

## **Attendance Policy**

This policy is developed from DCC's Education Welfare Service model attendance policy.

### **Philosophy**

St Luke's Science and Sports College is committed to providing a full and efficient educational experience for all students. We believe that if students are to benefit from education, good attendance is crucial. As a college we do all that we can to ensure maximum attendance for all students. Any problems that prevent full attendance will be identified and addressed as speedily as possible.

It is the policy of our college to celebrate achievement. Attendance is a critical factor to a productive and successful school career. Our College will actively promote and encourage 100 per cent attendance for all out students.

Our College will give a high priority to conveying to parents and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents have a vital role to play and that there is a need to establish strong home links and communication systems that can be utilised whenever there is concern about attendance.

If there are problems which affect students' attendance we will investigate, identify and strive in partnership with parents, carers and students to resolve those problems as quickly and efficiently as possible. We will adopt a clearly focused approach aimed at returning the students to full attendance at all times.

### **Objectives**

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence
- To acknowledge and reward a successful record of attendance
- To ensure a consistent approach throughout the college
- To establish a good pattern for later life
- To limit the negative effects of poor attendance on attainment.
- To safeguard students during the school day.

### **Statutory Duty of Schools**

The Education Act 1996 requires parents or carers to ensure that their children receive efficient full time education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

Schools are responsible for recording pupil attendance twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. An

entry must be made in the attendance register for all pupils of compulsory school age who are on the school's admission roll.

## **Recording Absence Figures**

Each year every school is required to submit to the DCFS details of the level of absence within their school. Schools are required to inform how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absence, and persistent absence.

## **Principles**

Parents are legally responsible for ensuring that a child of compulsory school age attends school regularly.

We will work towards ensuring that all students feel supported and valued. We will send a clear message that if students are absent, she/he will be missed. We will consult with all members of the college community and the Education Welfare Service in developing and maintaining the whole school attendance policy.

We will encourage parents/carers to be actively involved in promoting their child's attendance. We will ensure that all staff are aware of the requirements of the registration process and that they received training on registration Regulations and the law relating to attendance.

Attendance will be an important feature of the college improvement plan.

Consistent and vigorous monitoring and evaluation procedures will be in place.

## **Procedures:**

1. The college will ensure that each student is registered accurately and efficiently. Using an electronic registration system. The electronic registration system will enable the staff to track attendance to fulfil the statutory requirements and will, in addition, facilitate the tracking of pupil attendance through the day and allow us to monitor punctuality.
2. A full attendance (over 95%) is expected from every student unless this is unavoidable because of ill health. If a student is absent without explanation when the register is called, school staff will contact the parents/carers the same day wherever possible. This declared policy of first day contact will make it clear to students and parents that absence is a matter of concern and will be followed up. The college will contact parents when reasons for absence are unknown or unauthorised and follow up with the Education Welfare Service as necessary.

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3. Non attendance at college will be swiftly followed up by the Attendance Officer with the support of the Tutor, Head of House and SLT Line Manager for attendance, and if necessary by the Education Welfare Officer.
4. Lateness to College for AM and PM sessions will be recorded. If a student is late 3 times an after school detention will be issued and parents notified. If a student accumulates over 30 minutes late in a week for AM/PM lesson registration an after school detention will be issued and parents notified.
5. Students with poor attendance records at middle school will be identified through our transition programme before they transfer so that ways may be devised to support them on entry to secondary school.
6. A Link governor will oversee attendance issues and college staff will monitor and report on attendance as part of the Link Governor's annual review cycle.
7. Good attendance will be recognised through assemblies and celebrated in Achievement Awards Assemblies and through rewards and prizes, throughout the year.
8. Attendance and absence will be reported on in each student's full report to Parents, termly with Target Monitoring Grades and in the college profile to parents. Unauthorised absence and persistent absence will be a particular focus.
9. Students returning from an absence of more than two days will be monitored and supported to ensure that missed work is 'caught up'. (see appendix 3)

