



# **St Paul's Cathedral School**

## **Attendance Policy**

### **Academic Year 2025-2026**

## AIMS & PRINCIPLES

*St Paul's Cathedral School is a Christian, co-educational community which holds to the values of love, justice, tolerance, respect, honesty, service and trust in its life and practice, to promote positive relationships throughout the school community and where the safety, welfare and emotional well-being of each child is of the utmost importance.*

*The school aims to instil a love of learning through a broad curriculum. It aims to give each pupil the opportunity to develop intellectually, socially, personally, physically, culturally and spiritually. All pupils are encouraged to work to the best of their ability and to achieve standards of excellence in all of their endeavours.*

*Through the corporate life of the school, and through good pastoral care, the school encourages the independence of the individual as well as mutual responsibility. It aims to make its pupils aware of the wider community, espouses the democratic process and encourages a close working relationship with parents and guardians.*

## **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

This policy applies to all pupils, including those in EYFS (Early Years Foundation Stage) and is designed to address the specific statutory obligations on the school to record attendance and absence.

The Head is responsible for ensuring that pupils attend the school, recording their attendance and ensuring that absences are followed up appropriately. Day to day responsibility for attendance matters is delegated to the Deputy Head, Caroline Heylen who is our Senior Attendance Champion (**SAC**) whose responsibilities are to set a clear vision for improving attendance in school, to establish and maintain effective systems for tackling absence and make sure the systems are followed by all staff and to regularly monitor and evaluate progress, including the efficacy of the school's strategies and processes.

Parents have a duty to ensure that, where their child is of compulsory school age, they receive an education and, if their child is registered as a pupil at a school, that they regularly attend school.

Local authorities must put in place arrangements to identify and safeguard children who are at risk of missing education. Increased absence can be a warning sign of increased safeguarding issues.

This policy is published on the school website and is available in hard copy on request. A copy of the policy is available for inspection from the school reception during the school day and this policy can be made available in large print and other accessible format if required.

### **I. Rationale**

To fulfil its duty of care, it is crucial that the school know where our pupils are. This applies whether the pupils are on site or being educated elsewhere.

We recognise the strong link between attainment, wellbeing and attendance and the important partnership between parents and the school in ensuring that pupils in our care achieve their potential, both socially and academically. The school is committed to working with children and their parents to achieve the highest level of attendance possible. In school attendance is subject to various education laws and this policy is written to meet the school's responsibilities under:

- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014;

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- National minimum standards for boarding schools (Department for Education (**DfE**), September 2022);
- EYFS statutory framework for group and school-based providers (DfE, September 2025);
- Education and Skills Act 2008;
- Children Act 1989
- Childcare Act 2006;
- The School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024;
- Equality Act 2010; and
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation (**UK GDPR**).

This policy also has regard to the following guidance and advice:

- 'Working together to improve school attendance: statutory guidance (DfE, August 2024);
- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, August 2024);
- Guidance for parents on school attendance (Office of the Children's Commissioner, July 2024);
- 'Keeping Children Safe in Education, (DfE, September 2025),
- 'Children Missing Education' (DfE, August 2024)
- 'Is my child too ill for school?' guidance (NHS, April 2024);
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools (DfE, February 2023);
- Support for pupils where a mental health issue is affecting attendance (DfE, February 2023);

The importance of attendance for pupils is promoted through the pastoral system, PSHE, Assemblies and Form times.

## **2. Following this policy, the school aims to:**

- Foster a climate where regular attendance and punctuality are valued by the whole school community.
- Promote high levels of punctuality.
- Reduce further the numbers of authorised absences.

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- Promote the support networks in place to help pupils to achieve excellent attendance and therefore achieve their potential.
- Act early to address patterns of absence and the school will work effectively and respectfully with pupils, their families and, where appropriate, local authorities to address them
- Respond to non-attendance and / or lateness proactively, firmly, consistently and with care, with appropriate reference to this policy, its safeguarding and behaviour policies and the school's term and conditions. The school will act in a proportionate and targeted way in response to data or intelligence and ensure intervention is regularly reviewed
- Implement robust systems to track and record attendance, reasons for absence and patterns at an individual level and by cohorts or groups in order to identify pupils at risk of non-attendance and those who are persistently absent and it will monitor and analyse this data regularly to facilitate early intervention to address issues.

