ATTENDANCE POLICY

Policy owner	Admin manager	February 2019
Agreed by	Leadership group	February 2019
Formally endorsed by	Trustees	February 2019
Review date		January 2020

St. Pauls Steiner School
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www.stpaulssteinerschool.org
Charity no: 1076454

ATTENDANCE POLICY

St Paul's Steiner School is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

Introduction and Definitions

This policy is to enable the St Paul's Steiner School to work positively and clearly with parents in matters relating to attendance. We hope that with this clarity we will be able to support the children's education and fulfil the legal responsibilities lying with the parents and School. Please write or talk to the school before arranging any activity that may get in the way of your child's attendance.

The legal requirements

The law requires that children of compulsory school age must attend regular full-time schooling and that we complete a daily attendance register for the morning and afternoon session that shows whether the pupil has an authorised or unauthorised absence. We consider that children should achieve 96% attendance, which is the expected national average for schools.

We communicate with Access and Engagement Section of our Local Authority (Islington) in case of persistent lateness or unauthorised absence and submit all the requested statistics to the DfE and Ofsted.

At St Paul's Steiner School we:

- Regard any unnecessary absence as undermining the education. Our teaching methods make it almost impossible to catch up with learning and work missed, or for it to be done at home.
- Regard punctuality as healthy and appropriate and consider avoidable lateness as hampering the pupil's development.
- Do not encourage requests for holidays during term time and we will only give permission in very exceptional circumstances. We have longer holidays than state schools and many independent schools.
- We regard the children's health as paramount and encourage parents of sick children to keep them home until they are fully better and in a fit state to learn (and have had 24 hours clear of fever) before coming back to school.

Compulsory School Age

1. 5th birthday between 1st April and 31st August compulsory school age on 1st September
2. 5th birthday between 1st September and 31st December compulsory school age on 1st January
3. 5th birthday between 1st January and 31st March compulsory school age on 1st April.

Registration

Parents are asked to ensure that pupils arrive in school on time. The doors open at 8.15am and pupils are expected to be either at their places and ready to learn or ready to say the Morning Verse by 8.30am. Registration formally closes at 9.00am. After 8.30am, your child is considered Late and you MUST sign them in at Reception.

Reporting Absences

Should your child be unwell and unable to attend or is running late, parents MUST email the school by 8.30am with the reason, date and name. Each day the child is ill requires a new email.

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Unauthorised Absences

An absence is unauthorised when a child is away without the permission of the School.

Authorised Absences

An absence is classified as authorised when the School has given the child approval for their absence in advance or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. Only the School can authorise an absence and not all absences will be classified as authorised.

Please note that authorised absence still count to your child's overall attendance figures.

Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [School Attendance Guidance](#) September 2018 from the Department for Education (DfE), and refers to the DfE's statutory guidance on school attendance parental responsibility measures. These documents are drawn from the following legislation setting out the legal powers and duties that govern school attendance:
- The Education Act 1996 - sections 434(1)(3)(4)&(6) and 458(4)&(5)
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- Children missing education September 2016

School Procedures

Attendance register

By law, all schools are required to keep an attendance register, and all pupils must be placed on this register.
The attendance register will be taken at the start of the first session of each school day and after lunch break at 2:05pm.
Every entry in the attendance register will be preserved for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Unplanned absence

Parents must notify the school on each day of an unplanned absence – for example if their child is unable to attend due to ill health by 08:30am or as soon as practically possible. This can be done by emailing absence@stpaulssteinerschool.org or via the website contact page.

Absence due to illness will be authorised unless the School has a genuine concern about the authenticity of the illness.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the School may ask parents to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or other appropriate forms of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the School is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents will be notified of this in advance.

Medical or dental appointments

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We encourage parents to make medical and dental appointments outside of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the pupil should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence; advance notice is required for authorising these absences.

This can be done by calling Reception on 0207 226 4454, emailing absence@stpaulssteinerschool.org or via the website contact page.

