

# SACRED HEART CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL



## Attendance Policy

Approved by: LGC 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2023

Last reviewed:

Next review: June 2024

**Named personnel with designated responsibility for Attendance:**

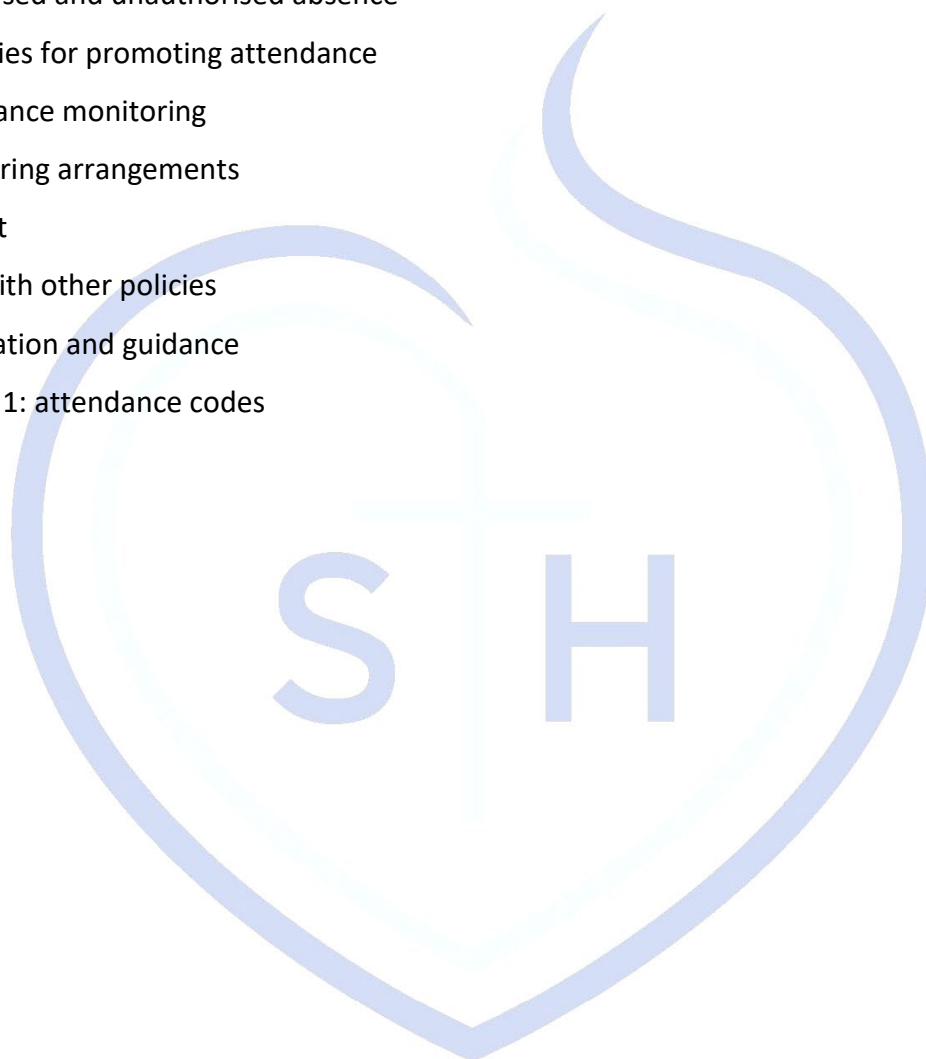
Academic year	Headteacher	Deputy Head (Pastoral)	Attendance Manager	Attendance Officer	Chair of Governors
2023-24	Suzanne Howell	Larry Clarke	Sue Mail	Paul Coulson	Denise Kendall

**Our school target is 96%**



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## **Attendance Policy**

### **1. Aims**

We are committed to meeting our obligation with regard to school attendance through our whole school approach that values good school attendance, including:

- Promoting good attendance
- Ensuring every child has access to full-time education
- Building and maintaining a strong relationship with families to enable targeted support to better school attendance
- Reducing absence, including persistent and severe absence
- Acting early to address patterns of absence
- Promoting the importance of arriving to school and lessons on time to support punctuality

### **2. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **2.1 The Governing Board**

The governing board is responsible for:

- Promoting the importance of school attendance across the school's policies and ethos
- Making sure school leaders fulfil expectations and statutory duties
- Regularly reviewing and challenging attendance data
- Monitoring attendance figures for the whole school
- Making sure staff receive adequate training on attendance
- Holding the headteacher to account for the implementation of this policy

#### **2.2 The Headteacher**

The headteacher is responsible for:

- Implementation of this policy at the school
- Monitoring school-level absence data and reporting it to governors
- Supporting staff with monitoring the attendance of individual students
- Monitoring the impact of any implemented attendance strategies
- Authorising the issuing fixed-penalty notices, where necessary

