



Attendance Policy

Academic Year 2026-2027

This policy is published on the School website, is available in hard copy on request and can be supplied in an accessible format.

I. Aims and 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. The safety, welfare and emotional wellbeing of every child are of the utmost importance.

The School recognises the strong relationship between attendance, safeguarding, wellbeing, belonging and achievement. Good attendance begins with a safe, supportive and engaging environment. The School works respectfully with pupils, parents, the relevant local authority and other professionals to understand and remove barriers to attendance.

- promote a culture in which attendance and punctuality support safeguarding, wellbeing, belonging and achievement
- set clear and appropriately ambitious expectations for every pupil
- identify emerging patterns and barriers at the earliest opportunity
- listen to pupils and parents and agree effective support
- make reasonable adjustments and support pupils affected by SEND, disability, physical or mental ill health, caring responsibilities or other vulnerabilities
- maintain accurate admission and attendance registers and fulfil information-sharing and return requirements
- respond promptly where absence may indicate a safeguarding concern
- monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of attendance arrangements

2. Scope and Statutory Framework

This policy applies to every registered pupil, regardless of age, including EYFS pupils and boarders. It addresses the School's duties as an independent school to maintain admission and attendance registers, follow up absence and work with families and public authorities.

The policy has regard to:

- Education Act 1996; Children Act 1989; Childcare Act 2006; Education and Skills Act 2008
- Equality Act 2010
- Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014
- Data Protection Act 2018 and UK General Data Protection Regulation
- School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024
- Working Together to Improve School Attendance and Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance, July 2026
- Keeping Children Safe in Education 2026, effective 1 September 2026
- Children Missing Education statutory guidance, September 2025
- Early Years Foundation Stage statutory framework effective 1 September 2026
- National Minimum Standards for Boarding Schools
- Supporting Pupils at School with Medical Conditions; Arranging Education for Children Who Cannot Attend School Because of Health Needs; Mental Health Issues Affecting a Pupil's Attendance; and Providing Remote Education

3. Leadership and Responsibilities

The Head is accountable for ensuring that statutory attendance responsibilities are fulfilled. Day-to-day strategic responsibility is delegated to Catherine Thomas, Senior Deputy Head and Senior Attendance Champion (SAC).

The SAC will:

- set a clear vision for improving and maintaining attendance
- establish effective systems for recording, following up and supporting attendance and ensure staff follow them
- regularly monitor and evaluate attendance data, patterns, strategies and processes
- ensure appropriate training and communication
- coordinate work with the DSL, SENCO, pastoral leaders, medical team and local authority
- report patterns, emerging concerns and effectiveness to the Governing Body at least annually and more frequently where necessary

Form Teachers are the first point of contact for pupils and parents. They monitor attendance and punctuality, listen to pupils, support return after absence and keep the Head of Year informed. Heads of Year monitor patterns and escalate emerging concerns to the SAC. All staff must complete registers accurately and promptly and report concerns.

Parents are expected to ensure attendance and punctuality, notify the School promptly of absence, provide accurate reasons, keep contacts up to date, avoid unnecessary absence and engage with support. Pupils are expected, in an age-appropriate manner, to attend required sessions, arrive punctually and speak to a trusted adult about barriers.

4. Whole-School Attendance Culture and Support

The School promotes attendance through pastoral care, curriculum, assemblies, form periods, communication with families and consistent staff practice. Recognition may focus sensitively on improvement, engagement, resilience and commitment; the School will not rely on rewards for 100% attendance that could disadvantage pupils with illness or disability.

Where concerns arise, the School will first seek to understand circumstances and barriers. Support may include pastoral or mentoring help, reasonable adjustments, SEND provision, support for physical or mental health, action in relation to bullying or relationships, early help, health or specialist services, and joint work with the local authority's attendance support team.