Applications for other types of absence, such as Leave of Absence in term time must also be made in advance by submitting a **Leave Request form** at least 4 weeks before the first day.

Lateness and punctuality

A pupil who arrives late but before the register has closed will be marked as late (between 8.30 and 09:00) using the appropriate code (L).

A pupil who arrives after the register has closed will be marked as absent (after 09:00) using the appropriate code (U).

Following up absences

The School will follow up any absences to ascertain the reason, identify whether the absence is approved or not. Should there be a Safeguarding concern, the Safeguarding team will be notified to assess what assistance / action is required.

The office will have completed all calls to parents to notify them of a pupil's absence, when no email or message has been received by the school, before 10:30 am.

Reporting to parents

Your child's attendance will be discussed with you if we have concerns throughout the year and included within the annual report at the end of each academic year.

Authorised and unauthorised absence

Granting approval for term-time absence

Schools may not grant any leave of absence to pupils during term time unless they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'.

The School considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the school's discretion. When making the decision, we will consider:

- The age of the child and the amount of time requested;
- The child's general absence/attendance record
- The child's ability to catch up on school work and their educational needs and general welfare.
- The circumstances of the request, purpose of the leave and frequency of the activity.

Valid reasons for authorised absence include:

- Illness and medical/dental appointments – as previously explained.

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- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong. If necessary, the School will seek advice from the parents' religious body to confirm whether the day is set apart.

- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes – this covers Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers. Absence may be authorised only when a Traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the School but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision.

- Other exceptions – where the School is satisfied with the authenticity, genuine need and where an agreement is reached with the providers of alternative education, regarding the child's safeguarding arrangements (confirmation of appropriate Safeguarding measures and policy will be required):
  o Certain sporting activities
  o Off-site education

- Authorised term time absence cannot be granted for:
  o Term time holidays
  o Family celebrations

The school will authorise or treat as authorised an absence if:
- The child is too ill to attend or ill with an infectious disease. The school will generally accept the parents' assessment of this without further questioning. However, if the child is off for longer periods (more than 5 consecutive school days or off sick repeatedly) the school will consider asking for proof from the family's GP.
- The parent has got the advance permission of the school e.g. for compassionate reasons such as bereavement, weddings, religious observation. Please note that we will consider the closeness of relationship before granting the leave.
- The child has been excluded.
- The child has a medical or dental appointment. You must provide paperwork to support this.
- The child is being educated off-site or has an interview or appointment at another school.

Attendance monitoring

Children's absence will be monitored on a weekly basis by the class teacher. The registers will be monitored by the Admin manager who will provide data to the Team leader on a half termly basis. If a pupil's absence goes above 7 days, the class teacher will contact the parents to discuss the reasons for this.

If after contacting parents a child's absence continues to rise, parents will be invited to a meeting to discuss ways of improvement.

The persistent absence threshold is 10%. If a pupil's individual overall absence rate is greater than or equal to 10%, the pupil will be classified as a persistent absentee. In circumstances where the absence rate continues to concern we will seek guidance from Access and Engagement services at our Local Authority (Islington).

In the event of high levels of absenteeism which is considered to be 80% or lower, and in the absence of exceptional circumstances, a decision may be taken by the school that we cannot ensure that we can appropriately educate the pupil, who will then be removed from the school roll.

School Refusers

In the event of a child becoming a school refuser, the Senco and the teacher will work with the Parent/Carer to assess the child and ascertain the best strategies for getting the child back into school. At the end of a period of one half term, a formal assessment meeting will be held with the

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parents (and child if appropriate) to assess the situation and determine an action plan with clear review periods.

In most cases a maximum period of one term will be given to try to resolve the situation, failing which the child may be taken off the school roll.

Children Missing from Education

Children missing from education can mean either a child being taken off a school roll, failing to attend on the agreed admission date or a child on extended absence or repeated absence. The School will contact the parent or carer of any child who has an unauthorised absence.

