

Attendance Procedure

Please read in conjunction with the **Attendance Policy** under the Information tab on the school website. This procedure has been developed with the guidance of the Local Authority Inclusion Officer.

Reporting absence

If you need to report your child's absence from school, you can either telephone or email the school office **by 08.45am** on the following:

Tel: 01428 684693

Email: office@stdominicsschool.org.uk.

We ask that you mail the office, because this email address is managed by our School Office team. If you email a tutor or other member of staff and they are not in school, the email will not be seen.

Reporting the reason for absence

As well as knowing that your child is absent, we also need to know the reason for absence, as we are required to record this information. Therefore, if you have left a message to report absence, but have not told us why, please understand that we will need to contact you to confirm this.

Medical absences

If your child is absent for medical reasons, as a parent you can self-certify for a period of 7 days consecutively. After this, or if we are concerned for any other reason, we may ask for evidence to support the absence.

Please note that we operate **the 48-hour rule** with regards to sickness and diarrhoea. If your child has sickness or diarrhoea, they must not return to school until 48 hours after the last time they have had an episode of either sickness or diarrhoea, even if they seem better in themselves. This is to reduce widespread infection and follows the advice from Public Health England.

We also understand that many of our children have to attend **Medical / CAMHS / Therapy** appointments and we ask that you provide medical evidence such as a copy of the appointment letter or forwarded email. We understand that these appointments are often allocated during school hours though, where possible, we ask that the pupil/student attends school before or after the appointment. For example, if the appointment is at 10:00am, they could come back to school afterwards, or if the appointment is at 2:00pm, they could be collected after lunch. We understand that not all appointments are in local areas and that this may not always be possible. Equally, we understand if your child is undergoing certain treatment that it is not possible to return to school on the same day.

Exceptional leave of absence for exceptional circumstances

Please see the guidance set out on the application form below.

What we have to do if a pupil or student is not in school and his / her absence has not been reported

If we have not received a message by the time the registers closes, the school will then contact you by phone to confirm why your child is absent. If we are unable to make contact, for safeguarding reasons we will then call the other two contacts provided. We follow this procedure every day that a pupil or student is absent without reason from school.

If we are unable to establish the whereabouts and wellbeing of the pupil or student, we have to contact the Police or Children's Services about a 'Concern for Welfare'. This may in turn result in a home visit by one of these agencies in order to ensure the wellbeing of your child.

Working with families to manage attendance

Keeping up to date contact details is essential to help us manage attendance and ensure the whereabouts and wellbeing of our pupils and students. Having three contacts for each pupil and student is a requirement for all schools. Please do let us know if your contact details change. We also ask, as an agenda item on our annual reviews, that you check and sign to confirm that the contact details we hold on file for your child are correct.

We fully understand that many of our pupils and students have complex needs which can affect their wellbeing, and this may sometimes affect their ability to attend school. We are sensitive to these needs and will remain as supportive as possible. We also know that even the healthiest of children can become ill. However, we also need ensure that our pupils and students attend school to enable them to achieve and make the best possible progress. Our Safeguarding Team reviews the attendance of all pupils and students and monitors those with attendance of less than 95%.

In order to improve attendance, there are many actions that we might take which tend to be very individualised. Often the first step is to contact you by letter and that may be followed by a meeting in school.

The school also works closely with **Local Authority Pupil Inclusion Officers**. Any pupil or student who is absent without an explanation for 7 days in a 6 week period will be notified to the Inclusion Team. This is a legal requirement.

Persistent Absence (PA)

A pupil or student becomes a 'persistent absentee' when they miss 10% or more schooling across the school year, for whatever reason. Absence at this level is considerably damaging a child's educational prospects and we need parents' fullest support and co-operation to tackle this. Parents will be notified by a letter if their child becomes a persistent absentee and they will be invited to a meeting, where an action plan will be drawn up to address the issues identified.

Failure to ensure regular school attendance

Local Authority Pupil Inclusion Officers take absence seriously and will work with parents and schools to address persistent absence. If necessary, they may also issue a Penalty Notice to parent / carers who are failing to secure their child's regular school attendance and are not engaging with supportive measures to improve attendance.

Penalty Notices

Before a Penalty Notice is issued, parents will be warned of their liability to receive such a notice. We understand that this might seem like an extreme measure but it is important that we inform the parents of pupils and students how these might be applied. Penalty notices are an alternative to the prosecution of a parent/carer for their child's unauthorised absence from school and requires the recipient to pay a fixed amount.

