**SAINT CHRISTINA'S SCHOOL: ATTENDANCE POLICY**

| Review Initiated by | ASG |
|---|---|
| Last Review | Autumn 2024 |
| Next Review | Autumn 2025 |

## 1. Introduction and guidance

1.1. In order to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of pupils, the School has a statutory duty to know the whereabouts of its pupils when school is in session, either that they are in school, as would normally be expected or, if they are not in school, where they are and why they are not present.

1.2. This Policy has due regard to:

- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations (August 2024)
- Children Missing Education (August 2024)
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance (August 2024)
- Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance (August 2024)
- School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (2015)

## 2. Key contacts

**Senior Attendance Champion**

Simon Hirst, Deputy Headteacher and DSL

T: 020 7722 8784

E: deputyhead@saintchristinas.org.uk

**Registration Team**

Michelle Hamilton, School Office

T: 020 7722 8784

E: headteacherspa@saintchristinas.org.uk

**Notification of Absence for Illness or other Approved Reasons** (by 8.45 am each morning)

School Office

T: 020 7722 8784 /

E: office@saintchristinas.org.uk / and Class teacher (email known to parents)

**Request for Absence** must be by approval of the Headteacher (at least seven days' notice is required wherever possible) via Michelle Hamilton, Headteacher's PA.

T: 020 7722 8784

E: headteacherspa@saintchristinas.org.uk

## 3. Aims

3.1. This policy aims to provide a clear, consistent and cohesive framework which confirms with statutory requirements and promotes high levels of attendance and punctuality of pupils at the School. It is applied fairly and consistently considering the individual needs of pupils and their families who have specific barriers to attendance. Parents will be provided with initial information when their child joins the School and are reminded of it at the beginning of the school year and when it is significantly updated.

## 4. Scope

4.1. This policy applies to all pupils within all year groups in the School.

4.2. This policy is also designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the School to record attendance and absence.

## 5. The importance of school attendance

5.1. For pupils to benefit fully from the educational opportunities at Saint Christina's School ('the School'), they must have high levels of attendance and punctuality sustained throughout the academic year. The School has an expectation that all pupils will aim for 100% attendance and punctuality unless there is a legitimate reason that this is not possible.

5.2. Pupils, parents and the School are all responsible for improving and maintaining good attendance. This begins with school being somewhere pupils want to be and therefore the foundation of securing good attendance is that the school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils are keen and ready to learn.

5.3. The barriers to accessing education can be wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. Occasionally, some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, pupils, parents, the School and relevant partners should work in partnership to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. This may involve, for example an emphasis on the curriculum, behaviour, bullying, SEND support, pastoral support and physical health, mental health and wellbeing support.

5.4. The School also recognises that absence/children missing from education can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues, including neglect, sexual abuse and child sexual and criminal exploitation. Consequently, attendance and registration policies are hugely important and must be regarded as such by pupils, parents and staff. Where attendance becomes an issue for a pupil, the School will actively seek to work with the family to improve school attendance, which may include working with the Local Authority to access sources of support that might assist pupils and their family. For our most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is also an important protective factor and the best opportunity for needs to be identified and support provided.

## 6. Expectations

6.1. The School expects that all parents enable pupils to attend all published school days, which are made known to parents two years in advance via email and posted on the School website. A school day means from the normal start of the school day to the normal end of the school day.

6.2. There will be occasions when a pupil cannot attend a day when School is in session, such as when they are too unwell to attend School or when government advice precludes them from attending, e.g., the Government's advice on staying away from School after a bout of vomiting or diarrhoea. In this case it is expected that parents communicate with the School in writing and in a timely manner with clear reasons for absence and an expected timescale for their return. It is important for parents to understand that, by law, the School is required to keep accurate records of attendance and to have written records to support any absence.

6.3. The School also expects parents to ask permission from the Headteacher well in advance for any significant planned absence, such as: a significant family event, important religious observance, taking part in national-level performances or competitions during the School day. Routine absences occurring during the School day such as medical or dental appointments, music exams etc., may be notified to the class teacher. Holidays when School is in session cannot be authorised.

6.4. The School also expects parents to work together with the School to help understand and overcome any barriers to their child's full attendance and to engage fully with any support offered on behalf of the School or local authority to avoid the need for more formal support.

## 7. Schoolbase

7.1. The School uses Schoolbase system to record children who are present, absent and late as well as recording reasons for any absence and to gather data on attendance, either individually, as a bigger group, e.g., by year group, or as a whole-school. This recorded data is then used to produce an accurate and updating absence list. The registers are backed up monthly and retained for six years.

