



## St Paul's Catholic Primary School

### Attendance Policy

**Mission:** *Our pupils and all members of our school community encompass, celebrate and live our values by:*

*Journeying together, The St Paul's Way.*

**Our Vision**

*An exceptional community where acceptance, compassion and diversity is valued. We will encourage inspire our children to serve God for the good of all, to excel in their learning and be resilient and caring. Our community will recognise, celebrate and protect God's gift of the world through the provision of a creative, relevant and ambitious curriculum which enables our children to be confident and prepared for modern life.*

**Our Values:**

*Respect, Friendship, Perseverance, Honesty, Caring, Thankfulness and Confidence which are rooted in the Gospels of Jesus Christ and we support and encourage those values which form our modern British Society – Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance (value) of those of different faiths and beliefs.*

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Signed (chair): <i>C Lawler</i>	Name: Carol Lawler	Date: 3/12/24
Signed (Head):	Name: Mrs Maxine Sewell	Date: 3/12/24
Ratified by: Governing Body on: 3 <sup>rd</sup> December 2024		Next Review: Autumn 2025

## Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)

### Part 1: EIA Screening

<b>Policies, Procedures or Practices</b>		<b>Date</b>	November 2024
<b>EIA CARRIED OUT BY:</b>	Carol Lawler	<b>EIA APPROVED BY:</b>	Maxine Sewell

Groups that may be affected:

Are there any concerns that the policy could have a different impact on any of the following groups? (please tick the relevant boxes)	Existing or potential adverse impact	Existing or potential for positive impact
Age (young people, the elderly: issues surrounding protection and welfare, recruitment, training, pay, promotion)		YES
Disability (physical and mental disability, learning difficulties; issues surrounding access to buildings, curriculum and communication).		YES
Trans Gender		YES
Marriage and civil partnership		YES
Pregnancy and maternity		YES
Racial Groups (consider: language, culture, ethnicity including gypsy/traveller groups and asylum seekers)		YES
Religion or belief (practices of worship, religious or cultural observance, including non-belief)		YES
Gender (male, female)		YES
Sexual orientation (gay, lesbian, bisexual; actual or perceived)		YES

Any adverse impacts are explored in a Full Impact Assessment

## 1. Rationale

1.1 Regular attendance at school is essential to each child's academic success and life-chances. Research links attendance with achievement, indicating that even occasional broken weeks can have a negative effect. We believe that the most important factor in promoting good attendance is the development of positive attitudes towards school. In promoting good attendance it is also hoped that this will lead to the development of habits of good attendance and punctuality for the future. We expect all children on roll to attend every day, when the school is in session, as long as they are fit and healthy enough to do so. We will also make the best provision we can for those children who, for whatever reason, are prevented from coming to school.

1.2 **Regular school attendance** is essential to ensure the best outcomes for our pupils. "Regular" in our policy assumes that all pupils attend each and every day that they are expected to attend. There may be exceptional circumstances when absences may be agreed in line with national attendance code guidance.

### 1.3 Health Needs and attendance.

The majority of all register absence marks relate to illness codes. In order to ensure health needs are addressed we will take full account of the medical needs policy.

## 2 Purposes

- 2.1 To ensure that parents/carers understand their duties to see that their children are present at school, for the morning and afternoon sessions, on the days that the school is open for pupils except where circumstances are deemed to constitute an authorised absence (see 3.3)
- 2.2 To ensure that teachers and other school staff are aware of the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence and the procedures for recording and reporting such occurrences.
- 2.3 To enable action to be taken quickly where unexplained absence or regular lateness occurs.
- 2.4 To ensure that officers of the Local Education Authority are informed where necessary so that they can fulfil their statutory obligations.

## 3 Registration Guidelines

### 3.1 Attendance registration.

We have a legal duty to register all pupils in the attendance register in the morning and afternoon. We will code according to national guidelines. Where there is a pattern of absence and no clear supporting evidence of acceptable reasons for absence we will mark these as unauthorised. (See 'health and attendance').

### 3.2 The registration period will be deemed to be:

8:40 am to 8:50 am

1:25pm to 1.30 pm

After these times the registers will be deemed to be closed.

3.3 Any arrival after 8:50 am and 1.25 pm will be regarded as late and marked accordingly using the Late Code. Arrivals after these times will be recorded as unauthorised (U) code. An entry for that child will be made in the Pupil Sign in/out book kept in reception and will be dated, timed and any reason given recorded. It is used to reconcile the class register in the event of a school evacuation or fire drill.