### **3. To promote the above aims:**

- All parents/carers are made aware, by distribution of this policy when pupils join the school and ongoing, of their responsibility to send their children to school on time and to provide reasons for absence or persistent lateness.
- Pupils are made aware, through form times and assembly messaging, of what is expected of them.
- Electronic registers are taken twice daily at the beginning of each session by the Form Tutors or relevant teachers.
- Registers are accurate and personal details are kept up to date.
- Staff concerns about absence and/or punctuality are reported to the relevant Head of Year and or Deputy Head.
- Staff, where appropriate, share and update information.
- Those pupils causing concern are monitored and strategies developed.
- Negative issues affecting attendance or punctuality are addressed appropriately and support is put in place.
- Support is offered to pupils returning to school after extended periods of absence.
- Staff use the procedures for irregular attendance and punctuality consistently and fairly.

#### **4. Monitoring attendance**

The school will undertake regular data analysis to identify and provide additional support to pupils or pupil cohorts that need it, and to look at historic and emerging patterns across the school and develop strategies to address them. This analysis may include:

- monitoring and analysing weekly attendance patterns and trends and provide support in a targeted way to pupils and families;
- using this analysis to provide regular attendance reports to class teachers to facilitate discussions with pupils and to leaders (including the special educational needs coordinator and designated safeguarding lead);
- undertaking frequent individual level analysis to identify pupils who need support and focus staff efforts on developing targeting actions for those cases;
- conducting thorough analysis of half-termly, termly, and full year data to identify patterns and trends;
- benchmarking attendance data at whole school, year group and cohort level to identify areas of focus for improvement;
- devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data;
- monitoring the impact of school-wide attendance efforts, including any specific strategies implemented; and
- providing data and reports to the Proprietor to support its work

#### **5. Pupil responsibilities**

School attendance is important to pupil attainment, wellbeing and development. The school therefore has high expectations of pupils as to their attendance and has systems in place to reward good attendance and manage poor attendance. (From Autumn 2025 postcards will be sent to mark 100% attendance).

Pupils should be aware that:

- they are expected to be present in-person for the duration of each school day;
- they are expected to arrive on time and attend all timetabled lessons;
- they should not leave a lesson or the school site without permission or otherwise in accordance with School rules;

- they should engage with the school's arrangements for recording and managing attendance as set out in this policy;
- any unexplained absence will be followed up;
- persistent lateness or non-attendance will result in action being taken by the school. This may take the form of:
  - offers of support to seek to identify and address any barriers to attendance; communication with parents;
  - reporting to other agencies such as children's social care; and
  - sanctions against them or their Parents in line with the school's behaviour policies.

If pupils are having difficulties that might discourage or prevent them from attending school or specific lessons regularly, they may speak to any member of staff, although the school encourages them to speak to their Form Teacher in the first instance. Pupils are entitled to expect this information to be managed sensitively.

## **6 Additional needs**

The school recognises some pupils may find it harder than others to attend school, and will work with those pupils and parents to try to remove barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

The school will make reasonable adjustments where a pupil has a disability that puts them at a substantial disadvantage, in comparison with pupils without a disability, in relation to school attendance.

It will also work with parents, and where appropriate with the local authority, to develop specific support approaches for attendance for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities e.g. ensuring the provision outlined in a pupil's education, health and care plan is accessed.

Where a pupil has an education, health and care plan the school will communicate with the local authority where the pupil's attendance falls or the school become aware of barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.

Suitable strategies and support will also be considered for pupils with any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance.

Where barriers are outside of the school's control, the school will work with parents and pupils to identify alternative sources of support or consider, where appropriate, making a referral for early help.

The school will make a sickness return to the local authority if a pupil is recorded in the attendance register as absent using the national absence code I (unable to attend because of sickness) and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will have to miss 15 consecutive or cumulative school days or more for illness or the pupil's total number of school days missed during the current school year because of illness (whether consecutive or cumulative) will reach or exceed 15 school days.

## **7. Parent responsibilities**

Pupils must attend every day that the school is open, nevertheless the school recognises that there will be situations where a pupil's attendance may fall below the expected levels due to illness, family circumstances and other unforeseen circumstances. In these cases we will always endeavour to work with families to provide support for pupils and their families to understand what is expected of them and why attendance is important to their child's attainment, wellbeing, and wider development and provide clarity on the short and long term consequences of poor attendance. The Form Teacher is the primary point of contact for parents and pupils in supporting attendance. If a child misses school it may be due to an issue school and parents are unaware of and it is important to identify the issue and provide early intervention. The school has a wide range of support systems in place within the school's pastoral care system. These include support from teachers, Heads of Year, Medical Team, Learning Support, the School Chaplain, the School Counsellor and the Safeguarding Team. All will liaise with key staff and parents in supporting pupils who may be struggling.