If a child has a repeated number of unauthorised absences, the Parents or Carers will be asked to visit the School and discuss the problem. If the situation does not improve, the School may contact the support services for the Local Authority (LA) where the child has normal residence. In some cases, the Safeguarding team will visit the home to establish whether the child is at home. If we cannot make contact, we will refer to the appropriate Local Authority.

We have a legal duty to inform the appropriate LA within 5 days of a child being added to the admission register (save for those joining at the start of our youngest year) and where a child transfers to another school or is home schooled. We also have a legal duty to inform the appropriate LA in accordance with their requested procedures if:

- A child is absent for 10 days following on from a period of approved leave
- A child is absent for 20 consecutive days without approved leave
- A child fails to attend school regularly
- A child is deleted from the register when the next school is not known
- A child is removed from the School roll at non-standard transition points

Parents should be aware that Local Authorities reserve the right to consider taking legal action against any Parents or Carers who repeatedly fail to accept their responsibility for sending their child/children to school on a regular basis.

With due regard for Children Missing Education, St. Paul's Steiner School will notify the relevant local authorities (in accordance with their requested procedures) when we are about to remove a pupil's name from the School Admission Register under any of the 15 grounds listed in the regulations (KCSIE Annex A). These 15 grounds include but are not limited to:
- When the family has apparently moved away
- When the child has been certified as medically unfit to attend
- When the child is in custody for more than four months
- When the child has been permanently excluded
- The child has been taken out of school to be home educated

This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the Admission Register at standard transition points and/or when the pupil has completed the final year of education normally provided by us. When removing a pupil's name, the notification to the Local Authority will be provided in accordance with their forms/procedures but should include contact details as well as the reason for removal and, if appropriate, the on-going School or place of education. We will also notify Local Authorities within five days of adding a pupil's name to the Admission Register at a non-standard transition point. This duty does not apply when a pupil's name is entered in the admission register at a standard transition point and/or at the start of the first year of education normally provided by us.

We will seek to obtain written confirmation from parents/carers if and when we find out that one of our pupils is being removed to be educated outside of the school system. A copy of this will be forwarded to the appropriate Local Authority.

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Roles and responsibilities

The Trustees

The Trustees are responsible for monitoring attendance figures for the whole school on at least a termly basis. It also holds the Team Leader account for the implementation of this policy.

The Team Leader

The Team Leader is responsible for ensuring this policy is implemented consistently across the school, and for monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to Trustees.

The Monitoring Team

The Administration Manager analyses attendance data at the School and individual pupil level. Concerns about attendance are reported to the Teacher who works with the Safeguarding Team to tackle persistent absence and arranges calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues.

Class, Cover and Subject Teachers

Class, Cover and Subject Teachers are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis using the correct codes where known. Any notes given should be kept in attendance folder. Once the register is closed at 9am the register should be sent to the school office.

Kindergarten – Keep paper registers and return them to the school office at 9am. The data is transferred to the online registration module of the school management system (SIMS) as soon as is possible during their morning session by the Admin Team.

Lower and Middle School – Keep paper registers and return them to the school office at 9am. The data is transferred to the online registration module of the school management system (SIMS) as soon as is possible during their morning session by the Admin Team.

Admin Team

- The Admin team will check the absence emails and mark the registers accordingly.

- Any pupil arriving after 9am and before 10:30am will be entered into the paper register by the Admin team.

- Any absences for which there has been no authorisation and/or notifications the Admin team will contact the student's Parents / Carers to ascertain why they are not in school. The first call to parents if the reason for any absence is unknown will be before 10:30.

- Admin Team enters all reported absences to the paper registers and transfer the data from the paper registers to the online registration module (SIMS).

Lower and Middle School - The attendance registers will be placed in the class teacher's pigeonhole and the class teacher is responsible for taking the register at 2:05pm and return it by 2:30pm. It is the class teacher's responsibility to follow up on any absences if the reasons are unknown at this point. If the class teacher is teaching a note will be sent to the school office.

