

St. Luke's Science and Sports College

Attendance Policy

Linked Policies

- Safeguarding Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Home-College Agreement

Advice and Guidance Used

- DfE School Attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities, (October 2014).
- DCC Model Attendance Policy
- DCC/Babcock Children Missing from Education (CME) Source of Referral and CME Process

1. Aims and Objectives

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 in partnership with parents/carers.

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 our students and celebrate those that achieve this.

Our College will give a high priority to conveying to parents/carers and students the importance of regular and punctual attendance. We recognise that parents/carers 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 as quickly as possible.

Our attendance policy aims:

- To encourage full attendance and punctuality.
- To safeguard students during the school day.
- To record and monitor attendance and absenteeism and apply appropriate strategies to minimise its occurrence.

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- 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.

2. Legal framework

The *Education Act 1996* states that:

The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him to receive efficient full-time education suitable —

- (a) to his age, ability and aptitude, and
- (b) to any special educational needs he may have,

either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

A person begins to be of compulsory school age —

- (a) when he attains the age of five, if he attains that age on a prescribed day, and
- (b) otherwise at the beginning of the prescribed day next following his attaining that age.

A person ceases to be of compulsory school age at the end of the day which is the school leaving date for any calendar year —

- (a) if he attains the age of 16 after that day but before the beginning of the school year next following,
- (b) if he attains that age on that day, or
- (c) (unless paragraph (a) applies) if that day is the school leaving date next following his attaining that age.

2.1 Children at Risk of Missing Education

St. Luke's Science and Sports College will inform the Local Authority of any pupil who is going to be deleted from the admissions register where they:

- Have been taken out of school by their parents/carers and are being educated outside the school system
- Have ceased to attend school and no longer live within reasonable distance of the school at which they are registered
- Have a medical condition certified by a medical officer that states that the pupil is unlikely to be in a fit state of health to attend school

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- Have been permanently excluded.

3. Roles and responsibilities

Governing body

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the governing body will:

- ensure that the importance of attendance is made clear by promoting the relevant school policies and guidance directed at parents/carers and staff.
- annually review the school's attendance policy and ensure that all provisions are in place to allow school staff, parents/carers, and children to implement the policy effectively.
- nominate or identify a member of the governing body who will take the lead role in monitoring attendance and coordinating provision and policies for attendance.
- ensure that all legislation regarding attendance is complied with and that up-to-date guidelines are communicated to parents/carers, children, and staff.
- work out appropriate and accurate annual attendance numbers and future attendance targets, and submit these to the LA within an agreed timescale each year.
- take time at governor's meetings to review and discuss attendance issues that have arisen in order to stay on top of expected attendance targets for the year.
- ensure that the school is implementing effective means of recording attendance and organising that data, including for children who are educated off-site.
- ensure that they are clear on how to analyse attendance data and how to communicate the findings effectively to parents/carers and staff.
- use any data gathered to devise solutions to problems, make the proper adjustments to attendance coordination and target set for the future..

School leadership team

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school leadership team will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families.
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own progression and achievement.
- coordinate with the governing body to monitor the implementation of the attendance policy and its effectiveness, with an annual full policy review.
- ensure that all staff are up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation, and that staff are fully trained to recognise and deal with attendance issues.

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- ensure that government legislation on attendance is complied with and that they (the leadership team) are up to date with any legislation changes and how to implement them.
- nominate or appoint a senior manager to take the responsibility of overseeing and monitoring attendance provision and that this person has sufficient time and resources to give to this job.
- report to the governing body each term and the lead governor for attendance half-termly on attendance records, data and provision .
- ensure that systems to record and report attendance data are in place and working effectively.
- develop multi-agency relationships to help with poor attendance and support families who are having difficulties getting their child to attend.
- document any specific interventions or steps taken to work with families to improve their child's attendance in case of future legal proceedings.

Teachers and support staff

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, the school's teachers and support staff will:

- be active in their approach to promoting good attendance to pupils and their parents/carers, which includes forming positive relationships with families
- ensure that the school's teaching and learning experiences encourage regular attendance and that pupils are taught the value of high attendance for their own personal progression and achievement
- ensure that they are fully aware and up to date with the school's attendance policy and government legislation and that they will speak to another member of staff or seek support if they are unsure how to deal with an attendance issue
- ensure that they are following the correct systems for recording attendance and that attendance is taken daily and at every period within the college day
- contribute to strategy meetings and interventions where they are needed
- work with external agencies to support pupils and their families who are struggling with regular attendance.

Parents and carers

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that parents/carers:

- engage with their children's education – support their learning and take an interest in what they have been doing at school

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- promote the value of good education and the importance of regular school attendance at home
- encourage and support their children's aspirations
- follow the set school procedure for reporting the absence of their child from school (**see section 4**), and include a expected date for return
- do everything they can to prevent unnecessary school absences, such as by making medical and dental appointments outside of school hours
- use the school as a support when they or their child are having difficulties, and work to form a positive relationship with the school so that there is easy communication when a problem arises
- keep the school informed of any circumstances which may affect their child's attendance
- enforce a regular routine at home in terms of homework, bedtime, etc. so that the child is used to consistency and the school day becomes part of that routine. It is vital that the child receives the same message at home as they do at school about the importance of attendance
- do not take their children out of school for holidays during term time. If parents would like to make a special request for this, they may do so to the Principal (**see section 4.6**)
- sign a home-college agreement which makes reference to attendance (see planner and College website for home-college agreement).

