P9 – PUPIL ATTENDANCE

1.0.   INTRODUCTION

1.1.   The College aims to meet its obligations with regards to attendance by:

- Promoting good attendance and working to reduce absence, including persistent absence

- Ensuring every pupil has access to full-time education

- Acting early to address patterns of absence

- Promoting punctuality in attending lessons

1.2.   Parents are responsible for ensuring that their children attend and stay at school. It is the responsibility of the school to support attendance and to take seriously problems that may lead to non-attendance.

1.3.   The College recognises that continuity is a key part of a successful education. Very often, if a pupil misses a day, they do not understand fully the content of lessons the following day, further compounding the difficulties caused by absence.

1.4.   Maintaining an accurate attendance register is a key part of the College's safeguarding arrangements. This policy should be read in conjunction with the College Safeguarding Policy, with particular reference to the procedures for Children Missing from Education.

1.5.   The College believes that in order to enable effective teaching and learning to take place, regular attendance is necessary. It seeks to enable this by:

- recording attendance during registration periods twice daily

- recording attendance in every lesson in the Senior School

- regularly checking reasons for absence with parents or guardians

- supporting those who are having problems with attendance

- supporting pupils in catching up work missed through absence

- publishing term dates at least 12 months in advance

- arranging peripatetic music lessons so that they have a minimal effect on timetabled lessons

- ensuring children's attendance is visible to parents through the iSAMS app

2.0.   LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

2.1.   This policy meets the requirements of the School Attendance Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities (July 2019) from the Department for Education. This is drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- The Education Act 1996
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (including subsequent amendments of 2010,2011,2013 and 2016)
- Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2019)

2.2.   According to the The Education (Independent School Standards) Regulations 2014, Regulation 3(15) "The standard in this paragraph is met if the proprietor ensures that an admission and an attendance register is maintained in accordance with the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006."

2.3.   Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers, an Admissions register, known as the "School Roll" and an Attendance register. School Inspectors are required to check both registers and assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

2.4.   The Regulations covering school admission and attendance are very prescriptive reflecting the importance that successive Governments have attached to ensuring that all children of compulsory school age attend school. Schools are required to ensure that an attendance register is taken twice a day, at the start of the morning session, and during the afternoon for all day pupils. The Regulations specify the contents of both registers and the manner in which they are operated and maintained.

3.0.   SCHOOL ATTENDANCE PROCEDURES

The school day: Senior School

3.1.   All students are required to be in school by 0820 and should not arrive before 0745. The normal school day ends at 1600, with afterschool activities beginning at 1615 and ending at 1715. All students are expected to be off the College site by 1730.

3.2.   Students are registered at the start of the day during morning tutor time, at the start of each lesson, and during afternoon tutor time.

3.3.   It is the Form Tutor's responsibility to register pupils at 0820 and at 1435 and the Subject Teacher's responsibility to register students at all other times.

3.4.   All students must be registered at the start of each lesson, either in class or with the teacher supervising a study session.

The school day: Junior School

3.5.   All pupils are required to be in school by 0830 and should not arrive before 0745. The normal school day ends at 1510 for Nursery, 1515 for Reception – Year 2 and 1535 for pupils in Years 3-6 (Prep). Afterschool activities take place between 1515 and 1620 in Pre-Prep and between 1545 and 1645 in Prep. All pupils are expected to be off the College site by 1730.

3.6.   Pupils are registered at the start of the day during morning form time and during afternoon form time.

3.7.   It is the Form Teacher's responsibility to register pupils at 0830 and at 1300 (Pre-Prep) or 1330 (Prep).

'Fobbing' in and out : Senior School

3.8.   All Sixth Form students are issued with an ID fob which allows them to gain access to security-controlled doors and gates on the College Site. All Sixth Form students must fob in whenever they enter the College and fob out whenever they leave the College. Fobbing in and out generates the Fire Register for the College, and is therefore critically important, as it allows us to count the students on- and off-site, should a fire or other emergency occur.

