



P9 – PUPIL ATTENDANCE

1.0. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The College aims to meet its obligations with regards to attendance by:
 - Ensuring a culture of good attendance is central to the College's ethos and culture
 - 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
 - Working with the relevant Local Authority when there are attendance concerns
- 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 its procedures for Children Who Are Absent From School.
- 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:
 - developing and maintaining a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance
 - 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 My School Portal

2.0. LEGISLATION AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1. This policy meets the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance (May 2022) 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)
 - Keeping Children Safe in Education (September 2023)
- 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. Where any reference is made to Junior School procedures, this is inclusive of pupils in the EYFS.

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 after-school activities beginning at 1615 and ending at 1715. All students are expected to be off the College site by 1745.
- 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 1455 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 0835 and should not arrive before 0745. The normal school day ends at 1510 for Nursery, 1515 for Reception, 1520 for Years 1 and 2, and 1535 for pupils in Years 3-6. After school 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 1800.
- 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 0835 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

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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 & out on the dedicated units provided (located near the College Office, West door and the STEM atrium)

Absence due to illness: Senior School

- 3.10. If a student misses school due to illness, the parent or guardian must email absence@stdunstans.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 an email 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. No matter what the cause of absence, pupils are urged to catch up on missed lessons immediately. Normally, missed work will be found on our VLE. 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 our VLE, 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

- 3.13. If a pupil misses school due to illness, the parent or carer must phone the Junior School Office (020 8516 7225) or email the Junior School Office jsoffice@stdunstans.org.uk 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 telephone to ensure the pupil is safe and to verify their whereabouts.

Late arrival

- 3.14. By 0845 (Senior School) or 0850 (Junior School) each day, all pupils will be marked present, late (with number of minutes indicated) or absent. It is therefore essential that if a pupil arrives late after this time, they sign in at the Junior School Office or the College Office (Senior School) so our systems remain fully updated in case an

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evacuation of the College is necessary and in order that we know exactly where every pupil is at all times.

- 3.15. 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 pupils 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)

- 3.16. 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 but must fob out before leaving the premises
 - Year 12 and 13 students may leave the College during the break and lunch period, if they have earned the privilege to do so. They must fob out before leaving and fob back in again on their return.
- 3.17. If a pupil has to leave the College during the day for illness or if a parent or guardian is collecting the pupil for a medical appointment, he or she is required to sign out at the Junior School Office or College Office.
- 3.18. 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 Head.

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/carer in writing via email sent to the pupil's Form Teacher and the Junior School Office.
- 4.5. The Head of Junior School is responsible for approving 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 pupil 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 term time. 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 Head, 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 be sending text messages or telephoning pupils' mobile phones during the school day as pupils are not permitted to use these.** 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. These should be 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 Head or the Head of Junior School is only able to authorise leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. If the Head or Head of Junior School grants a leave request, it is for them to determine the length of time that the pupil 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 monitoring pupil attendance and will contact parents if they feel there is a matter of concern, such as frequent absence. Where escalation is necessary, the Section Head (Junior School) or Head of Year (Senior School) may offer support.
- 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

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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. Truancy or unauthorised lateness in the Senior School 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 Head 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 pupils who are school refusers or at risk of becoming a school refuser in line with the Safeguarding Policy (P1) and related document Supporting School Refusers.
- 6.6. All pupils who are studying at the College on a visa sponsored by SDEF will have their attendance monitored particularly closely. We recognise our obligation to report to the border agency a sponsored pupil who misses 10 expected contact points without a verified reason. For the purposes of this policy, we use both morning and afternoon registration points as expected contact points within any one school day and therefore reporting would ordinarily occur after 5 school days of unexplained absence.
- 6.7. St. Dunstan's College is a relatively open site and thus it would be easy for a Senior School pupil to disregard school rules and leave the site without permission. If a Senior School pupil's non-presence in a lesson or activity suggests that this may have taken place, staff will:
- Inform the DSL and College Office.
 - Checks will be undertaken to try and ascertain whether the pupil is on site. Locations to be considered include: Medical room, Music rooms, LRC, Toilets, Sports Fields.
 - If pupils still cannot be located, DSL will agree action to be taken with the Head/ Head of Section, which may involve calling the Police.

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- 6.8. In the Junior School, should a member of staff find that they are unable to account for a child's whereabouts, all relevant staff will check the immediate area which will include the Junior School Office, toilets, classrooms and the playground. In addition, College CCTV would be checked to identify if the child has left the school site. -If after 10 minutes the child has not been located, police and parents should be called.
- 6.9. Any Junior School child who has not been collected at the end of the day will be taken to the Junior School Office and parents/carers will be contacted-If the child has not been collected from After School Care by 1800, parents/carers are called. If parents/carers or alternative named contacts, who have been given permission by parents/carers to collect, cannot be reached after one hour then Children's Services will be called, and their advice will be followed.

Attendance registration system

- 6.10. The College uses iSAMS, an electronic pupil information management system, which enables the College to record, report and monitor pupil 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.
- 6.11. As schools in membership of the Independent Schools Council (ISC) take part in that organisation's annual census of pupils, 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.
- 6.12. The registers use the following attendance codes (in accordance with the guidance Working Together to Improve Attendance (May 2022)

PRESENT	
/	Present (AM registration)
\	Present (PM registration)
L	Late (before registers close: 0845 Senior School or 0900 Junior School)
B	Off-site educational activity e.g. taster day
D	Attending another 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	Leave of absence granted by the school
E	Excluded – fixed term suspension (with no alternative provision made; must be no more than 5 consecutive days)
H	Family holiday agreed by the Head, or Head of Junior School
I	Illness (not medical or dental appointments)
M	Medical or dental appointment
R	Religious observance (agreed by the Head, or Head of Junior School)
S	Study leave (Y11-Y13 only during public examinations)
UNAUTHORISED ABSENCE CODES	
G	Family holiday NOT authorised by Head or Head of Junior School (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	Absent without authorisation
U	Late (after registers close: 0845 Senior School or 0900 Junior School)
OTHER ATTENDANCE CODES	
Y	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. snow, national emergency, the pupil is in custody, etc.)
Z	Pupil not on admission register (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 Head to account for the implementation of this policy.
- 7.2. The Head (with support from the Deputy Head Pastoral and Head of Junior School): The Head is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the College and for ensuring attendance statistics are reported to governors. The Head also authorises absence in exceptional circumstances.
- 7.3. Attendance Officer and Junior School/College Office administrative teams. They work together to
- Monitor attendance data at College and individual pupil level
 - Update the attendance register following communication on absence/lateness from parents via the absence@stdunstans.org.uk or jsoffice@stdunstans.org.uk email address
 - Report attendance concerns to the relevant Head of Section/Section Head and the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School and Junior School)
 - The Attendance Officer and Junior School Office:
 - Contact parents to query unexplained pupil absences
 - In liaison with the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School and Junior School), ensure staff are completing registers accurately
 - In liaison with the Deputy Head Pastoral (Senior School and Junior School) monitor 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.

9.0.RELATED POLICIES

P1 Safeguarding Policy

Pupil Attendance			
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