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Annex 1

Absence and Attendance Codes

The national codes enable schools to record and monitor attendance and absence in a consistent way which complies with the regulations. They are also used for collecting statistics through the School Census System. The data helps schools, local authorities and the Government to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reasons for, absence. The codes are:

Present at School

Pupils must not be marked present if they were not in school during registration. If a pupil were to leave the school premises after registration they would still be counted as present for statistical purposes.

Registration Code / \: Present in school / = am \ = pm

Present in school during registration.

Code L: Late arrival before the register has closed

Schools should have a policy on how long registers should be kept open; this should be for a reasonable length of time but not that registers are to be kept open for the whole session. A pupil arriving after the register has closed should be marked absent with code U, or with another absence code if that is more appropriate.

Present at an Approved Off-Site Educational Activity

An approved educational activity is where a pupil is taking part in supervised educational activity such as field trips, educational visits, work experience or alternative provision. Pupils can only be recorded as receiving off-site educational activity if the activity meets the requirements prescribed in regulation 6(4) of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006. The activity must be of an educational nature approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school. The activity must take place during the session for which the mark is recorded.

Attendance codes for when pupils are present at approved off-site educational activity are as follows:

Code B: Off-site educational activity

This code should be used when pupils are present at an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school. Ultimately schools are responsible for the safeguarding and welfare of pupils educated off-site. Therefore by using code B, schools are certifying that the education is supervised and measures have been taken to safeguard pupils. This code should not be used for any unsupervised educational activity or where a pupil is at home doing school work. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the provider of the alternative activity notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. The school should record the pupil's absence using the relevant absence code.

Code D: Dual Registered - at another educational establishment

This code is not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census. The law allows for dual registration of pupils at more than one school. This code is used to indicate that the pupil was not expected to attend the session in question because they were scheduled to attend the other school at which they are registered.

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The main examples of dual registration are pupils who are attending a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school on a temporary basis. It can also be used when the pupil is known to be registered at another school during the session in question.

Each school should only record the pupil's attendance and absence for those sessions that the pupil is scheduled to attend their school. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby all unexplained and unexpected absence is followed up in a timely manner.

Code J: At an interview with prospective employers, or another educational establishment

This code should be used to record time spent in interviews with prospective employers or another educational establishment. Schools should be satisfied that the interview is linked to employment prospects, further education or transfer to another educational establishment.

Code P: Participating in a supervised sporting activity

This code should be used to record the sessions when a pupil is taking part in a sporting activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.

Code V: Educational visit or trip

This code should be used for attendance at an organised trip or visit, including residential trips organised by the school, or attendance at a supervised trip of a strictly educational nature arranged by an organisation approved by the school.

Code W: Work experience

Work experience is for pupils in the final two years of compulsory education. Schools should ensure that they have in place arrangements whereby the work experience placement provider notifies the school of any absences by individual pupils. Any absence should be recorded using the relevant code.

Authorised Absence from School

Authorised absence' means that the school has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory school age to be away, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as justification for absence.

Absence codes when pupils are not present in school are as follows:

Code C: Leave of absence authorised by the school

Only exceptional circumstances warrant an authorised leave of absence. Schools should consider each application individually taking into account the specific facts and circumstances and relevant background context behind the request.

Code E: Excluded but no alternative provision made

If no alternative provision is made for a pupil to continue their education whilst they are excluded but still on the admission register, they should be marked absent in the attendance register using Code E. Alternative provision must be arranged for each excluded pupil from the sixth consecutive day of any fixed period or permanent exclusion. Where alternative provision is made they should be marked using the appropriate attendance code.