3.9.   Forgetting to fob out will result in a student being listed on the fire register when they are, in fact, off-site. This puts rescue workers' lives at risk as they will search the site for any unaccounted-for students. Repeated failure to fob in and out will result in sanctions, depending on the circumstances.

NOTE: fobbing in and out is not the same as using a fob to gain access to a door. Students must fob in on a dedicated unit (located near the West door and the Sixth Form Common Room)

Absence due to illness: Senior School

3.10.   If a student misses school due to illness, the parent or guardian should email absence@sdmail.org.uk and the pupil's Form Tutor before 0900 each and every day of absence or phone the College Office (020 8516 7200). If the College has not heard from a parent or guardian, we will always try to telephone or send a text message requesting contact to ensure the student is safe and to verify his or her whereabouts.

3.11.   It is important that parents make contact with the College each day their child is absent in order that we can keep our records updated, and importantly, so that we can keep abreast of his or her progress to full health and anticipated return date.

3.12.   On returning to the College, pupils must provide their form tutor with a letter from their parents explaining the reason for their absence. An email from the parental address which the College holds on file is acceptable in lieu of a letter.

3.13.   No matter what the cause of absence, pupils are urged to catch up on missed lessons immediately. Normally, missed work will be found on Firefly. Teachers will make every effort to help the pupil to catch up if they ask for help. In the event of prolonged absence for medical reasons the school will make every effort to send set work to the pupil, normally via Firefly, but additional 'hard copy' material cannot be guaranteed. Teachers are not expected to set bespoke or additional work for pupils who are absent.

Absence due to illness: Junior School

3.14.   If a pupil missed school due to illness, the parent or guardian should phone the Junior School Office (020 8516 7225) or email the Junior School Office and the pupil's Form Teacher before 0815 on the first morning of absence. If the College has not heard from a parent or guardian, we will always try to telephone requesting contact to ensure the pupil is safe and to verify his or her whereabouts.

Late arrival

3.15.   By 0845 (Senior School) or 0900 (Junior School) each day, all students will be marked present, late (with number of minutes indicated) or absent. It is therefore essential that if a student arrives late after this time, he or she signs in at the College Office so

our systems remain fully updated in case an evacuation of the College is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every student is at all times.

3.16.   Our systems are again updated by 1000 when we compile a final Registration for the morning. At this point, if parents have not contacted the College by telephone or email, a list will be generated of students who are not present and this will prompt the Junior School Office or College Attendance Officer to endeavour to contact parents or guardians.

Leaving school early (during the school day)

3.17.   Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day, with the following exceptions:
- Year 13 students may leave after 1435 registration if they have unsupervised study periods during period 5.
- Year 12 and 13 students may leave the College during the lunch period, if they have earned the privilege to do so.

3.18.   If a pupil has to leave the College during the day for illness if a parent or guardian is collecting the student for a medical appointment, he or she is required to sign out at the College Office.

3.19.   Pupils are not permitted to sign themselves out for appointments or illness without approval from the Form Tutor or Form Teacher or other appropriate member of staff.

4.0.   REQUESTS FOR ABSENCE

Requesting absence: Senior School

4.1.   Any request for planned appointments or events that will result in missing less than a full day of school should be made by the parent/guardian in writing via email sent to the student's Form Tutor.

4.2.   Any request for planned appointments or events that will result in missing one day of school should be made by the parent/guardian in writing via email sent to the student's Head of Year.

4.3.   The Deputy Head Pastoral must approve of any absence of more than a full day. In instances of prolonged absence from school, please correspond with the Headmaster.

Requesting absence: Junior School

4.4.   Any request for planned appointments or events that will result in missing less than a full day of school should be made by the parent/guardian in writing via email sent to the pupil's Form Teacher and the Junior School Office.

