

# ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE



## Attendance Policy

# Our Mission at St Paul's

**S**ervice to each other: learning to become a self-disciplined leader

**T**eaching that inspires me, that challenges me, that gives me a lifelong love of learning

**P**artnership at the heart of our school: a partnership between school, home and community

**A**chievement: learn and achieve beyond my expectations within an internationally-enriched curriculum, using world-class technology, with people who care

**U**nderstanding of me as an individual: staff who know me by name and help make my experience of school rich and happy

**L**ove and respect experienced through our vibrant Catholic Christian community

**S**uccess: academically, spiritually, morally, socially and beyond the classroom

## ***'Learn to Serve'***

*St Paul's is a community of faith echoing St Paul's letter to Timothy where,  
as hallmarks of Christian living Paul stresses*

# St Paul's Attendance Policy

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## ST PAUL'S CATHOLIC COLLEGE ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Paul's is committed in partnership with, students and Governors, to building a community in which we can be proud.

We believe that all students benefit from regular attendance at College and it is key to the whole person's academic, spiritual, moral, cultural and physical potential. We are committed to encouraging parents/guardians to ensure that their children regularly attend College. This is achieved by providing a caring, learning environment which allows issues that prevent regular attendance to be identified and dealt with at an early stage.

Any absence affects the pattern of a student's education and regular absence will seriously affect their learning. There is also research that clearly demonstrates the link between regular attendance and educational progress and attainment.

### **The law relating to Attendance**

Section 7 of the Education act 1996 (part 1) states that 'the parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full time education suitable:-

- (a) To age, ability and aptitude and
  - (b) To any special educational needs he/she may have
- Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise

In law it is an offence if a parent/carer fails to secure a child's attendance at a school in which they have registered and that absence is not authorised by the school. Penalty notices supplement the existing sanctions currently available under section 444 Education Act 1996 (prosecution of parents) or section 36 the children act 1989 (Education supervision order) to enforce attendance at school where necessary. (See *appendix 2*)

We expect that all students will:

- Attend every day and punctually
- Attend prepared for the day

We expect that all parents/guardians will:

- Not take their children on holiday during term time
- Be aware of their legal duty to ensure that their child/children attend College on a regular full time basis-(section 7 Education Act 1996)
- Ensure that they contact the College on the first day of absence and each subsequent day and provide medical evidence after 2 days absence, either a copy of a prescription, doctors/dentist appointment card or a copy of medication label/ packaging.
- Notify the college in writing of any activity or occasion that will prevent their child attending college.

- Contact the college if a problem occurs that may or has resulted in their child not wanting to attend college
- Notify the college of any changes to contact details. eg. Mobile numbers, e-mail details or postal address.
- To arrange medical appointment such as dentist/GP outside of college hours where possible and provide medical evidence for appointment eg appointment card or letter in advance of the appointment.

We expect the College will:

- Provide a welcoming atmosphere for all students
- Keep a regular and accurate register of attendance twice a day
- Contact parents/guardians each day of the absence where no prior explanation has been received
- Monitor students patterns of attendance and punctuality
- Make initial contact with parents/guardians where a student is not attending regularly followed by a meeting to discuss any issues that are preventing regular attendance
- Refer to Surrey Education Welfare, students who require support beyond the College's resources.
- Refer to Surrey Education Welfare for further actions; a parent contract, penalty notice, parental prosecution or an application for an Education supervision order.
- Celebrate good and improved attendance
- Publish attendance statistics.

### **The register**

The register is a legal document (at St Paul's period 1 and period 6) staff need to understand the importance of adhering to the DFE guidelines when completing it. Both staff and students should see the taking of registers as an integral part of the college day. Particular attention must be paid to accurate registration and precise guidelines need to be followed to ensure uniformity.

## **Lateness**

Poor punctuality is not acceptable. If your child misses the start of the day they can miss vital information of the particular subject. Late arriving pupils also disrupt lessons, which can be embarrassing for the child and could therefore encourage absence.

## **How we manage lateness**

The College day starts at 8.20am allowing your child to be in class for their first lesson at 8.25am. Any time after 8.30am will be marked as late (L).

At 9am the registers will be closed. In accordance with the regulations, if your child arrives after that time they will receive a (U) code; this is unauthorised absence and counts as half a day absence. This may mean that you could face the possibility of a penalty notice if the problem persists.

Students who arrive late to College (after 8.30am) are required to sign in at reception. They will be issued with a lunchtime detention if there is no valid reason for the lateness, this will be on that day for 20 minutes at 12.35pm in N4.

If the student fails to attend the detention, parents will receive a text message saying their son/daughter needs to attend a detention for 1 hour after College on the date specified.

The afternoon register is taken at 1.15pm.

## **Students leaving during the College day**

Students are not allowed to leave College at any time without prior permission from the College. Parents/guardians should make medical appointments outside College hours. Parents are requested to confirm in writing the reason for the appointment and a copy of the appointment card or letter should be given to the College.

If students have a pre-arranged appointment, they are required to sign out at reception, where they will be issued with a permission slip.

Should a student become unwell during the College day, they can report to reception where they will be given permission to be seen by their Head of Year.

The Head of year will then give authorisation if necessary for the student to go home. Reception will contact parents/guardians to inform them and arrange for the student to be collected from College.