## **8. Training**

The school ensures that regular guidance and training on attendance is arranged on induction and at regular intervals thereafter so that staff and volunteers understand what is expected of them by this policy and have the necessary knowledge and skills to carry out their roles. As a minimum this will include all staff understanding:

- the importance of good attendance and that absence is almost always a symptom of wider circumstances; and



- the school's strategies and procedures for tracking, following up and improving attendance.

Dedicated attendance training is provided to any member of staff with a specified attendance function in their role, including administrative, pastoral or family support staff and senior leaders. This should include:

- the law and requirements of schools including on the keeping of registers;
- the process for working with other partners to provide more intensive support to pupils who need it;
- the necessary skills to interpret and analyse attendance data; and
- any additional training that would be beneficial to support pupils and pupil cohorts overcome commonly seen barriers to attendance.

The School maintains written records of all staff training.

## **9. Procedures**

- The school monitors, records and shares data about pupil attendance as part of its duty to safeguard and protect pupils and promote attendance. The school accurately completes admission and attendance registers as required by law. The admission and attendance registers must be kept electronically and retained by the school the relevant time period as stated by law.
- The coding for any absences will be in accordance with the statutory guidance 'Working together to improve school attendance (August 2024)' provided by the Department of Education.
- Form Teachers or appropriate subject teachers will only mark as present pupils who are in the room at registration, both morning and afternoon.
- If a pupil is absent when the register started being taken but arrives before the register is closed they will be recorded as a late arrival (code L).
- If a pupil arrives after the register has closed but before the end of the session without a satisfactory explanation, e.g. because of an unavoidable cause, then this will be recorded as an unauthorised absence (code U) and the reasons given / not given will be recorded.
- The School Office will amend the register to record the presence of those who have been attending an early school activity such as music.

- Parents are asked to notify the School Office when their child is absent, preferably before 8.15am. This can be by phone 0207 248 5156 or email [office@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:office@spcs.london.sch.uk)
- Any absences which have not been reported to the School Office before 9.15am, will be checked by the school office to see if the student is in school. If they are not, the School Office will ring home to find out the reason for absence. It is therefore important that the school is made aware of any changes to parents' contact details.
- The School Office will alert the relevant pastoral staff, to include the Designated Safeguarding Lead and Form Teacher, if a child is unaccounted for, i.e. because the parents cannot be contacted. Relevant staff will follow the school's Safeguarding Policy and all related policies and procedures for children who go missing in education.
- Chorister parents are asked to contact the resident team on the duty phone – 07708 048244 to notify them of any absence.
- While daily registration follow up arrangements pertain to day pupils, the principles apply to boarders also.
- Any pupil arriving after 8.50am must register with the School Office.

### Registration Times

| <b>Morning Registration</b> | <b>Afternoon Registration</b> |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Reception – Year 2          | Reception – Year 2            |
| 08.30                       | 12.30                         |
| Year 3                      | Year 3                        |
| 08.40                       | 12.50                         |
| Year 4 - 5                  | Year 4 - 5                    |
| 08.40                       | 13.10                         |
| Year 6                      | Year 6                        |
| 08.40                       | 13.30                         |
| Year 7 – 8                  | Year 7 – 8                    |
| 08.40                       | 13.50                         |

Morning registration closes for all pupils at 09.00. Afternoon registration closes 20 minutes after the relevant start times above.

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## **10. Absence**

### **10.1 Expectations**

The Deputy Head Pastoral meets with the City of London Education Welfare Office (EWO) once every half term to monitor attendance. Any pupil with an attendance of 90% and below will be considered a concern as a persistently absent pupil. At this point, the Deputy Head will investigate and may meet with parents and, if necessary, put in place extra support, in addition to any pastoral measures already in place. If deemed appropriate, the school may liaise, in collaboration with the parents, with relevant external services, such as the pupil's GP and/or Local Authority Early Help services.

Our expectations for attendance are:

- 97-100% Expected
- 95-97% Emerging cause for concern
- Below 95% but above 90% A cause for concern
- Below 90% A serious cause for concern

In line with our expectations for attendance the following table outlines our school procedures. The information below is discretionary and based on individual pupil circumstances.