4.5.   The Head of Junior School must approve any absence of a full school day or more.

5.0.   AUTHORISED AND NON-AUTHORISED ABSENCE

5.1.   The Government has confirmed that schools, not parents, authorise absence. The main areas where the College will authorise absence are given below:

- Illness. Where the College accepts that a student is ill, we will authorise the absence but can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.
- Appointments. Dental and medical appointments are authorised absences but, where possible, such appointments should be made out of school hours.
- Religious observance. The College is proud of its cultural diversity and, although holy days are taken into consideration in the setting of the College term dates, we recognise that families of different faiths have days of observance that fall within the school calendar. This is balanced against the need for consistency in the education of pupils and, where possible, parents are encouraged to consider ways of observing faith holidays that do not affect school attendance. Each request for absence on the grounds of faith will be considered on an individual basis and must be submitted to the Headmaster, or Head of Junior School.
- Exceptional circumstances/unavoidable causes. Authorised absence can be granted for compassionate reasons such as a serious family illness or bereavement.

5.2.   Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds or in exceptional circumstances should be made in writing in advance of the proposed absence when possible, to the appropriate member of staff as detailed above. Absence in exceptional circumstances does not ordinarily include the following:
- Birthdays
- Holidays
- Festivals
- Days out as a special treat
- Other family celebrations

5.3.   Parents can send urgent messages to their children via the College Office or the Junior School Office during the school day. Parents should not request that their child is removed from timetabled lessons or activities to meet with them during the

school day, unless such meetings are required by social services or court order, and are arranged in advance through the third party and the Head of Junior School or appropriate Head of Section (Senior School). This excludes meetings between College Staff, children and parents, which are arranged by the College.

5.4.   Holidays. The Regulations state that time off for family holidays is not a right. Parents do not have the right to take a child out of school during term time. By law parents must ask prior permission for their child to miss school. The Regulations do not allow the College to give retrospective approval. No parent can demand leave of absence for the purposes of a holiday as a right and the school reserves the right to withhold permission if it feels that the educational drawbacks of the request outweigh the advantages.

5.5.   The Headmaster or the Head of Junior School is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If the Headmaster or Head of Junior School grants a leave request, it is for him to determine the length of time that the student can be away from school. Authorised leave is unlikely to be granted for the purpose of a family holiday and parents could face prosecution if they take their child(ren) out of school without permission.

5.6.   Holidays which are taken for the following reasons will not be authorised:
- Availability of inexpensive holidays
- Availability of desired accommodation
- Poor weather in school holiday periods

6.0.   ATTENDANCE MONITORING AND RECORD-KEEPING

6.1.   Form Tutors and Form Teachers are responsible for keeping a watching brief over pupil attendance and will contact parents if they feel there is a matter of concern, such as frequent absence.

6.2.   The Department for Education (DfE) expects every pupil attending school to maintain an attendance level of approximately 90 per cent and above. Pupils whose attendance is below 90 per cent are classed as 'persistently absent'. The College is obliged to contact the parents/guardians if their child's attendance drops below that figure. If attendance does not improve and absence continues to be persistent, the College will contact the appropriate Attendance, Inclusion and Participation Service from the child's local authority.

6.3.   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. The College will alert their local authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has:

- Been absent without authority for 10 consecutive school days, or
- Failed to attend school regularly, or
- Been removed from the school without the school being informed formally, in writing, or
- If there is a safeguarding concern (including Children Missing Education) about the pupil in question.

6.4.   Frequent unauthorised absence and unauthorised lateness may result in sanctions as outlined in the *College's Behaviour Management Policy (P3)*. Should unauthorised absence or school refusal result in attendance falling below 85%, the Headmaster may review whether the pupil's continued education at the College is tenable.

6.5.   The College recognises the difference between wilful truancy and school refusal, and will support students who are school refusers or at risk of becoming a school refusal in line with the Safeguarding Policy (P1) and related document Supporting School Refusers.