Pupils

As part of our whole-school approach to maintaining high attendance, we request that pupils:

- be aware of the school's attendance policy and when and what they are required to attend. This will be communicated to them through the school staff, parents, and the school timetable
- speak to their tutor or another member of staff if they are experiencing difficulties at school or at home which may impact on their attendance
- attend all lessons ready to learn, with the appropriate learning tools requested and on time for the class. Lesson times will be made clear through their school timetable
- bring a note of explanation from their parents or carers to explain an absence that has happened or is foreseen
- follow the correct set school procedure if they arrive late (**see section 4.9**). Pupils are held responsible for this and it is made clear to all students what this procedure is by their form tutors. This will help the school to monitor attendance and keep accurate records for the child's individual attendance, and is also vital for health and safety in the event of a school evacuation
- follow college consequences for late arrival in to college including attendance at lunchtime detention
- sign a home-college agreement.

4. Categories of absence and procedure for reporting absences

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Absences will be treated as unauthorised unless a satisfactory explanation for the pupil's absence is given to the school. Parents/carers cannot authorise absences.

Staff should make it clear on the school register when taking attendance whether a child's absence is authorised or unauthorised.

When a child is to be absent from school without prior permission, parents should inform the school by telephone on the first day of absence and let them know what date they expect the child to return. For a prolonged absence, this should be followed up with a written note from the parent/carer of the child. Alternative arrangements will be made individually with non-English speaking parents or carers.

4.2 Illness

Most cases of absence due to illness are short term, but parents will need to make a phone call to alert the school on the first day/each day of absence. When the child returns to school they should bring a note from their parent/carer explaining the absence – this is for the school records.

For prolonged absence due to illness, parents/carers may be asked to provide the school with medical evidence such as a note from the child's doctor, an appointment card or a prescription paper.

4.3 Medical or dental appointments

Parents/carers should make every effort to ensure these appointments are made outside of school hours. Where it cannot be avoided, children should attend school for as much of that day as possible.

4.4 Authorised absences

There may be some instances where the school will authorise absence such as for a family bereavement or a representational sporting commitment.

4.5 Exclusion

Exclusion is treated as an authorised absence. The Principal/ tutor/ subject teacher will arrange for work to be sent home.

4.6 Family holidays and extended leave

Guidance from the DFE does not provide for holidays in term time. The college will not approve a holiday during term time unless in exceptional circumstances. Where a leave of absence is granted, the Principal will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school.

The absence request form is available from the college reception. This form is both a means to request absence and the formal written warning to parents/carers should students be taken out of school without authorisation.

If a student is absent 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/carer will receive a separate penalty

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notice for each child taken out of college. Should a parent/carer fail to pay any penalty notice issued then the evidence provided by the college will be the only information laid before the court.

4.7 Religious observance

There may be times where children of different faiths observe religious festivals that fall outside of school holidays and weekends, and will allow authorised absence for these times.

Parents will be aware of these dates and should give the school written notification in advance.

4.8 Study leave

The school has a period of study leave leading up to GCSE examinations where students are granted authorised absence to revise at home. The school operates study sessions at school within this time to help with revision and to reduce the amount of time spent out of school. Any study leave will be used sparingly and at the discretion of the Principal. Provision will still be made available for any student who wishes to come in to college to revise with students encouraged to take up this more supervised provision.

4.9 Late arrival

Pupils who arrive after the registration period has ended should go straight to the school office to sign in and give a reason for their lateness. Any unjustifiable reason for absence will be marked as unauthorised and a lunchtime detention issued as per the College's Behaviour Policy. It is vital that pupils sign in at the office to ensure that appropriate health and safety regulations are followed and that all pupils are accounted for.

A register is also taken at the start of all subject lessons by the subject teacher, and any unexplained absences reported back to the school office. If a student is late to the lesson this will be recorded on the register.

Persistent lateness may result in disciplinary action.

5. School action: following up absences

Registers are taken electronically via SIMs at the start of tutorial and every lesson throughout the day. Where there are unexplained or unauthorised absences, the school will contact the parents or carers. If a pattern of unauthorised absences emerges, the Head of House or tutor will contact the parent or carer to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Parents/carers will be contacted if a pupil gives a reason for an unauthorised absence and there is doubt about the truth of the excuse.

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Tutors will chase students for written explanation from their parents/carers for their absence upon the student's return from being away. This is for the school records and is necessary not matter what the reason or length of the absence.

Where students have been away for either short or long term, the school will support that child when they re-enter school to help them catch up on any work that they have missed.

The school will take disciplinary action against any pupils who are discovered to be truanting and parents or carers will be contacted to discuss possible reasons and school support systems that could help.

Adopted: September 2015

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