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Attendance below 97% but above 95% | Emerging cause for concern. Deputy Head to review attendance with Head of Year and Medical Team to determine if any cause for concern and if necessary ask Form Teacher to have a discussion with pupil or parent for younger pupils.  |
| Attendance below 95% but above 90% | Cause for concern. Deputy Head to review attendance with Head of Year and Medical Team and to review reasons given for absence. Discussion with pupil and Form Teacher and if necessary email/phone call home from Form Teacher/Head of Year.  |
| Attendance below 90%               | Persistent Absence. Serious Cause for Concern.<br>All attendance below 90% is reviewed by Deputy Head with City of London EWO. Where clear and acceptable reasons for absence are not established an email home from Head of Year and meeting with parents organised with a support plan |

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
|                      | put in place. A rationale will be recorded by the DSL for any action taken based on attendance figures.                        |
| Attendance below 85% | In consultation with EWO Deputy Head/DSL and Head of Year to meet with parents and review or instigate support plan for pupil. |
| Attendance below 75% | Ongoing intervention in consultation with EWO.   |
| Attendance below 50% | Severe absence. School, parents and local authority to agree a join approach for additional support.                           |

## **10.2 Authorised and Unauthorised absences**

The Heads of Year will monitor attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis, any concerns being raised with the Deputy Head.

If appropriate, staff should follow the school's Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy and all related policies and procedures for children who go missing from education, particularly on repeat occasions. Wherever there is a suspicion of possible abuse, neglect or radicalisation, staff will inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL). Staff should be particularly aware of the needs of SEN and disabled pupils as they can be impacted by matters such as bullying and child on child abuse without outwardly showing any signs. Concerns will also be raised for those pupils who are persistently absent and severely absent from school, including persistent absences for part of the school day.

### **Authorised Absence**

Requests for authorised leaves of absence during the school day will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and will only be permitted if made in writing, addressed to the Head. If a leave of absence is granted, it is for the Head to determine the length of time the pupil is to be away from school. It will be recorded as an authorised absence.

- The Head may authorise absence if:
  - the leave of absence is made for religious reasons and the day concerned is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong.

- Excessive amounts of authorised absence can be damaging to the pupil's learning and wellbeing and the school will therefore only authorise absence sparingly and after careful consideration.

### **Unauthorised Absence**

Unauthorised absence is used where prior permission for absence has not been given and where the school is not satisfied with the explanation given or where no explanation has been given. Examples of where absence will not be authorised include:

- no explanation is offered by the parent/carer;
- the explanation offered is unsatisfactory;
- family holidays which are taken without the school's prior consent or knowledge and/or are in excess of any time agreed with the school;
- lateness when the child arrives after the register has closed and fails to offer a satisfactory explanation;
- when the school does not agree that absence should be authorised;
- where no supporting documentation can be provided when it has been reasonably requested and would have been reasonable to do so; or
- where the School has reason to suspect that the reason for absence is not genuine.

Where absence is not authorised, parents will be informed in writing by the Deputy Head or Head, and where appropriate invited to discuss the circumstances to avoid repetition. Repeated unauthorised absences will likely result in breach of the contractual Terms and Conditions agreed between the school and the parent and could put a child's place at the school at risk.

### **10.3 Frequent Absence and Lateness**

A pupil becomes persistently absent when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year for whatever reason. Absence at this level can have a considerable impact to any child's education and wellbeing.

- **Lateness** – Punctuality is equally important. Form times from 8.40-9.00am, and assemblies from 9.00 – 9.20am, are an essential time for the pupils to bond with their peer group, receive important messages for the day and celebrate with the

school. It is also a time for the pupils to make sure they are organised and set up for their day. Punctuality is also important at the end of the school day, which finishes at 3.25pm for Reception, 3.30pm for Year 1, 3.35pm for year 2 and 3.40pm for years 3 – 8.