The issue of a Penalty Notice will also be considered where attendance has fallen below 90% and there are no less than 7 unauthorised sessions during the preceding 6 school weeks. The parents' failure to engage with supportive measures proposed by the school or Inclusion Officers will be a factor when considering the issue of a Penalty Notice. Unauthorised absence will include late arrival after the close of registration without good reason.

The Education (Pupil Registration)(England)(Amendment) Regulations 2013, state that Head Teachers may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances.

Where a child is taken out of school for 5 days or more and the 'leave of absence' is without the authority of the Head Teacher, each parent is liable to receive a penalty notice for each child who is absent. In these circumstances, a warning will not be given where it can be shown that parents had previously been warned that such absences would not be authorised and that they will be liable to receive a Penalty Notice if the leave of absence is taken.

Request for School Absence under Exceptional Circumstances

Please complete this form if you are applying for holiday, not medical appointments.

As parents, you have a legal responsibility to ensure your child's attendance at school. During the academic year, pupils and students are at school for 190 days and at home for 175 days.

Please be aware that by law Head Teachers / Principals may not grant any leave of absence during term time unless there are exceptional circumstances. The Principal is also required to determine the number of school days a child can be away from school if leave is granted.

Please complete and submit this form as early as possible and **at least 2 weeks** before the beginning of the requested absence if you want the Principal to consider your request for your child's leave of absence for exceptional circumstances. We may ask for proof to back up your request. A copy will then be sent to you to indicate whether this request for leave of absence is authorised or unauthorised.

We have a responsibility to report persistent absence to the Local Authority, **which may result in the issue of a Penalty Notice**. Penalty Notices are issued by the Local Authority in accordance with Surrey County Council's Code of Conduct. The Penalty Notice is £60 per child per parent/carer if paid within 21 days, or £120 if paid after 21 days but within 28 days. Failure to pay the Penalty Notice will result in you being served a summons to appear at the Magistrates Court.

The Principal will consider the reasons for the request carefully and will notify you of the decision.



Request for school absence

Please complete all the specified details and return to the School Office. A letter with the outcome will be sent by email/to your home address.

Pupil or Student name: _____

Tutor group: _____ **Year: Group:** _____

First date of absence: _____ **Last date of absence:** _____

Total No of Days Absence: _____

Reason for absence: _____

Signature of parent/guardian: _____

Printed name of parent/guardian: _____

Contact number and email: _____

OFFICE USE ONLY:

Attendance Record Check:

No. of days absence: _____ Reasons _____

This Absence Request Approved by Principal?

Yes No Reply Sent Date _____

Comments:

Staff roles and responsibilities in managing pupil attendance

All staff are expected to:

- Encourage good attendance and punctuality
- Set an example with their own attendance and punctuality.

Subject teachers are responsible for:

- Record pupils' and students' presence in each lesson and raise concerns about a pupil's whereabouts if not in the lesson (when expected to be there) by following the school procedures.

Form tutors:

- Provide pastoral support to address attendance issues and liaise with the safeguarding team regarding specific concerns.
- Forward any communication from parents to the office.
- Ensure timetables and communication from parents is accurately checked prior to recording codes in the register.
- Accurately record registration in a timely way (close of register is 09.00am and 13.40pm).
- **IMPORTANT;** If the whereabouts of the pupil are unknown between 08.45 and 09.00am the register should be left blank and the office notified.

Heads of Key Stage:

- Forward any communication from parents to the office.
- Work with families to resolve attendance issues.
- Respond to actions set by the Attendance Officer/Safeguarding team.

School Office:

- Receive pupils arriving after 08.45am. Taxi drivers have been informed not to go to the barrier but to report to the school reception.
- Mark a pupil arriving after 09.00am as L (late) and inform staff that the pupil is now in school.
- Ensure morning and afternoon registers are taken and are up to date during periods 1 and 5.
- Contact parents and request reasons for absence.
- Collate daily attendance records and, together with the attendance lead, put in place agreed procedures to monitor and respond to poor attendance and punctuality.

Attendance Lead:

- Identifies and monitors attendance of PA students, with the Safeguarding Team.
- Regularly meets with the Inclusion Officer to identify and action any attendance concerns.
- Monitors and reviews the attendance policy on an annual basis.
- Monitors and reviews the attendance procedures and works with the attendance office and Inclusion Officer to ensure reasons for absence are identified and interventions are put in place.

Headteacher:

- Promotes the attendance policy within the school and ensures that it is implemented effectively.

The Governing Body:

- Agrees appropriate absence targets on an annual basis.
- Plays an active role in ensuring targets are met.