### **Holidays**

The College term times and holidays are published a year in advance and are available on the College website, in line with Government guidelines holidays in term time **WILL NOT BE AUTHORISED**. If parents take their child on holiday during term time, they may be issued with a penalty notice from the Local Education Authority and may lose their child's college place. This type of absence includes visits to sick relatives in other countries which may not be considered by the parents as holiday, but will also not be authorised.

### **Exceptional leave of absence**

The Education (pupil registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, which became law on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013 state that the **Head teacher may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances**.

The head teacher is required to determine the number of College days a student can be away if leave is granted.

### **Unauthorised absence**

Unauthorised absence occurs when a student is absent and no explanation is provided or the one given is unacceptable to the College. The college does not have to authorise absence due to illness if medical evidence has not been provided.

*(See appendix 1)*

## **Offsite education**

When a student is attending an alternative place of education or placement during the College hours, the College attendance policy and procedures continue to apply to the student and parent/guardians. College and placement should be contacted in relation to absence.

## **Attendance procedures**

The attendance officer will:

- Check registers daily
- Monitor student's attendance daily.
- Contact the parent/guardian if an explanation has not been provided for their child's absence or is not a valid reason.
- Issue warning letters to parents/guardian if a student's attendance becomes a concern
- Will provide parents/guardians with their child's attendance certificate and percentage.
- Will meet regularly with Heads of Year to discuss students attendance and any causes for concern
- Organise and attend meetings to support the regular attendance of students at risk.
- Keep accurate records of failure by the family to comply with the planned support set by the College/Educational Welfare.
- Refer students to Education Welfare Officer for further actions. (*see appendix 1*)
- Reward good attendance

## **Penalty notices**

The Education Welfare service acting on behalf of Surrey County Council may issue a penalty notice as an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/guardian for their child's unauthorised absence from College; this requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

- The amount payable on issue of a penalty notice is £60 if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice, rising to £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days.



- If the penalty notice is not paid within 28 days, the local authority must prosecute the parent/guardian for failing to ensure regular College attendance under section 444 of the Education act 1996.

### **Circumstances where a penalty notice may be issued**

Pupils identified by police and Education Welfare Officers engaged on truancy patrols and who have incurred unauthorised absences.

Where a student is taken out of College and the leave of absence is without the authorisation of the Head teacher, each parent may be liable to receive a penalty notice for each student who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents/guardians had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and they will be liable to receive a penalty notice if the leave of absence is taken.

The parent's failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the College or Education Welfare will be a factor when considering the issue of a penalty notice.

### **Unauthorised absence**

The issuing of a penalty notice for unauthorised leave may be considered appropriate in the following circumstances:

- 1. Unauthorised leave of absence in term time (5 days/10 sessions or more within a three month period- this need not be consecutive) without the authorisation of the school.*
- 2. Unauthorised absences or late arrival after the close of registration, on 7 occasions in any six week period (not including school closures)*

**With the exception of unauthorised leave of absence taken in term time, parents will be sent a formal warning of their liability to receive such a notice before it is issued.**

## APPENDIX 1

### Understanding types of absence

Every half day absence from College has to be classified by the College (not by the parents), as either **authorised** or **unauthorised**. This is why information about the cause of any absence is always required, preferably in writing or by phone call to main College number.

#### Authorised Absences

Mornings or afternoons away from College for a valid reason such as illness, medical appointments that unavoidably fall in College time, emergencies or other unavoidable cause.

#### Unauthorised Absences

Are those which the College does not consider reasonable and for which no leave has been given, this may include:

- Parents/guardians keeping student's away from College unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during College day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Students who arrive at College too late to get a mark as registers have closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children, birthdays day trips and holidays in term time.

This type of absence can lead to the College and Education Welfare service issuing sanctions and or/legal proceedings.

#### Persistent Absenteeism

A student becomes a persistent absentee when they miss **10%** or more days' education across the College year for whatever reason. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any student's educational prospects. As of September 2015 any student with attendance at **90%** and below will be targeted for additional support.

St Paul's monitors all absence thoroughly. Any cases that have reached the PA level or are at risk of moving towards that level may be referred to the Educational Welfare Officer.

The level of attendance will be closely monitored.

**Failure to ensure regular College attendance, under section 444 of the education act 1996, could result upon conviction in a magistrates court, to and not exceeding £2500 or a term of imprisonment not exceeding three months or both.**

### **Rewarding good attendance**

Students that achieve excellent levels of attendance (over 95%) are rewarded through tutor times, assemblies, tutor group breakfasts, the success bus and certificates of recognition.

## **APPENDIX 2**

### **Education Welfare further actions**

#### **Parenting contracts**

Parenting contracts were introduced by section 19 of the Anti-social behaviour act 2003. Parenting contracts can be used in case of irregular attendance at school or at alternative provision. Parenting contracts are useful tools in identifying and focusing the problems behind non-attendance.

#### **Education supervision order**

An Authority may apply for an Education supervision order (ESO) instead of or as well as prosecuting the parents. An authority is under a duty to consider applying for an ESO before commencing legal proceedings against parents.

For further information and advice you can visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/school-attendance-absence/overview>