A pupil will not be sanctioned solely for absence caused by illness, disability, unmet need or circumstances outside the pupil's control. Deliberate truancy or leaving the site without permission may be addressed under the Good Behaviour Policy after safeguarding and additional-needs factors have been considered.

5. Monitoring and Use of Data

- monitor weekly patterns and provide targeted support
- provide appropriate information to Form Teachers, pastoral leaders, the SENCO and DSL
- undertake individual-level analysis to identify pupils requiring support
- analyse half-termly, termly and full-year patterns
- benchmark whole-school, year-group and cohort data where reliable comparisons are available
- identify repeated or emerging patterns, including absence from individual sessions
- evaluate strategies and adjust them where they are not effective

- provide proportionate reports to the Governing Body

Analysis will be used to support pupils and improve practice. It will be handled lawfully, sensitively and without over-interpreting small cohorts or treating an attendance percentage as the sole basis for action.

6. Additional Needs, Illness and Health

The School recognises that some pupils find attendance harder than others. It will build trusting relationships, work with parents and relevant professionals, make reasonable adjustments and seek to secure provision in an Education, Health and Care Plan. Where attendance barriers relate to an EHCP, the School will communicate with the local authority.

The School will not routinely require medical evidence. It may request proportionate evidence where there is genuine and reasonable doubt about the reason, evidence is needed to identify support, or absence is prolonged or recurring.

The School will make a sickness return to the local authority where a pupil is recorded using Code I and there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will miss, or has missed, 15 school days, consecutively or cumulatively, because of illness during the current school year.

7. Training

Attendance guidance and training are included in induction and refreshed at appropriate intervals. All staff must understand the importance of attendance, the relationship between absence and wider circumstances, and the School's procedures for registration, follow-up and support.

Staff with a specified attendance role receive dedicated training covering the law, register requirements, multi-agency support, analysis of data and barriers commonly experienced by pupils. The School maintains written records of attendance training.

8. Admission and Attendance Registers

8.1 Admission register

The School maintains the admission and attendance registers electronically in accordance with the School Attendance (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2024. Every pupil, regardless of age, is entered on the admission register. A pupil's name is deleted only where a statutory ground applies and all associated requirements have been met.

8.2 Attendance sessions and closure

The attendance register is taken for all registered pupils at 08:30 and 13:40. The morning register closes at 08:50 and the afternoon register closes at 14:00. Pupils on a temporary part-time timetable remain on the register and the appropriate national code is recorded for every session.

Any pupil arriving after 08:50 must enter through the School Office. Code L is used for arrival after registration begins but before the register closes. After closure, the appropriate absence code is used; Code U is used where the pupil arrives after closure and no authorised absence code applies.

8.3 Accurate coding and approved off-site activity

An appropriate national attendance or absence code is entered for every required entry. Physical presence is recorded only after it has been verified. Attendance at early activities, including music rehearsals, must be confirmed to the School Office by the supervising member of staff.

An approved educational activity away from School is recorded as attending only where it is educational, approved by the School, appropriately supervised and the pupil's attendance has been confirmed. The School will have arrangements for the provider or supervising adult to report absence promptly. An unexpected or unexplained absence from an off-site activity is followed up immediately.

Remote education, schoolwork completed at home or an online lesson does not by itself mean that a pupil is physically present at School or attending an approved educational activity. The appropriate absence code will be used unless the statutory conditions for another code are met.

8.4 Unexplained absence and amendments

Code N may be used temporarily where the reason has not been established. The School will establish the reason and replace Code N as soon as possible and no later than five school days after the session. If no reason can be established within that period, Code O will be used.

Each register entry is preserved for six years from the date it was made. An amendment must retain the original and amended entries, reason, date and name of the person making the amendment. Entries are amended only for a legitimate correction or completion.

9. Day-to-Day Absence Procedure

Parents must notify the School Office as soon as possible and preferably before 08:15 on the first day of unexpected absence, by telephone on 020 7248 5156 or email to office@spcs.london.sch.uk. Parents must continue to update the School if absence continues. Chorister parents must also notify the resident team on 07708 048244.