### **Student Action:**

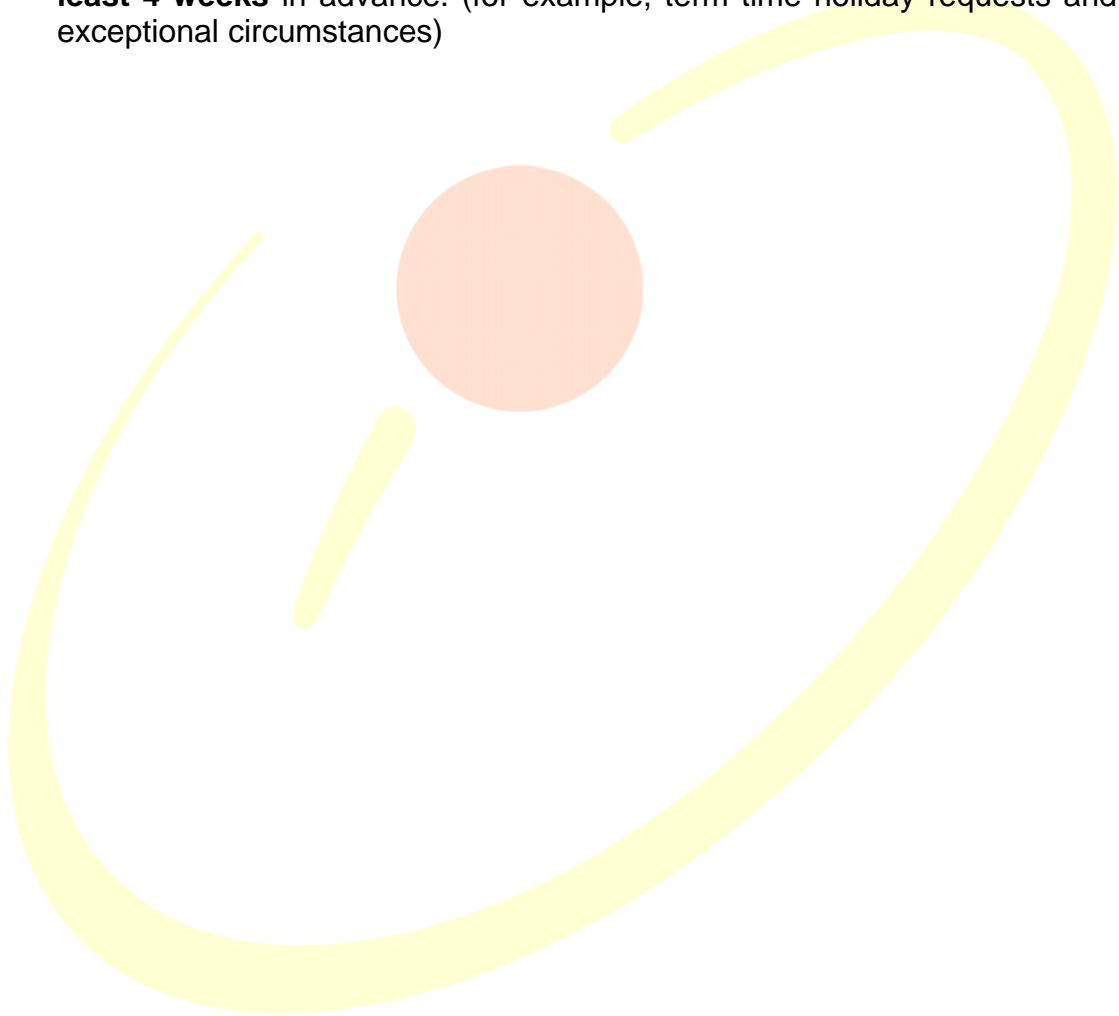
1. Students will be encouraged to attend college regularly and on time.
2. Students will be encouraged to inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.

### **Parent or Carers Action:**

1. Each parent/carers must accept the importance of a good standard of attendance and their vital role in achieving this goal. Expectations for attendance will be published regularly through newsletters, on the web site and in the Home-School Agreement.
2. DCFS guidelines ask parents to inform the college on the first day of non-attendance, and to ring in on everyday of absence thereafter until the student returns to College.