## 8. Registration team and senior attendance champion

8.1. The Registration Team includes:

**The School Office** – these colleagues are based in the School Reception area and have access to Schoolbase and the main school telephone number, including any voicemails left. Members of this team will phone parents of children who are not yet registered after the close of registration if no reason has already been provided for an absence.

**The Deputy Headteacher, is the School's DSL and Senior Attendance Champion**. His role includes:

- Having overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance in school, including setting a clear vision for improving and maintaining good attendance.
- Establishing and maintaining effective systems for tackling individual absence and lateness and make sure that procedures are followed by all staff.

- On a fortnightly basis formally monitor attendance and lateness, raising pupils whose attendance or lateness exceeds accepted levels, enabling informal support structures or liaising with external agencies where needed.
- Regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.
- Report levels of absence and lateness to the Headteacher and to School Governing Body at appropriate frequencies.

8.2. The Deputy Headteacher, as Senior Attendance Champion, is also the DSL so will report to the other members of the Safeguarding Team (DDSLs) and Class teachers where attendance of a pupil may become, or indicate signs of, a possible Safeguarding issue.

## 9. Registration Times

9.1. An electronic attendance register is kept for each class (which, for the purposes of this policy includes EYFS). This register is completed at the start of each morning and afternoon session. Pupils are expected to arrive for morning registration no later than 9.00am and afternoon registration no later than 1.30pm. Staff will complete registration using SchoolBase.

9.2. Registration closes for each session at the following times:
- Morning 9.15 am
- Afternoon 1.45 pm

## 10. Finalising the attendance register

10.1. It is expected that all pupils will be accounted for as soon as possible after registration ends each morning or afternoon. Members of the Registration Team (School Office) will phone parents of children who are not yet registered after the close of registration if no reason has already been provided for an absence.

10.2. It is expected that all pupils would be accounted for, and therefore no 'N' codes remain, within one hour of the registration period ending, inside DfE guidelines which state that 'N' codes must be resolved within five working days. In the unlikely event that the reason for absence cannot be established after five working days, the pupil's record will be amended to an 'O' code with notes made.

10.3. If a pupil could not be accounted for at all and it were not possible to verify the pupil's whereabouts with parents, or there was some concern about the pupil's whereabouts, the Registration Team would inform the Deputy Headteacher, who is also the DSL, as soon as possible and it may be that the Missing Child Procedure is put into place.

## 11. Late Arrival of a Pupil

11.1. If a child arrives once the School is in session (9.00 am), parents will be asked to sign them in on the electronic entry system screen (Entry Sign) in the School foyer.

11.2. Children in Nursery and Reception Classes will need to be collected from the foyer by a Teaching Assistant or will be assisted to class by a member of the Reception Team (School Office)

11.3. Children from Years 1 to 6 will make their own way to their classrooms.


## 12. Leaving School during School Hours

12.1. If a pupil has permission to leave School (with a parent or responsible adult) during School hours, the parent must collect their child from the foyer and sign them out using the Entry Sign screen, with the child's name, date, time of departure and reason for leaving. If pupils are accompanied on a School trip by a member of staff during School hours, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to notify the School Office that they are leaving.


## 13. Returning to School during School Hours

13.1. If a pupil, who has been marked absent in the Entry Sign screen, returns to School during the day but outside of a registration period, parents will be asked to sign their child back in on the Entry Sign screen before their child can pass through into the School.

13.2. If pupils return from a School trip during School hours but outside of a registration period, it is the responsibility of the member of staff to notify the School Office that they have returned.


## 14. Pupil Illness or Unplanned Absence

14.1. If a pupil is ill or unable to attend School for any other reason and the School has not been previously notified, parents should telephone the School Office by 8.45am at the latest. If telephoning before 8.00 a.m., parents may leave a message on the answerphone.

14.2. Parents should always email the class teacher and the School Office to notify them of or explain an unplanned absence.

14.3. If a pupil is ill for more than one day, parents should telephone the office each morning to confirm that the pupil will be absent for that day.

14.4. In deciding whether or not a child should be absent from school due to illness it should be recognised that we can be 'under the weather' and still function well within the classroom. Where an ailment is more significant and children are infectious or lethargic due to a heavy cold, parents might consider that an absence will benefit their recovery. Pupils suffering from 'bugs' leading to vomiting should remain off school for 48 hours after the last time that they have been sick.


## 15. Pupil Planned Absence

15.1 Saint Christina's School values the strong relationship it has with parents and the support they afford in ensuring their children are in attendance throughout the School day. There are, however, occasions when a pupil may need to be absent for all or part of the School day. If a parent needs to take a child out of School for a pre-arranged e.g. medical appointment, music exam etc, the pupil's class teacher needs to be notified in writing, (letter or e-mail) in advance.