### 3.4 Persistent lateness

We believe that a pupil arriving late will not receive the best outcomes. Arriving late can be unsettling for the pupil and may cause classroom disruption. Parents who bring children to school persistently late will be invited to attend a School Attendance meeting and could be liable for a fixed penalty notice in line with the South Gloucestershire Local Code of Conduct (September 2024)

### 3.5 First Day of Absence Call

It is essential that parents provide an explanation as to why their child is absent from school as early in the school day as possible so that the school knows that the child is safe and hasn't been injured or abducted if walking to school alone. We will regularly request updates of parent-carer contact information. Adults who have day to day care of a pupil are legally responsible for ensuring regular attendance. We will ensure that we know where children are via our First Day Absence procedure outlined below:

- o Parents have a responsibility to call the school before school and leave a message on the office answering machine to let the school know if a child is absent from school on that day, along with the reason for this absence. A note will be made on the digital register next to the absence mark explaining the absence.
- o **Should a parent not ring the school**, before 9:30am the school office will send a text to remind the parent that they need to call. They will send a second text 30 minutes later. Should neither text be responded to, the school office will call the parent and ask for an explanation for the absence. *Parents should not rely on the office phoning them as this wastes valuable administration time.*
- o **Should the parent not answer the phone**, other contact numbers will be tried to establish the whereabouts of the child.
- o **Should the parent still not be contactable**, the Headteacher will assess the risk to that child based on evidence available. The school will then either conduct a home visit, or ask the police to carry out a welfare check in order to establish that the child is safe.
- p If the pupil has left the school without explanation and there are concerns about the pupil's welfare we will contact the local Access and Response Team immediately.

## 4. Health and Attendance

4.1 Where illness is a clear reason for a pattern of absence with supporting information (for example prescription information, medical appointment cards, information from other health professionals) we will put in place an Individual Health Care Plan in line with the South Gloucestershire Council Medical Needs Policy. We may ask for consent to share information from the GP to best support the child's needs.

4.2 Where there are occasional absences such as for sickness and diarrhoea there is no requirement for medical supporting information. For repeat absences we will follow government guidance and agree to absences where there is appropriate medical supporting information.

4.3 Where a parent/ carer maintains that absences are regularly the result of ill-health, yet no evidence of this is provided, the school may choose to not automatically authorise such absences.

## 5. Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

5.1 The decision to authorise an absence is made by the Headteacher. There is no automatic right for an absence to be authorised.

5.2 Absence can be **authorised** if:

- The pupil is ill or prevented from attending by unavoidable cause.
- The absence occurs so that the pupil could take place in a religious observance set apart by the religious body to which the parent/carer belongs.
- The school at which the child is registered is not within walking distance of the child's home and no suitable transport, boarding accommodation arrangements or alternative school placement have been made by the LA.
- There is a family bereavement.
- The pupil is involved in an exceptional special occasion (whether an absence is exceptional is determined by the Headteacher.
- *Family birthdays/ gatherings or holidays are not considered exceptional special occasions and will not be authorised.*

5.3 Absence will be counted as unauthorised if:

- No explanation is forthcoming. The school should be informed on the first day of any absence and the reason and expected length of absence given.
- The school is dissatisfied with the explanation.
- The pupil is absent for **unexceptional** special occasions.
- The pupil is away from school on a family holiday.
- The pupil arrives after the close of the register and is assigned a U code.

5.4 The 1996 Education Act requires parents and carers to ensure children attend school regularly and punctually. Where patterns of absence or broken weeks have been identified, we will seek to engage with parents-carers and the young person. Where efforts to address attendance have not lead to a reduction in unauthorised absence consideration will be given to a formal legal process.

## **6. Penalty Notices:**

6.1 In cases where parents or carers take their child on holiday during term time we will follow the South Gloucestershire Local Code of Conduct (September 2024) and request that a Penalty Notice is issued by the local authority where applicable.

6.2 They may be issued to one or both parents/carers regarding each of their children if more than 10 sessions in 10 weeks (1 session equals either a morning or afternoon) of unauthorised absence are accumulated in a 7 week period (i.e. 70 sessions of possible attendance at school). A session is a morning or an afternoon. Any person with day to day care of the child may be issued with a Notice; this could include grandparents, step-parents and partners.

6.3 Unauthorised Holidays in term time will automatically result in the school requesting a Fixed Penalty Notice on the 11th missed session in 10 weeks.

6.4 Other than for holidays in term time, the decision regarding the issue of a Penalty Notice will be taken as part of the legal process between the school and local authority (i.e. at Attendance Panels and Reviews).

6.5 The fine is £80 per parent per child if paid within 21 days of receipt of the notice for the first offence; rising to £160 if not paid within 21 days. The payment must be made in full – part payments will not be accepted - details of how to pay are printed on the Penalty Notice. Any fines after this will be at the higher rate, with no reduction offered.

6.6 From the 2024 to 2025 school year, each parent will only get up to 2 fines for the same child in a 3-year period.

If you get a second fine in 3 years it will be £160. If you do not pay the fine in 28 days you may be taken to court for keeping your child out of school.

If your child is off school 3 or more times within the 3 years you will not be fined but may be taken to court.

## **7. Parental Engagement regarding attendance:**

7.1 We believe regular attendance is so important in ensuring best outcomes for our pupils that we will review our attendance performance each term. We will regularly analyse the pupils where there is a pattern of absence. Where a child has a pattern of broken weeks,\* we will contact parents and may arrange to meet and review progress. The school will discuss attendance concerns with parents at the earliest opportunity as working in partnership is the most effective way to improve attendance.