If absence has not been reported by 09:15, the School Office will check whether the pupil is on site and contact parents. If the pupil remains unaccounted for or a parent cannot be contacted, the Office will alert the relevant pastoral staff and DSL or DDSL without delay. Vulnerability, known safeguarding concerns, circumstances and patterns will inform whether children's social care or police contact is required.

Parents must provide current contact information and, wherever reasonably practicable, more than one emergency contact. For boarders, statutory registration is supplemented by boarding roll-call and whereabouts procedures.

10. Attendance Thresholds and Graduated Response

A pupil is persistently absent when they miss 10% or more of possible sessions across the school year, for any reason. Severe absence is absence of 50% or more. The School uses additional internal indicators to identify concerns earlier, but percentages do not replace professional judgement or consideration of individual circumstances.

Indicator	School response
Below 97% but at least 95%	SAC reviews with pastoral and medical staff; discussion with pupil or parent where appropriate.
Below 95% but at least 90%	Review reasons and barriers; pupil and family contact; agree proportionate support.
Below 90%	Persistent absence. SAC reviews with City of London EWO; support plan and recorded rationale for action.
Below 85%	SAC/DSL and Head of Year review or initiate support with the EWO and parents.
Below 75%	Ongoing, intensified intervention in consultation with the relevant local authority.
50% absence or more	Severe absence. School, parents and the relevant local authority work jointly to agree intensive support.

Actions are discretionary, graduated and based on circumstances, barriers, safeguarding, reasonable adjustments and the impact of previous support. The Deputy Head Pastoral meets the City of London Education Welfare Officer once each half term to monitor attendance.

11. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

11.1 Leave of absence

Except in an emergency or where another statutory code applies, leave must be requested in writing and in advance by a parent with whom the pupil normally lives and addressed to the Head. Each application is considered individually. Where leave is granted, the Head determines the period and the appropriate national code.

A holiday, leisure activity or recreation during term time will not normally constitute an exceptional circumstance. Qualifying circumstances may include regulated performance or employment, a medical or dental appointment, an admission or employment interview, study leave where applicable, a temporary part-time timetable, or another exceptional circumstance considered individually.

11.2 Religious observance

Code R is used for absence on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parent belongs. Additional requested days require separate consideration as leave of absence.

11.3 Unauthorised absence

Absence is unauthorised where no satisfactory reason is established, a reason does not meet an authorised code, leave is taken without permission, absence continues beyond granted leave, a pupil arrives after closure without an authorised reason, or the School reasonably concludes that an explanation is not genuine. Parents will be informed and the School will seek to understand and prevent further absence.

12. Temporary Part-Time Timetables

A part-time timetable is used only in exceptional circumstances, where it is in the pupil's best interests and as part of a plan to return to full-time education. It must not be used to manage behaviour or as an informal exclusion.

The arrangement must be agreed with parents and, where appropriate, the pupil and relevant professionals. It will have a clear purpose, specified sessions, support arrangements, safeguarding and supervision arrangements, a review schedule and an intended end date. The School will review it regularly and work towards a return to full-time attendance as soon as appropriate.

The pupil remains on the admission register. For sessions the pupil is not expected to attend under the agreed timetable, the national code applicable under the 2024 Regulations will be used. Where a pupil has an EHCP, is looked after, has a social worker or is subject to other statutory involvement, the School will consult or notify the relevant authority as required.

13. Children Absent from Education and Safeguarding

Repeated, prolonged or unexpected absence, including absence from part of the school day, may indicate neglect, abuse, exploitation, radicalisation, mental ill health, bullying or another safeguarding concern. Staff must report concerns to the DSL or DDSL and follow the Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

A pupil who remains registered but absent is not solely for that reason a child missing education. If enquiries indicate that a pupil may no longer be attending and their whereabouts or education are unclear, the School will notify the home local authority and support joint reasonable enquiries. The pupil will not be deleted from the admission register until a statutory ground is fully met.