Code H: Holiday authorised by the school

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Head teachers (Team Leader) should not grant leave of absence unless there are exceptional circumstances. The application must be made in advance and the head teacher must be satisfied that there are exceptional circumstances based on the individual facts and circumstances of the case which warrant the leave. Where a leave of absence is granted, the head teacher will determine the number of days a pupil can be away from school. A leave of absence is granted entirely at the head teacher's discretion. Leave of Absence in term time must be made in advance by submitting a Leave Request form at least 4 weeks before the first day.

Code I: Illness (not medical or dental appointments)

Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness. Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness. If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness. Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if not satisfied of the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention. Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.

Code M: Medical or dental appointments

Missing registration for a medical or dental appointment is counted as an authorised absence. Schools should, however, encourage parents to make appointments out of school hours. Where this is not possible, the pupil should only be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary for the appointment.

Code R: Religious observance

Schools must treat absence as authorised when it is due to religious observance. The day must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the parents belong. Where necessary, schools should seek advice from the parents' religious body about whether it has set the day apart for religious observance.

Code S: Study leave

Schools must record study leave as authorised absence. Study leave should be used sparingly and only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. Provision should still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come into school to revise.

Code T: Gypsy, Roma and Traveller absence

A number of different groups are covered by the generic term Traveller – Roma, English and Welsh Gypsies, Irish and Scottish Travellers, Showmen (fairground people) and Circus people, Bargees (occupational boat dwellers) and New Travellers.

This code should be used when Traveller families are known to be travelling for occupational purposes and have agreed this with the school but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision. It should not be used for any other types of absence by these groups.

To help ensure continuity of education for Traveller children it is expected that the child should attend school elsewhere when their family is travelling and be dual registered at that school and the main school. Children from these groups whose families do not travel are expected to register at a school and attend as normal. They are subject to the same rules as other children in terms of the requirement to attend school regularly once registered at a school.

Unauthorised Absence from School

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Unauthorised absence is where a school is not satisfied with the reasons given for the absence. Absence codes are as follows:

Code G: Holiday not authorised by the school or in excess of the period determined by the head teacher.

If a school does not authorise a leave of absence for the purpose of a holiday but the parents still take the child out of school, or the child is kept away for longer than was agreed, the absence is unauthorised. The regulations do not allow schools to give retrospective approval. If the parents did not apply for leave of absence in advance, the absence must be recorded as unauthorised.

Code N: Reason for absence not yet provided

Schools should follow up all unexplained and unexpected absences in a timely manner. Every effort should be made to establish the reason for a pupil's absence. When the reason for the pupil's absence has been established the register should be amended. This code should 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 (absent from school without authorisation).

Code O: Absent from school without authorisation

If the school is not satisfied with the reason given for absence they should record it as unauthorised.

Code U: Arrived in school after registration closed

Schools should actively discourage late arrival, be alert to patterns of late arrival and seek an explanation from the parent.

Administrative Codes

The following codes are not counted as a possible attendance in the School Census:

Code X: Not required to be in school

This code is used to record sessions that non-compulsory school age children are not expected to attend.

Code Y: Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

This code can be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

- The school site, or part of it, is closed due to an unavoidable cause; or
- The transport provided by the school or a local authority is not available and where

  the pupil's home is not within walking distance; or

- A local or national emergency has resulted in widespread disruption to travel

  which has prevented the pupil from attending school. This code can also be used where a pupil is unable to attend because:

• The pupil is in custody; detained for a period of less than four months. If the school has evidence from the place of custody that the pupil is attending educational activities then they can record those sessions as code B (present at approved educational activity).

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This code is collected in the School Census for statistical purposes.

Code Z: Pupil not on admission register

This code is available to enable schools to set up registers in advance of pupils joining the school to ease administration burdens. 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.

Code #: Planned whole or partial school closure

This code should be used for whole or partial school closures that are known or planned in advance such as: between terms; half terms; occasional days (for example, bank holidays); weekends (where it is required by the management information system); up to five non-educational days to be used for curriculum planning/training; and use of schools as polling stations.

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