Attendance registration system

6.6.   The College uses iSAMS, an electronic student information management system, which enables the College to record, report and monitor student attendance and absence. The attendance register is backed up in the form of an electronic copy, at least once a month and records are retained for three years after the end of the school year in question.

6.7.   There is no requirement for independent schools to return absence data to the DfE, therefore absence statistics are not published in the DfE Achievement and Attainment Tables or in the annual Statistical First Release.

6.8.   As schools in membership of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) take part in that organisation's annual census of students, staff and expenditure etc. From January 2009 it has been mandatory to include pupil ethnic monitoring data using the same methodology as the maintained sector.

6.9.   The registers use the following attendance codes (in accordance with the School Attendance Guidance for Maintained Schools, Academies, Independent Schools and Local Authorities (July 2019):

PRESENT	
/	Present (AM registration)
\	Present (PM registration)
L	Late (before registers close: 0845 Senior School or 0900 Junior School)
B	Off-site educational activity (where the pupil is educated off-site)
D	Attending other establishment (for example a hospital school or special school on a temporary basis)
J	Pupil at interview (with prospective employers or another educational establishment)
P	Approved sporting activity (for example a sporting activity approved by the College and supervised by someone authorised by the College)
V	Educational visit or trip (including day and residential trips of strictly educational nature arranged by the College or an organisation approved by the College
W	Work experience
AUTHORISED ABSENCE CODES	
C	Other authorised circumstances
E	Excluded – fixed term suspension (with no alternative provision made; must be no more than 5 consecutive days)
H	Family holiday agreed by the Headmaster
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance (agreed by the Headmaster)
S	Study leave (during public examinations)
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE CODES	
G	Family holiday NOT authorised by Headmaster (unauthorised absence)
N	Reason for absence not yet provided (will be followed up by tutor – this code must not be left on a pupil's attendance record indefinitely; if no reason for absence is provided after a reasonable amount of time it should be replaced with code O)
O	Unauthorised absence
U	Late (after registers close: 0845 Senior School or 0900 Junior School)
OTHER ATTENDANCE CODES	
Y	Enforced closure or exceptional circumstances (e.g. snow, national emergency, the pupil is in custody, etc.)
Z	Pupil not on roll (for administration purposes; schools must put pupils on the admission register from the first day that the school has agreed, or been notified, that the pupil will attend the school – this code is used to cover the time between the pupil being added to the admission register and starting school at the College)
#	School closure (planned whole or partial school closure including between terms, half terms, occasional days (e.g. bank holidays), curriculum planning/training and use of schools as polling stations)

7.0.   ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

7.1.   The Governing Body: The Governing Body is responsible for monitoring whole College attendance statistics on a termly basis. It holds the Headmaster to account for the implementation of this policy.

7.2.   The Headmaster (with support from the Deputy Head Pastoral): The Headmaster is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the College and for ensuring attendance statistics are reported to governors. The Headmaster also authorises absence in exceptional circumstances.

7.3.   Attendance Officer. The Attendance Officer:
- Monitors attendance data at College and individual pupil level
- Updates the attendance register following communication on absence/lateness from parents via the absence@sdmail.org.uk email address
- Reports attendance concerns to the relevant Head of Section and the Deputy Head Pastoral
- Calls parents to query unexplained pupil absences in the Senior School
- In liaison with the Deputy Head Pastoral, ensures staff are completing registers accurately
- Keeps a watching brief on particularly vulnerable children including but not limited to those in private fostering arrangements, school refusers, children with medical or learning needs and children in Local Authority Care.

8.0.   RELATED POLICIES

P1 Safeguarding Policy

Pupil Attendance			
Author/s:	Jade McLellan Laura Whitwood	**Date Reviewed:**	Michaelmas 2019
Date Ratified:	Michaelmas 2019	**Next Review Date:**	Michaelmas 2021
Committee:	Education Committee	**Clerk to the Governors** **Signature:**	……………………………