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3. When a student returns to college after an absence parents must supply a letter to explain the reason and length of absence. Notes should be returned to the Attendance Officer. Staff will be vigilant in noting both patterns of absence and warning signals that all is not well for a particular student and work with parents and other internal staff and agencies to seek to resolve problems.
4. Parents will be encouraged to inform staff if there is a problem that may lead to absences.
5. Parents will be expected to discuss planned absences with the college **at least 4 weeks** in advance. (for example, term time holiday requests and exceptional circumstances)



## Holidays In Term Time

Guidance from the DCFS discourages holidays in term time. The college will decide whether or not to approve a holiday during term time according to criteria based on attendance and college records.

Except in exceptional circumstances, absence requests will not be authorised for:

Years 10 and 11

Any student during any exam period or for one week prior to exams

The first 2 weeks of the school year

The first week of any term

Requests for holidays in years 7, 8, 9 will be assessed on a case by case basis (according to the college criteria) and will only be allowed in exceptional circumstances and where attendance is over 90%

If a student is taken on holiday during term time and the absence has not been authorised by the college a penalty notice may be considered appropriate. In such a case each parent will receive a separate penalty notice for each child taken out of college. Should a parent fail to pay any penalty notice issued then the evidence provided by the college will be the only information laid before the court.

### General Criteria for the issuing of a Penalty Notice

A Penalty Notice will only be issued to parents if the student has at least ten half-day unauthorised absences recorded against their name within the previous six months. The ten unauthorised absences will include the absences to be included within the Penalty Notice. Whenever practicable, the issue of a Penalty Notice will be preceded by the despatch, by post, of a formal warning letter to parents. Only one formal letter will be sent to a parent in any twelve month period. The warning letter will:

- State the record of unauthorised absences which gives rise to the formal warning.
- Notify the parent that a Penalty Notice will be issued unless the following condition is met:
- State that the student should record no unauthorised absences during the fifteen day of the college period commencing those days following the despatch of the formal warning letter.

### Procedure for issuing Penalty Notices

Following the implementation of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 it is possible that certain cases of unauthorised absence can be dealt with by way

of a Penalty Notice. Penalty Notices will require the parent of a child of compulsory school age, whose attendance has been unsatisfactory to pay a fine, currently £50.00 if paid within 28 days or £100.00 if paid within 42 days.

1. In Devon, Penalty Notices will be issued by the Education Welfare Service. The service will ensure that the issuing of notices is closely monitored and that recipients pay the relevant fine. Where the penalty is not paid within the appropriate period, the Principal Education Welfare Officer will instigate action through the courts as required by legislation.
2. The Education Welfare Service will receive requests to issue Penalty Notices from school and will action the requests providing the circumstances of a case meet the criteria for the issue of a Penalty Notice specified in the Code of Conduct for Devon and that all necessary information is provided to establish that an offence under Section 444(1) Education Act 1996, has been committed.

3. Police Powers:

Under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, the police now have powers to remove truants found in public places and return them either to their schools or a place designated by the Local Education Authority. When students are identified as truants in the course of a truancy patrol; enquiries will be undertaken with the school and the issue of a Penalty Notice may be considered appropriate.

### Fast Track to Prosecution

The fast-track to prosecution framework promotes early intervention and aims to ensure that appropriate action is taken to tackle non-attendance at school as soon as problems become apparent.

The aim of Fast-track is to ensure that the school and EWS deal with attendance cases quickly and in the most effective way to get a student back into school. Fast-track involves engaging the parent(s)/carer(s) specifying what improvements need to be made over a fixed time frame (usually 12 weeks).

Parents and carers have the responsibility for ensuring that their child attends school regularly. Where a parent fails in this responsibility and no improvement is brought about within the specified time-frame, prosecution proceedings are initiated. A pre-court meeting will be held in college before prosecution proceedings are initiated to allow parents/carers/students a final chance to improve attendance and thereby avoid prosecution.

See Appendix 2 'Fast-Track to Prosecution' explaining the fast-track process.

**Monitoring Evaluation and Review**

- The college will review this policy annually and assess its implementation and effectiveness.
- The policy will be promoted and implemented throughout the college and with all stakeholders.

**Appendix 1** Circumstances where a Penalty Notice will be issued and Penalty Notice Certificate of Absence.

**Appendix 2** 'Fast-Track to Prosecution'

**Appendix 3** Reintegration from absence procedure.