### **2.3 The Designated Senior Leader Responsible For Attendance**

The designated senior leader is responsible for:

- Leading attendance across the school
- Offering a clear vision for attendance improvement
- Evaluating and monitoring expectations and processes
- Having an oversight of data analysis
- Devising specific strategies to address areas of poor attendance identified through data
- Arranging calls and meetings with parents to discuss attendance issues
- Delivering targeted intervention and support to students and families

The designated senior leader responsible for attendance is Mr. Larry Clarke and can be contacted via telephone 0191 2747373 or email by [enquiries@shhs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@shhs.org.uk)

### **2.4 The Attendance Manager**

The school attendance officer is responsible for:

- Monitoring and analysing attendance data (see section 7)
- Benchmarking attendance data to identify areas of focus for improvement
- Providing regular attendance reports to school staff and reporting concerns about attendance to the designated senior leader responsible for attendance and the headteacher
- Working with relevant school staff to tackle persistent absence.
- Advising the Attendance Officer (authorised by the headteacher) when to issue fixed-penalty notices

The attendance manager is Mrs. Sue Maill and can be contacted via 0191 2747373 or by email at [enquiries@shhs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@shhs.org.uk).

### **2.5 Class Teachers/Form Tutors**

Class teachers/form tutors are responsible for recording attendance on a daily basis, using the correct codes, and submitting this information to the school office at the start of each morning and afternoon session and at the start of each teaching lesson/period.

### **2.6 School Office Staff**

School Office staff will:

- Take calls from parents about absence on a day-to-day basis and record it on the school system
- Transfer calls from parents to the Attendance Manager in order to provide them with more detailed support on attendance

## **2.7 Parents/Carers**

Parents/carers are expected to:

- Make sure their child attends every day on time
- Call the school to report their child's absence before 08:45 on the day of the absence and each subsequent day of absence), and advise when they are expected to return
- Provide the school with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child
- Ensure that, where possible, appointments for their child are made outside of the school day

## **2.8 Students**

Students are expected to:

- Attend every timetabled session on time

## **3. Recording Attendance**

### **3.1 Attendance Register**

We will keep an attendance register and place all students onto this register.

We will take our attendance register at the start of the first session of each school day and once during the second session. It will mark whether every student is:

- Present
- Attending an approved off-site educational activity
- Absent
- Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

Any amendment to the attendance register will include:

- The original entry
- The amended entry
- The reason for the amendment
- The date on which the amendment was made

The name and position of the person who made the amendment

See appendix 1 for the DfE attendance codes.

We will also record:

- Whether the absence is authorised or not
- The nature of the activity if a student is attending an approved educational activity

- The nature of circumstances where a student is unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances

We will keep every entry on the attendance register for 3 years after the date on which the entry was made.

Students must arrive at school by 08:40 on each school day.

The register for the first session will be taken at 08:45 and will be kept open until 09:15. The register for the second session will be taken at 13:45.

### **3.2 Unplanned Absence**

The student's parent/carer must notify the school of the reason for the absence on the first day of an unplanned absence by 08:45 or as soon as practically possible by calling the school to report the absence or using INSIGHT (see also section 7).

Telephone 0191 2747373 (option 1) or by email [enquiries@shhs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@shhs.org.uk)

We will mark absence due to illness as authorised unless the school is genuinely concerned about the illness's authenticity.

If the authenticity of the illness is in doubt, the school may ask the student's parent/carer to provide medical evidence, such as a doctor's note, prescription, appointment card or another appropriate form of evidence. We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily.

If the school is not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

### **3.3 Planned Absence**

Attending a medical or dental appointment will be counted as authorised if the parent/carer notifies the school in advance of the appointment.

Telephone 0191 2747373 (option 1) or by email [enquiries@shhs.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@shhs.org.uk)

However, we encourage parents/carers to make medical and dental appointments out of school hours where possible. Where this is not possible, the student should be out of school for the minimum amount of time necessary.

The student's parent/carer must also apply for other types of term-time absence as far in advance as possible of the requested absence. Go to section 5 to find out which term-time absences the school can authorise.

### **3.4 Lateness and Punctuality**

A student who arrives late:

- Before the register has closed will be marked as late, using the appropriate code
- After the register has closed will be marked as absent, using the appropriate code

Repeated absence at the beginning of a school session can amount to a failure to attend regularly for the purpose of 1996 Education Act. The school seeks to improve general punctuality and to improve the attitude of persistent offenders by:

- a. Informing parents of our expectations and offering ways of helping combat lateness.
- b. Parents of persistent offenders must be contacted and reported to the Attendance Officer if no improvement.
- c. Praise and acknowledge latecomers who improve.
- d. Ensure that staff set a good example by arriving punctually for lessons.
- e. All children and parents must understand that lateness is actively discouraged, although sensitivity may sometimes be appropriate.
- f. Schools may use other incentives to improve levels of punctuality
- g. The Attendance Office will be used to support students and families with any of the above issues.