15.2 For all other absences, parents are asked to seek permission in writing for absence from the Headteacher.

15.3 Parents should know that the Secretary of State for Education requires all children to attend school. Schools are accountable for the attendance of the children on the school roll to the DfE through inspection. Strict safeguarding regulation exists surrounding attendance. The Headteacher is authorised to allow children to miss school for exceptional reasons. This might include a special family event.

## 16. Unauthorised Absence

16.1 It is expected that all parents will notify the School of any absence in accordance with this policy in order that the School can safeguard the welfare, health and safety of all pupils. It is therefore unlikely that there will be an unexplained absence by the end of a registration period.

16.2 If a pupil has been marked 'N' on the register at the close of registration because no reason for the absence has been given, the School Office will make contact with parents, as a matter of priority, to establish a reason for the absence. In such situations, a member of the school registration team will seek to contact parents between 9:15am and 9.45am once the registers have been checked.

## 17. Managing poor attendance proactively and reactively

17.1 The School aims to manage attendance in three main ways:

17.2 Prevention of Poor Attendance: this is done in many ways, from making the term dates clear in advance, making the School a positive experience for all pupils and giving proactive communication to parents about the School's expectations with attendance, e.g., regularly in the weekly bulletin.

17.3 Early intervention to reduce absence and lateness before it becomes habitual: this is done by regularly monitoring attendance and lateness and having good communication between the Registration Team, Class teachers, Phase Leaders and the Senior Attendance Champion. This may also include sending letters home to ensure parents are aware that lateness or attendance needs to improve or meeting informally with parents.

17.4 Targeted reengagement of persistently and severely absent pupils: this is where targeted support is put in place, working with partners, e.g., local authorities, to improve attendance, especially for those who have less than 50% attendance.

## 18. Attendance concerns

18.1 Absence from School of more than 10% over an extended period is considered by the Department for Education (DfE) to be 'persistent absence', and recommends that, at that level, the School should work with local authority services to ascertain and understand the reasons for their low attendance, and seek to support the child and parents to overcome those barriers. If low attendance were to continue despite initial support, parents are also expected to proactively engage with any formal support offered by the school or local authority, such as a voluntary Attendance Contract or other voluntary early help plan to prevent the need for legal intervention, such as an Educational Supervision Order.

18.2 Where parents fail to ensure regular attendance, and have not engaged with support services or voluntary measures such as an Attendance Contract, the local authority may take a number of measures, as outlined in [School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures](#) (DfE, 2015).

18.3 **Attendance Persistently Under 90%:** The School keeps a list of pupils whose attendance is at or below 90%, including their reasons. This list is monitored at least fortnightly to see whether particular pupil's attendance is improving or likely to remain under 90%. The Registration Team should let the Deputy Headteacher know each day if one of the pupils on this list is absent.

18.4 **Lateness:** The School maintains a log for attendance monitoring lateness. This log identifies pupils whose attendance is lower and is used to track whether a particular pupil's lateness is improving or likely to remain above 10%. It is expected that Class teachers, in the first instance, and Phase Leaders will initially speak to pupils and parents of pupils who are persistently late before escalating to the Senior Attendance Champion if lateness does not improve.

18.5 **Parents Uncontactable/No Reason Known:** If a pupil is unable to be accounted for and parents are not contactable within a reasonable time frame, e.g., within one hour of registration ending, then the Deputy Headteacher, who is also the DSL, should be contacted.

18.6 If it is known that a pupil has been present in School and is not then subsequently able to be found, then the Missing Pupil Protocol should be enacted, documented in the Supervision of Pupils Policy.

18.7 **Longer-term Physical and Mental Health Conditions, SEND and Part-Time Timetables:** The School is sensitive to pupils with longer-term physical and mental health conditions, those on the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) register and any with part-time timetables. It will look to provide additional support to these pupils where appropriate.

18.8 If a pupil has a longer-term physical or mental health condition then it is expected that the School should be kept fully informed and provided with appropriate medical evidence (e.g. doctors note). If a child with these conditions is missing from School for ten consecutive days or fifteen days consecutively or cumulatively under Code I, the Local Authority will be informed.

## 19. School action in case of persistent absence or lateness

19.1 **Setting expectations:** The School expects all pupils attend School by having a culture where all pupils can, and want to be, in School and ready to learn. This is the case for the overwhelming number of pupils.

