



St Hilary's School

Attendance Policy

Introduction

At St Hilary's School, we see education as a partnership between the family and the school. Our school is dedicated to preparing our children for their adult life beyond formal education and ensuring that it promotes and reinforces British Values to all our children. We actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Moto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

We are committed to providing the highest quality of education for our pupils, and we look to parents to support this objective. Regular attendance at school is essential to ensure uninterrupted progress and to enable pupils to attain their potential. The attendance pattern for all children is monitored weekly with the school seeking to work actively with parents to ensure a regular pattern is maintained. 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. Poor attendance can seriously affect each child's attainment in school, relationships with other children and their ability to form lasting friendships, confidence to attempt new work and to learn alongside others. The Governors and Headmistress, in partnership with parents, have a duty to promote full attendance at school and take their responsibility to Safeguard Children, KCSIE (2018), Children Missing Education extremely seriously. All pupils are required to be in school before 8.40am, although some pupils may arrive earlier to attend before school care and/or Breakfast Club. The school day ends at 3.30pm for Pre-Prep and 4.00pm for Prep, although many pupils remain later to take part in extra-curricular activities, or to attend after school care, under the supervision of a member of staff.

The Law and ISI guidelines

Every school is required by law to maintain two separate registers of its pupils:

- an admissions register, known as the 'school roll'
- an attendance register

ISI inspectors are required to check both registers when inspecting independent schools to assure themselves that the requirements of the regulations are being met.

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.

The Government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence.
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled.
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children, of compulsory school age and who are registered at school, attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

St Hilary's understands that we have a legal duty to report certain attendance issues to the local authority: ten days of unauthorised absence (other than for reasons of sickness or leave of absence), failure to attend regularly, and deletion from the school register when the next school is not known. In this last case, independent schools are required to report the circumstances as soon as possible to the local authority (LA) in which the child lives. Working Together to Safeguard Children (WT) states the importance of inter-agency working in order to promote the welfare of children. For further information, please see the **Admissions Policy** which includes information regarding the Admissions Register and procedures regarding pupils joining and leaving the school..

Registers

Class/Form teachers complete a register at the beginning of each morning and afternoon session. Registers are completed online through our School Management System. Marking the attendance registers twice daily is a legal requirement. The DfE publication, Children missing education (2016), and regulatory requirements, describe the legal requirements in relation to registers. Teachers mark pupils according to the register guidelines (**Appendix 1**). Pupil attendance is monitored weekly to highlight, and take action, where the attendance of individual children is causing concern. The morning register is taken at 8.45 and closes at 8.50 where pupils, who are not present, will be marked with an N if the reason is unknown. This will be changed when the reason for absence has been established. A pupil arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late (L) by the School Office, once the pupil has arrived. The lunch register is completed after lunch break, at 1.30, and is closed at 1.40.

Pupils attending before and after-school care will be registered by the supervisor.

Authorised Absence

An absence is classified as authorised when a child has been away from school for a legitimate reason and the school has received notification from a parent or carer. For example, if a child has been unwell and the parent writes a note or telephones the school to explain the absence. Only the Headmistress can authorise absence for approved reasons where the absence must be unavoidable. The Headmistress is not obliged to accept a parent's explanation and if the absence is not authorised, parents will be notified.

Unauthorised Absence

An absence is classified as unauthorised when a child is away from school without the permission of the Headmistress. Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no authorisation has been given. This includes parents keeping children off school unnecessarily, absences that have never been properly explained, holidays not agreed, persistent non-specific illness, absence of siblings if one child is ill, parental illness, oversleeping, inadequate clothing/uniform, confusion over school dates, medical/dental appointments of more than half a day without very good reason and child's/family birthdays. The school will follow the guidelines for reporting absence to the Local Authority in view of KCSIE (2018) and Children Missing Education (2016).

According to KCSIE (2018), all staff should be aware that children going missing, particularly repeatedly, can act as a vital warning sign of a range of safeguarding possibilities. This may include abuse and neglect, which may include sexual abuse or exploitation and child criminal exploitation. It may indicate mental health problems, risk of substance abuse, risk of travelling to conflict zones, risk of female genital mutilation or risk of forced marriage. Early intervention is necessary to identify the existence of any underlying

safeguarding risk and to help prevent the risks of a child going missing in future. Staff should be aware of the unauthorised absence and children missing from education procedures.

Parental Responsibility

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and arrives on time. Full attendance is essential to the all-round development of a child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them by law. Poor attendance undermines their education and sometimes, puts pupils at risk. Parents are able to view their child's/children's attendance by logging into the Parent Portal. It is the parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent and every subsequent day after that. This is a safeguarding matter so that all parties know that every child is safe.

Pupils are expected to arrive between 8.30 and 8.40am, when the front gate is opened and children go to class. Some pupils may attend Hedgehogs morning care which begins at 7.45am for Breakfast Club. Children have the choice of either having breakfast at 8am or staying in the classroom until 8.30am; both are supervised by members of staff. Parents book their children in for Breakfast Club and are charged for this service. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where they are registered.

Pupils are not normally allowed to leave the site during the school day, unless accompanied by a member of staff, for a trip, a visit or a sporting fixture. The dates of these are published in the Calendar or will have been notified to parents in advance. Pupils will also be granted absences for school visits and external examinations. Requests for leave of absence on compassionate grounds, or in exceptional circumstances, should be made in writing to the Headmistress (see **Appendix 2** for medical absence requests and **Appendix 3** for non-medical absence requests) well in advance of the proposed absence.

Term dates are published in the school calendar so that holidays can be arranged without disrupting the pupil's education. Please note that it is our policy not to allow holidays to be taken during term, unless there are exceptional circumstances or the pupil is below compulsory school age.