Once the site gates are closed at 8.40 am the only way to get into school is via the Front gate and the 'Late Gate Officer'. Any student who comes into school after 8.45 am will be marked as late in the attendance record. Records are kept of those students who are late, this is documented on the electronic register for each student (Attendance code L). Any child who arrives for school later than 9.05 am will be marked as having an unauthorised absence for the morning. (Attendance code U). Children who have attended a dentist or doctor's appointment and subsequently come to the school later than 9.05 am will have the absence recorded as a medical absence (Attendance code M).

Children who are persistently late miss a significant amount of learning, often at the beginning of the day is the most important aspect, when the student receives information in assembly and from their personal tutor. Where there have been persistent incidents of lateness parents/carers will receive a letter advising them of the concerns and the school will provide opportunities for parents/carers to seek support and advice to address these issues.

### **3.5 Following Up On Unexplained Absence**

Where any student we expect to attend school does not attend, or stops attending, without reason, the school will:

- Contact the student's parent/carer on the morning of the first day of unexplained absence to ascertain the reason. If the school cannot reach any of the student's parental contacts, the school may ask for a home visit by the School Attendance Officer or the Police.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not
- Identify the correct attendance code to use and input it as soon as the reason for absence is ascertained – this will be no later than 5 working days after the session
- Contact the parent/carer on each day that the absence continues without explanation to ensure proper safeguarding action is taken where necessary. If absence continues, the school will consider involving an education welfare officer



### 3.6 Reporting to Parents/Carers

The school will regularly inform parents about their child's attendance and absence levels via INSIGHT, termly reports and letter if the school are concerned about failing levels.

## 4. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

### 4.1 Approval for Term-time Absence

The headteacher will only grant a leave of absence to a student during term time if they consider there to be 'exceptional circumstances'. A leave of absence is granted at the headteacher's discretion, and will include the length of time the student is authorised to be absent for.

The school considers each application for term-time absence individually, taking into account the specific facts, circumstances and relevant context behind the request.

Any request should be submitted as soon as it is anticipated and, where possible, at least two weeks before the absence, and in accordance with any leave of absence request form, accessible via the school Attendance Manager. The headteacher may require evidence to support any request for a leave of absence.

Valid reasons for **authorised and unauthorised absence** include:

<b>Authorised Absence</b>	<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>
Illness	Absence without a valid reason
Medical Appointment / Dental (For the time of appointment including travelling)	Holidays
Family Bereavement	Persistent lateness within the first 30 minutes of the day
Religious Observance	Babysitting children including siblings
Interview / Work Experience	Shopping during school time.
Excluded Children	Special occasions, e.g. birthdays.
Sports / Music / Exams	
Agreed other educational activity at the discretion of the Headteacher	

### 4.2 Extended Leave

When a child will be absent from school for an extended period (i.e. 15 school days or more) parent/carer should advise the school of the temporary address and contact details if different to those on record.

### 4.3 Legal Sanctions

The school or local authority can fine parents for the unauthorised absence of their child from school, where the child is of compulsory school age.

If issued with a fine, or penalty notice, each parent must pay £60 within 21 days or £120 within 28 days. The payment must be made directly to the local authority.

Penalty notices can be issued by a headteacher, local authority officer or the police.

The decision on whether or not to issue a penalty notice may take into account:

- The number of unauthorised absences occurring within a rolling academic year
- One-off instances of irregular attendance, such as holidays taken in term time without permission
- Where an excluded student is found in a public place during school hours without a justifiable reason

If the payment has not been made after 28 days, the local authority can decide whether to prosecute or withdraw the notice.

## **5. Strategies for Promoting Attendance**

The school will regularly discuss the importance of good school attendance throughout our school day although good attendance is an expectation the school seeks to improve the whole school

attendance by offering incentives, this may include:

- 100% Certificates
- Prizes
- Positive Postcards
- Letters
- School / Class Events
- Trips

## **6. Attendance Monitoring**

### **6.1 Monitoring Attendance**

Our office staff have the responsibility for ensuring that all of the attendance data is accurately recorded on the SIMs attendance software. Regular meetings are held with the Head teacher to discuss all attendance concerns and appropriate actions are taken following these meetings such as letters sent to parents or meetings arranged to discuss attendance concerns with parents.

## 6.2 Analysing Attendance

At Sacred Heart Catholic High School, we follow a traffic light system, the purpose of colour coding helps staff, Parents and Students have a clear understanding of our expectations.

- **Red Zone: Under 90%**

Students in the red zone are more likely to underachieve, find making friendships difficult and misbehave. Legal action may also be taken against Parents/Carers of Red Zone students.