19.2 **Monitoring and Informal Responses:** The Registration Team account for each child twice a day and so are likely to be the first to be aware of persistent lateness or absence. The Team will alert the relevant people – normally the Class teacher and Phase Leaders if a pattern is emerging or if a pupil is likely to be absent for a few days. In practice all parents have direct contact with class teachers who normally have an understanding of how long a child may be absent and will be setting work for the duration. Where absences persist, an absence becomes longer, or attendance is recurrently intermittent (with or without a discernible pattern), the Deputy Headteacher will be informed.

19.3 A similar process takes place for those pupils who are persistently late, though the School is aware and understanding of the fact that some families have long commutes and a relatively short delay on key public transport or problems on the roads can lead to many pupils being late for School. Where lateness is beginning to become a regular occurrence, class teachers will speak to parents about the situation in order to explore strategies to improve the situation.

19.4 **Communicating with Parents and Pupils, Seeking to Understand:** The School puts pupils at the heart of everything it does and that a child's welfare is paramount. Each family situation is both dynamic and unique and it may be that there are factors affecting a pupil's attendance or ability to attend School on time that the School was previously unaware of. The wider pastoral team (Classteachers, Phase Leaders, SEND team and the Head and Deputy Headteacher) should seek to understand any issues sensitively and work together in partnership with parents to offer support so as to remove barriers to attendance. If a period of schooling where a shorter school day as part of the support is being considered, the Deputy Headteacher will be involved in the assessment as a member of the Senior Leadership Team.

19.5 In all instances where the School has been in contact with parents regarding attendance that has dipped below 90%, records will be kept.

## 20. Reporting absence to external agencies

20.1 The School defines a "contact point" as one normal teaching day while School is in session i.e., Monday to Friday during term time.

20.2 The School is obligated to work closely with local partners, including the local authority Education Welfare service, and Children's Social Care where appropriate, including sharing data on individual cases, to help remove barriers to improve school attendance.

20.3 **Continual General Absence:** If a pupil misses ten consecutive days, the School will report the pupil's name, address and reason for absence (if known) to the local authority unless the reason for absence is either sickness confirmed by the provision of a doctor's note or leave of absence granted by the Headteacher.

20.4 **Medical Absence:** If a pupil misses fifteen days consecutively or cumulatively under Code I, the School will report the pupil's name, address and reason for absence to the local authority.

20.5 **Attendance of less than 90%:** Where absence escalates or persists and pupils miss an average of 10% or more of School after the first few weeks of the academic year, the School will work proactively with the local authority to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils. It should be noted that if support has been put in place but severe absence for unauthorised reasons continues, it is likely to constitute neglect.

20.6 Where parents fail to ensure regular attendance, and have not engaged with support services or voluntary measures such as an Attendance Contract, the local authority may take a number of measures, as outlined through the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2024. These may include a Penalty Notice, a School Attendance Order, a Parenting Order, or prosecution, which could result in a fine of up to £2,500 or a jail term of up to three months.

## 21. Sharing of Information

21.1 Through the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024, the School is obligated to work closely with local partners, including the local authority Education Welfare service, and Children's Social Care, including sharing data on individual cases, to help remove barriers to appropriate school attendance.

## 22. Duty to Report Absence to the Local Authority

22.1 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 and the School is obliged to provide this information to the Local Authority.

22.2 Schools are required to alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent without authority for ten consecutive days (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence), or fails to attend School regularly or is removed from the School roll without the pupil's next school being known. In this last case, the School is required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the Local Authority in which the pupil lives.

## 23. Pupils joining or leaving the school at non-standard points

23.1 In line with local arrangements, the School will inform the local authority (RBKC) within 5 days when a pupil joins the School at any point other than at the beginning of Nursery and Reception and will provide them with all the information held within the Admissions Register about the pupil and as requested by RBKC.

23.2 In line with local arrangements the School will also inform the local authority (RBKC) if a pupil leaves the School at any point including the end of Year 6. This includes if the pupil has relocated

for an agreed period of time before returning to School. In line with the regulations the School will share the following information about the pupil from the Admissions Register:

- full name;
- address;
- the full name and address of any parent the pupil normally lives with;
- at least one telephone number by which any parent the pupil normally lives with can be contacted in an emergency;
- if applicable, the pupil's future address, the full name and address of the parent who the pupil is going to live with, and the date the pupil will start living there;
- if applicable, the name of the pupil's other school and when the pupil began or will begin to attend the school;
- the reason set out in regulation 9(1) or (3) under which the pupil's name has been deleted from the admission register.

## 24. Access to work during a period of absence

24.1 The School has a legal responsibility and duty of care to its pupils to ensure face-to-face attendance.

24.2 If a pupil is so unwell that they cannot come in to School, then they should be resting properly and recovering so that they can return to School and where absence has led to significant work being missed, a plan is then put in place to enable the pupil to catch up with any work missed.

