellent attendance and punctuality are more likely to achieve or beat their targets at GCSE than those whose attendance is a cause for concern. Our best results correspond with our highest attendance levels. This is why maximum attendance is so important.

Missing one day every fortnight equals six months of absence over the five years you are at school.

An attendance of 90% is a real cause for concern and the new government's benchmark to denote a persistent absence problem. We understand that at times your child may be poorly and ask that you contact school in the morning to inform us of this. Please do, where possible, try to arrange any appointments for your child out of school time and any leave of absence during term time for holidays will not be authorised unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Lateness to lessons: Constantly arriving late for classes will also damage your prospects of getting good GCSEs. You miss out on the important instructions and explanations which are given at the start of the lesson. This can also lead to teaching and learning being disrupted. If a pupil is often late to lessons they will receive sanctions and their parent/carer will be informed.

Some absences or lateness are unavoidable: - we understand that on some occasions you are genuinely poorly. Also, buses sometimes arrive late or a trip or activity over-runs. It is important NOT to worry or panic when this happens. Teachers will understand if you explain the circumstances. If you have a concern about any of these matters raise them with your Form Teacher or Year Leader. They will reassure you and follow up any worries.

What is the responsibility of parents regarding absence from school?

Parents are responsible in law for ensuring that their children attend school. Please let us know as soon as possible if your child is ill, or has a doctor's or dental appointment. We will need this information **by 9.30 am at the very latest on the first morning of their absence.** The school has a 24 hour automatic telephone answering system (01254 823362) on which your message should be left. When calling, please state clearly your name, the name of the child concerned, your relationship with the pupil, the reason for the absence, the child's year group, and if possible, their form. Alternatively, parents can contact school by text on 07787820337.

Under no circumstances should a pupil make phone calls or send messages regarding their absence from school. We may keep copies of calls/messages sent to us. For reasons of security, it is essential that **parents or carers** make these contacts. Please contact the school every additional morning your child is absent. If, however, you think it likely that your child is going to be absent for a specific number of days within the same week and are able to provide us with this information in your first phone call, we will not require further contact from you. **However you must call us back on the Monday of any ensuing week of absence.** The safety and security of children is of paramount importance to us and we also want to stop any prospective truancy. Where there has been no notification of an absence we will write to parents. In cases where we have significant cause for concern regarding absences our Attendance Improvement Worker will also be involved. We may request a medical certificate.

If your child needs to leave school at any time during the day for a doctor's or a dentist's appointment, they must have a note signed by a parent or carer requesting permission to leave the premises which must be handed to the school office. Pupils who are leaving school must be signed out by the adult collecting them. **Please do your best to avoid routine medical appointments taking place during school time if this is possible.**

If a parent wants to take a pupil out of school other than for medical reasons **they must request permission in writing beforehand.** The law regarding this matter is precise and letters must be phrased in the correct way. **Only a headteacher can grant "leave of absence", not a parent.** This is why the school **cannot** accept letters **telling** or **informing us** of a forthcoming absence and why we will always return these letters without granting permission.

Holidays in term time are disruptive to pupils and to the rest of the class and will rarely be authorised. However, leave of absence for other activities (such as participating in sporting / performance events) may be granted if the time requested is not excessive. Continuity of lessons is vital for all pupils in the school. We are particularly reluctant to grant leave of absence for KS4 students (those in Years 10 & 11). A pupils' absence will impact on their final results. The school does **not** set work for pupils taking holidays during term time.

How are absence and lateness monitored at school? Mrs Hughes-Gooding, our **Deputy Head** (Pastoral) oversees all aspects of attendance and punctuality. She discusses individual pupils who are causing concern with Mrs Shackleton, our Attendance Improvement Worker (AIW) and respective Year Leaders.

Each of the five Year Groups in the school is overseen by a **Year Leader** who liaises with Form Teachers, the AIW and parents. **Form Teachers** are responsible for marking registers and passing on relevant information to the AIW. They encourage the pupils in their form group to maintain a good level of attendance and punctuality at all times.

Pupils are responsible for getting to registration on time. If pupils are ever late to school they must make sure that they sign in and collect a "late slip" from the school office to hand to the teacher of the lesson they are going to. They are also responsible for passing on "Requests for Leave of Absence" notes in good time.