7.2 **Appendix 1** shows the action that will be taken to engage with parents, initially through informal discussions or a standard awareness raising letter, then through more formal School Attendance Plans and School Attendance Contracts meetings, where:

- there are five broken or incomplete weeks in each term (Autumn, Spring, Summer).\* A broken week is one where there is at least one late or absence mark in the register;
- attendance is below 95% over a term;
- there have been repeat late or U code marks with or without other attendance concern

## **8. Removal from Roll**

- 8.1 There are strict grounds as to when schools may remove pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 2006. Regulation 12(6) states that when a school has decided to delete a pupil's name from their admission roll they must notify their Local Authority as soon as the ground for removal is met and no later than the time at which the pupil's name is removed from the register.
- 8.3 If there are concerns that a pupil may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) or radicalisation we will contact the Access and Response Team immediately.
- 8.4 If the school is told that a pupil is leaving to attend another school, staff at the school of departure will establish the pupil's new address, the name and address of the new school and the date the pupil will start there. Once the school has confirmation that the child has started at the new school, they will update School Management Information System (SMIS). Whenever a pupil leaves a school a Common Transfer File (CTF) must be completed.
- 8.5 If the school is concerned about any aspect of a transfer or if a pupil has "disappeared" the matter will be drawn without delay to the attention of the Access and Response Team immediately. Please see further information in Children Missing Education Team in the Local Authority.

## **Part time timetables**

- 9.1 All pupils of compulsory school age are entitled to a full-time education. In exceptional circumstances there may be a need for a part time timetable to meet an individual pupil's needs and this decision is made by the Head Teacher in consultation with external agencies. A part time timetable is time limited and must not be treated as a long term solution and can only be made with parental agreement. This will be reviewed every two weeks within the time limited period. The school will mark the sessions where the pupil is not expected to attend as authorised absence. (Code C).

## **10. Attendance Data**

- 10.1 Whole School Attendance Data is shared with the Governing Body as part of the Headteacher's Report and is published on the school website annually.
- 10.2 Targets to improve attendance are set by the Governing Body annually.
- 10.3 There is a named Attendance Governor who monitors the school's attendance procedures along with the Headteacher.

## Appendix 1 - STAGES OF PARENTAL **CONTACT**:

**Commented [DL1]:** Maxine, It maybe helpful for us to discuss changes to process to support with completing the section as there have been significant changes in line with the 'working together to improve attendance' guidance that was update on 19<sup>th</sup> August

STAGE	THRESHOLD	CONTACT/ ACTION
<b>Stage 1</b>	<p><b>Where there are no prior concerns regarding attendance in previous academic year:</b></p> <p>Year to date broken weeks 5 or more broken weeks in an old-style term (e.g. T1-2, T3-4, T5-6),</p> <p><b>AND/ OR</b></p> <p><i>Attendance less than 95% with no clear, valid explanation (e.g. single illness).</i></p>	<p>Attendance Letter 1 - <i>explaining that attendance has fallen below the school's expected threshold, offering support and informing parents that attendance will be monitored more closely for the next two terms.</i></p>
<b>Stage 2</b>	<p>Two terms or more &gt; 5% broken weeks</p> <p><b>AND/ OR</b></p> <p><i>Attendance less than 95% with no clear, valid explanation (e.g. single illness).</i></p> <p><b>AND/ OR</b></p> <p><i>Attendance less than 95% AND &gt;5% or more broken weeks in the previous academic year.</i></p>	<p><b>'School Attendance Meeting'</b> held with parents and Headteacher to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss impact of missed Learning</li> <li>• investigate reasons for absence and solutions</li> <li>• set attendance targets</li> <li>• consider creation of Individual Health care plan where applicable</li> <li>• notify parents of possible Fixed Penalty Notice.</li> <li>• Set review period</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 3</b>	<p>Continued broken weeks AND/ OR insufficient improvement in attendance since last School Attendance Meeting.</p> <p><b>AND/ OR</b></p> <p>Attendance less than 90% AND/ OR 10 or more broken weeks in the <u>previous academic year</u> despite School Attendance Meetings during this period.</p>	<p>Further School Attendance Meeting with HT and/or Education Welfare Officer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss impact of missed learning</li> <li>• investigate reasons for absence and solutions</li> <li>• explain final, short review period before start of legal process (Attendance Panel Meeting).</li> <li>• notify parents of possible Fixed Penalty Notice.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 4</b>	<p>Continued broken weeks AND/ OR insufficient improvement in attendance since final School Attendance Meeting</p>	<p><b>Attendance Panel Meeting Held.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Advise parent/carer that a panel meeting will take place.</li> </ul>



	<p><b>AND/ OR</b></p> <p>Attendance less than 90% AND/ OR 10 or more broken weeks in the <u>previous academic year</u> despite final School Attendance Meetings during ____ this period.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Attendance Panel meeting takes place (Letter sent to arrange)</li> <li>• Parents warned about possible legal action if attendance doesn't improve.</li> </ul>
<b>Stage 5</b>	If no improvement after 4 weeks of Attendance Panel Meeting.,	<p><b>Attendance Panel review</b> chaired by LA representative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LA considers beginning legal process for non-attendance.</li> </ul>

**Parents/Carers will be formally notified in writing at which stage the case is being considered and when they move to the next stage.**