24.3 Reasonable adjustments can be made when someone is disabled and the impairment must be declared "long-term". Long-term disability is defined by the Equality Act as:
- It has lasted for at least 12 months;
- It is likely to last for at least 12 months, or
- It is likely to last for the rest of the life of the person affected.

24.4 A doctor's note would need to be properly evaluated by the School before a decision were made that a pupil was disabled and that reasonable adjustment needed to be made.

**APPENDIX A - SYMBOLS USED TO RECORD ATTENDANCE**

The symbols used in the registration process are as follows and taken from Working Together to Improve School Attendance.

## Attending the School

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|---|---|---|
| / | Present at the School (AM) | |
| / | Present at the School (PM) | |
| L | Late arrival before register is closed | Arrived at School after the register was Taken. |

## Attending a place other than the School

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|---|---|---|
| B | Attending any other approved educational activity (not K, V, P or W) | Attending a transition day at another school. |
| K | Attending education provision arranged by the local authority. | Rarely used at SCS. |
| P | Participating in an approved sporting activity | A pupil has left School early with School staff to attend an away fixture and has been registered by those staff. |
| V | Attending an educational visit or trip | A School residential trip with the pupil having been registered by staff. |
| W | Attending work experience | Not used at SCS. |

## Absent – Leave of Absence, Approved

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|---|---|---|
| C | Leave of absence for exceptional circumstance | Special family event, approved by the Headteacher. |

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|---|---|---|
| C1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of participating in a regulated performance or undertaking regulated employment abroad | Pre-agreed absence for a national-level performance or competition, e.g., a chess competition. |
| C2 | Leave of absence for a compulsory school-age pupil subject to a part-time timetable | A pupil who has been seriously unwell and has been away for a long time coming back in a phased return. |
| D | Dual registered at another school | A pupil is temporarily attending school in hospital or in a pupil referral unit. |
| J1 | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending an interview for employment or for admission to another educational institution | Attending assessment days, open days or tours of a future school. |
| M | Leave of absence for the purpose of attending a medical or dental appointment | Doctor's appointment |
| S | Leave of absence for the purpose of studying for a public examination | Not used at SCS |
| X | Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to attend school | Nursery aged child. |

## Absent – Other Authorised Reasons

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|---|---|---|
| E | Suspended or permanently excluded (where a pupil is not attending elsewhere) | If permanently excluded, E is give until the pupil is removed from the School Roll. |
| I | Illness (not medical or dental appointments) | Pupil is sufficiently unwell to be unable to attend School. |
| R | Religious observance. | E.g., Eid or Yom Kippur. |
| T | Parent travelling for occupational purposes | Applies to children who are classed as mobile children and have no fixed abode. |

## Absent – Unable to Attend School because of Unavoidable Cause

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Q | Unable to attend the School because of a lack of access arrangements | Not generally used at SCS, e.g., lack of local authority provision to provide transport to School where they have a legal responsibility to do so. |
| Y1 | Unable to attend due to transport normally provided (School/LA) not being available | Not used at SCS. |
| Y2 | Unable to attend due to widespread disruption to travel (local, national or international emergency) | E.g., tube strike where a pupil cannot reasonably get to School. |
| Y3 | Unable to attend due to part of the School premises being closed | The School is open but is restricting numbers due to only part of the premises being open. |
| Y4 | Unable to attend due to the whole school site being unexpectedly closed | Power cut. |
| Y5 | Unable to attend as pupil is in criminal justice detention | Police detention, awaiting trial or sentencing. |
| Y6 | Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law | Following NHS guidelines regarding vomiting or diarrhoea. |
| Y7 | Unable to attend because of any other unavoidable cause | Court attendance, bail conditions prevent a pupil coming to School. |

## Absent – Unauthorised Absence

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|------|-------------|----------------------------|
| G | Holiday not granted by the School | |
| N | No reason yet provided for absence | To be updated within no more than 5 school days after the session. |
| O | Absent in other or unknown circumstances | Absence relating to applications for Leave of Absence that have either not been approved or not been requested, including school refusal. This code is also used after five days instead of code N if the reason for absence is still unknown. |
| U | Arrived in School after registration closed, but before 9.45 am | Arrived at School after the register has been closed, which occurs at 9:15 am |

## Administrative codes (not collected for statistical purposes)

| Code | Explanation | Examples and further notes |
|------|-------------|----------------------------|
| Z | Prospective pupil not yet on the admission register | To enable schools to set up prospective pupils in advance of them arriving. |
| # | Planned whole school closure | Bank Holidays, Day of Play, half-day closure, etc. |