Illness and Medical Appointments

If your child is unwell, please contact (via email or telephone) the School Office before 8.40am on the first day, and every subsequent day, of absence informing the school of the reason for absence. The absence will then be marked in the register. As part of our Safeguarding Procedures, the school office will contact the parent or carer and other emergency contacts if no message has been received regarding the reason for the absence to check on the safety of the child. In order to be compliant with safeguarding guidelines and KCSIE (2018), parents/caregivers are required to give more than one emergency number for each pupil.

Every effort should be made to arrange medical appointments outside of school hours. If it is necessary for a child to be out of school for this reason, the child should be returned to school directly after the appointment.

If your child is absent due to vomiting, they should not return to the School for the next 48 hours after the last bout of sickness. This is to reduce the risk of infection to other children and adults at school.

Following absence, the School requires a written explanation of why the child was absent. The School Office will request this if it is not produced. Medical certificates are required for an absence greater than five days.

Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

A pupil becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year **for whatever reason**. Absence at this level is doing considerable damage to any child's educational prospects;

missing school seriously affects children's longer term life opportunities and we need parents/carers fullest support and co-operation to tackle this.

We monitor all absence thoroughly. Any case that is seen to have reached the PA mark, or is at risk of moving towards that mark, is given priority and you will be informed of this immediately. PA pupils are tracked and monitored carefully through our pastoral system.

If attendance at school continues to worsen, we will make a referral to the Education Welfare Service who offer support to parents/carers and to the school to ensure the student attends regularly. If necessary, the Education Welfare Service will arrange home visits and/or contact other agencies to meet with the family to ensure attendance improves.

Attendance records

It is the responsibility of the school attendance team to ensure that attendance and lateness records are up to date. If no reason for absence has been provided, parents are contacted on the first day of absence. Where it is not possible to make contact, letters are sent to parents requesting reasons for absence with a seven day reply deadline before the absence is recorded as unauthorised.

The school should follow up any absences to:

- Ascertain the reason.
- Ensure the proper safeguarding action is taken.
- Identify whether the absence is approved or not.
- Identify the correct code to use before entering it on to the school's electronic register.

Non-attendance is an important issue that is treated seriously. However, each case is different and the school acknowledges that no one standard response will be appropriate in every case. Consideration is given to all factors affecting attendance before deciding what intervention strategies to apply. It is essential that parents keep the school fully informed of any matters that may affect their child's attendance.

Children at risk of missing education

Schools are required to alert their Local Authority after a pupil of compulsory school age has been absent without authority for 10 consecutive days, or fails to attend school regularly, or is removed from the school roll without his or her next school being known. Children cannot be removed from the school roll until we have been notified by another school that a place has been offered and accepted. Children who stop attending, and who cannot be traced, cannot be removed from the school roll. Where a child is missing from education, Local Authority guidance will be followed.

Our school is dedicated to preparing our children for their adult life beyond formal education and ensuring that it promotes and reinforces British Values to all our children.

Reviewed: June 2019

Next review date: June 2020

Person responsible: Mrs Aislinn Clarke (Deputy Head)

Appendix 1: Register codes

Code	Meaning	Notes on use
#	School closed	
\	Present	
B	Educated off site	Senior School Visits
C	Other authorised	Where parents have requested absence from JW e.g. horse riding comp, cricket, theatre trips and she has agreed and said it will be authorised
D	Dual registration	DO NOT USE
E	Excluded	
F	Extended family holiday	DO NOT USE
G	Family holiday (unauthorised)	
H	Family holiday (authorised)	
I	Illness	
J	Interview	DO NOT USE
L	Late	
M	Medical/Dental appointment	
N	No reason yet provided for absence	Teacher doesn't know why they're absent
O	Unauthorised absence	Where parents have requested absence from JW e.g. horse riding comp, cricket, theatre trips and she has agreed but said it will be unauthorised.
P	Approved sporting activity	e.g. netball tournaments
R	Religious observance	Office use only
S	Study leave	DO NOT USE
T	Traveller absence	DO NOT USE
U	Late (after register closed)	DO NOT USE
V	Educational visit/trip	Accompanied by school
W	Work experience	DO NOT USE
X	Un-timetabled sessions for non-compulsory school age pupils	DO NOT USE
Y	Enforced closure	Office use only
Z	Pupil not on roll	Nursery/KG only

Key
For staff use
Office use only
DO NOT USE
Nursery/KG only

Appendix 2: LEAVE OF ABSENCE - Medical

This is to request that my child/ren

..... Class

..... Class

Be permitted to be absent from school on (date)

- Doctor's appointment
- Dentist's appointment
- Hospital appointment
- Other Please specify

They will leave school at and return at

Signature of parent/guardian Date

✂ -----

TEACHER COPY

..... (name) will be absent on(date)

- Doctor's appointment
- Dentist's appointment
- Hospital appointment
- Other Please specify

They will leave school at and return at

Appendix 3: LEAVE OF ABSENCE – Non Medical

This is to request that my child/ren

..... Class

..... Class

Be permitted to be absent from school on (date)

- Senior School Open Day Name of School
- Scholarship / Interview Please Specify
- Entrance Exam Name of School
- Music/Art/Ballet/other External Exam Please Specify
- Other Please specify

For Holiday Requests, please email the Head’s PA: secretary@sthilarysschool.com

They will leave school at and return at

Signature of parent/guardian Date

✂ -----

TEACHER COPY

..... (name) will be absent on (date)

- Senior School Open Day Name of School
- Scholarship / Interview Please Specify
- Entrance Exam Name of School
- Music/Art/other External Exam Please Specify
- Other Please specify

They will leave school at and return at