- **Amber Zone: 90% - 95%**

Students in this zone are still at risk of underachieving due to the absence level. Students who miss school regularly are more likely to suffer from school-related stress. If your child in the Amber Zone, we will contact you to complete a Parent Contract to help avoid attendance falling into the Red Zone.

- **Green Zone: 95% - 100%**

We expect students to have Green attendance throughout their education. Those in the Green are more likely to do well in examinations, have better job opportunities and can develop strong friendships within school.

## 6.3 Using Data to Improve Attendance

The school will:

- Provide regular attendance reports to Heads of Year, form tutors, and other school leaders, to facilitate discussions with students and families
- Use data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies

## 6.4 Reducing Persistent and Severe Absence

Persistent absence is where a student misses 10% or more of school, and severe absence is when a student misses 50% or more.

The school will:

- Use attendance data to find patterns and trends of a persistent and severe absence
- Hold regular meetings with the parents of students whom the school (and/or local authority) considers being vulnerable, or are persistently or severely absent, to discuss attendance and engagement at school
- Provide access to wider support services to remove the barriers to attendance

## 7. Monitoring Arrangements

This policy will be reviewed as guidance from the local authority or DfE is updated, and as a minimum yearly by the Head of Pastoral. At every review, the policy will be approved by the full governing board.

## 8. Support

The school will:

- Build relationships with students and families to encourage regular school attendance.
- Analyse and use data and relationship knowledge to prevent regular absence.
- Using resources (School based and external services) to intervene early with support.
- Use targeted support for persistent/severe absences.

## 9. Links With Other Policies

This policy links to the following policies:

- Safeguarding policy
- Behaviour & Exclusions policy

## 10. Legislation and Guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the [working together to improve school attendance](#) 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:

- Part 6 of [The Education Act 1996](#)
- Part 3 of [The Education Act 2002](#)
- Part 7 of [The Education and Inspections Act 2006](#)
- [The Education \(Student Registration\) \(England\) Regulations 2006 \(and 2010, 2011, 2013, 2016 amendments\)](#)
- [The Education \(Penalty Notices\) \(England\) \(Amendment\) Regulations 2013](#)

This policy also refers to the DfE's guidance on the [school census](#), which explains the persistent absence threshold

- [Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance](#)
- [Support for students where mental health issue is affecting attendance \(Effective practice examples\)](#)

## Appendix 1: Attendance Codes

The following codes are taken from the DfE's guidance on school attendance.

Code	Definition	Scenario
/	Present (am)	Student is present at morning registration
\	Present (pm)	Student is present at afternoon registration
L	Late arrival	Student arrives late before register has closed
B	Off-site educational activity	Student is at a supervised off-site educational activity approved by the school
D	Dual registered	Student is attending a session at another setting where they are also registered
J	Interview	Student has an interview with a prospective employer/educational establishment
P	Sporting activity	Student is participating in a supervised sporting activity approved by the school
V	Educational trip or visit	Student is on an educational visit/trip organised, or approved, by the school
W	Work experience	Student is on a work experience placement

Code	Definition	Scenario
<b>Authorised Absence</b>		
<b>C</b>	Authorised leave of absence	Student has been granted a leave of absence due to exceptional circumstances
<b>E</b>	Excluded	Student has been excluded but no alternative provision has been made
<b>H</b>	Authorised holiday	Student has been allowed to go on holiday due to exceptional circumstances
<b>I</b>	Illness	School has been notified that a student will be absent due to illness
<b>M</b>	Medical/dental appointment	Student is at a medical or dental appointment
<b>R</b>	Religious observance	Student is taking part in a day of religious observance
<b>S</b>	Study leave	Year 11 student is on study leave during their public examinations
<b>T</b>	Gypsy, Roma and traveller absence	Student from a traveller community is travelling, as agreed with the school
<b>Unauthorised Absence</b>		

<b>G</b>	Unauthorised holiday	Student is on a holiday that was not approved by the school
<b>N</b>	Reason not provided	Student is absent for an unknown reason (this code should be amended when the reason emerges, or replaced with code O if no reason for absence has been provided after a reasonable amount of time)
<b>O</b>	Unauthorised absence	The school is not satisfied with the reason for the student's absence
<b>U</b>	Arrival after registration	Student arrived at school after the register closed

<b>Code</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Scenario</b>
<b>X</b>	Not required to be in school	Student of non-compulsory school age is not required to attend
<b>Y</b>	Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances	The school site is closed, there is a disruption to travel as a result of a local/national emergency, or the student is in custody
<b>Z</b>	Student not on admission register	Register set up but student has not yet joined the school
<b>#</b>	Planned school closure	Whole or partial school closure due to half-term/bank holiday/INSET day