Where a pupil of compulsory school age has been continuously absent for ten school days and the absence is recorded using one or more of Codes G, N, O or U, the School will make the required attendance return to the relevant local authority. Continuing absence without parental contact will be treated as a safeguarding concern and escalated according to risk.

14. Attendance Support and Legal Intervention

Where a pattern emerges, the School will meet the pupil and parents to understand barriers, agree actions, review support and intensify it where absence continues. Where voluntary support has not succeeded or has not been engaged with, the School will work with the relevant local authority to consider formalised support or statutory intervention.

Depending on the circumstances, this may include an attendance contract, education supervision order, children's social care involvement or prosecution under the Education Act 1996. The National Framework for Penalty Notices and Notices to Improve does not apply to independent schools, and the School will not issue penalty notices. The relevant local authority may consider other lawful interventions.

Contractual action will not be automatic. Before considering it, the School will seek to understand the absence, offer appropriate support, consider safeguarding and equality duties, make required reasonable adjustments, consider the pupil's circumstances and best interests, liaise with the local authority where appropriate and ensure that any deletion complies with the 2024 Regulations.

15. Statutory Returns and Information Sharing

- New pupil returns: where required, within five days of adding a pupil outside a standard transition point.

- Deletion returns: when a pupil is deleted from the admission register, except where a statutory exception applies.
- Attendance returns: required information about compulsory-school-age pupils who fail to attend regularly or have ten continuous school days recorded with Codes G, N, O or U, provided at the frequency agreed with the local authority and at least monthly.
- Sickness returns: where the conditions in section 6 are met.

Where a pupil lives in another local-authority area, the School will notify and work with the home authority where required. Authorised local-authority officers may access registers and take lawful extracts. The daily attendance data-sharing requirement for state-funded schools does not apply to this independent school.

Information is shared where required by law or where necessary and proportionate to safeguard a pupil, understand barriers or secure support. Data protection law does not prevent proportionate safeguarding information sharing. Records are managed under the School's retention and destruction policies and privacy notices.

16. Key Contacts

- School Office: office@spcs.london.sch.uk | 020 7248 5156 or 020 7651 0281
- Catherine Thomas, Senior Deputy Head and SAC: cthomas@spcs.london.sch.uk | 020 7651 0283
- Kim Thomas, Head of Pre-Prep: kthomas@spcs.london.sch.uk | 020 7248 5156
- Julie Schindler, Head of Years 3-6: jschindler@spcs.london.sch.uk | 020 7248 5156
- Dan Hall, Head of Years 7-8: dhall@spcs.london.sch.uk | 020 7248 5156
- Form Teachers: through the School's usual parent communication system

17. Related Policies

- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Missing Pupil Policy
- Good Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- SEND Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Data Protection and Records Retention policies

18. Review and Approval

The Governing Body reviews this policy at least annually. The SAC will recommend earlier amendment where legislation, statutory guidance, School arrangements or identified practice issues require it.

Document Change Record

Version / date	Area	Change
1.1 September 2026	Policy control and structure	Added approval controls, streamlined duplication and clarified responsibilities.
1.1 September 2026	Off-site and remote education	Clarified verification, provider absence reporting and that remote learning does not itself count as physical attendance.
1.1 September 2026	Part-time timetables	Added exceptional-use test, pupil best interests, prohibition on informal exclusion, review and end-date requirements.
1.1 September 2026	Thresholds and support	Distinguished statutory persistent and severe absence from internal early-warning indicators and reinforced individual judgement.
1.1 September 2026	Safeguarding and returns	Clarified ten-day return, sickness return, CME distinction, home local authority and independent-school data/penalty notice position.

Policy Area	Staff
Author	Senior Deputy Head
Senior Team Lead	Senior Deputy Head
Governing Body Committee	Curriculum and Standards
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