Frequent or persistent lateness will be monitored by the school office, Form Teachers and the Deputy Head/DSL. The Deputy Head/DSL and or Form Teacher will speak to the pupil and, if appropriate and necessary, the parents

- **Continuing absence** - should a pupil be absent for more than one day without parents contacting the school, this will be treated as a matter of concern with potential safeguarding issues.
- **Ten Days' Absence** – Following the DfE 'Working together to improve school attendance' statutory guidance, the school will contact the local authority if any pupil of compulsory school age fails to attend school regularly or has been absent for a continuous period of ten school days where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised (G, N, O and/or U).
- **Frequent Absence** – where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absence, the Deputy Head, will speak to the pupil and, if appropriate, the parents. The school may liaise, wherever possible in collaboration with the parents, with external services or professionals, such as the pupil's GP and Local Authority Early Help services. The school has a duty of care to all of its pupils and absence from school may be an indicator that they may be in need of additional support. Such absences could indicate underlying issues, such as bullying, stress and anxiety of work and exams, friendship issues etc., which must be addressed.

## **11. The Role of the Form Teacher**

Form Teachers are the first point of contact for parents and pupils and have a key role to play in supporting members of their form, along with the relevant Head of Year, in all matters relating to attendance and punctuality.

Pupils who have been absent for a period of time will be supported by their Form Teacher and Head of Year to catch up on work. If, whilst absent, it is deemed appropriate for a pupil to complete work, the Form Teacher will coordinate this and arrange for work to be sent

home, in consultation with the Deputy Head Academic, who will advise on and oversee any necessary support required for a pupil to catch up on missed work.

Once the pupil returns their Form Teacher will meet with them and help draw up a plan to catch up on any work as required.

Form Teachers will monitor and support pupils in their forms who are persistently late by setting targets and helping them to meet them. The Head of Year should be kept informed throughout via the weekly Year Group Meetings.

## **12. Key Contacts**

The school office: [office@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:office@spcs.london.sch.uk) Tel: 0207 248 5156 or 0207 651 0281

The Deputy Head & SAC, Caroline Heylen: [cheylen@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:cheylen@spcs.london.sch.uk) Tel: 020 7651 0283

Heads of Year:

Madeleine Smyth [msmyth@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:msmyth@spcs.london.sch.uk) Tel: 0207 248 5156 (Head of Pre-Prep)

Kate Moir/Amy Waterhouse [kmoir@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:kmoir@spcs.london.sch.uk) [awaterhouse@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:awaterhouse@spcs.london.sch.uk)  
Tel: 0207 248 5156 (Head of Years 3 and 4)

Julie Schindler [jschindler@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:jschindler@spcs.london.sch.uk) Tel: 0207 248 5156 (Head of Years 5 and 6)

Aoife Kennedy [akennedy@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:akennedy@spcs.london.sch.uk) Tel: 0207 248 5156 (Head of Years 7 and 8)

The Form Teachers: [name@spcs.london.sch.uk](mailto:name@spcs.london.sch.uk) Tel: 020 7248 5156

## **13. Information sharing & Publication of Attendance information**

The school has a legal duty to promote attendance and is legally required to share information from the registers with the local authority which, as a minimum, includes:

- New pupil and deletion returns;
- Attendance returns; and
- Sickness returns. ..

Parents are sent information concerning their child's attendance at the end of each reporting period.

The school is often asked to disclose information on attendance and punctuality when writing references for pupils.

The law allows local authority officers access to the attendance and admission registers of all types of schools to carry out their functions under the Education Acts to support joint working between schools and local authorities. Trends in attendance are regularly monitored and reviewed by the City of London Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). The SAC keeps Governors updated about attendance trends as required and at least annually via the Safeguarding Report to Governors and discusses any concerns over attendance figures with the lead Governor for Safeguarding as required and as minimum at their termly meeting.

#### **14. Record keeping and confidentiality**

All records created in accordance with this policy are managed in accordance with the School's policies that apply to the retention and destruction of records.

The information created in connection with this policy may contain personal data. The School's use of this personal data will be in accordance with data protection law. The School has published privacy notices on its website which explain how the School will use personal data.

#### **15. Other Relevant Policies**

- Missing Child Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Good Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding (Child Protection) Policy

#### **16. Conclusion**

We want every pupil to make the very best of their St Paul's Cathedral School experience and work to ensure that every lesson counts. Every school day is valuable to every child, socially and academically. Absences are inevitably disruptive. We expect our parents to support us in our aim to keep authorised absence to a minimum by:

- Ensuring their children attend the school during term time when they are medically fit to do so.
- Avoiding unnecessary absence wherever possible.
- Contacting either their Form Teacher or the Deputy Head if they have any questions about attendance or are aware of any underlying issues relating to attendance.



- Restricting holidays and special family occasions to the published calendar dates.