



Saint GREGORY'S  
Bath

## Attendance Policy

Title		Attendance Policy
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In Christ we flourish

## **Rationale**

At Saint Gregory's we are unwavering in our drive to continue to improve the attendance of students in order to ensure that every child has the ability to achieve success. We expect the highest level of attendance from our students so they can develop their full potential during their time at our school.

It is our aim to promote and maintain a culture where outstanding attendance and punctuality is recognised and rewarded. Missing out on education is proven to have a significant effect on students' life opportunities. At Saint Gregory's we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community – students, parents, governors, all teaching and support staff and external agencies will work collectively to ensure that excellent attendance and punctuality maintain an integral part of the school's work.

St Gregory's is dedicated to promoting a distinctive Catholic ethos by upholding the teachings of the Catholic Church. This means that everything we aim to achieve will be based on the teachings and practice of the Catholic Church.

Our motto is "*in Christo floremus*" or 'in Christ we flourish' and our aim is to achieve this motto in our school life.

We are committed to developing the full potential of every individual, regardless of culture, race, religion, disability, or special need by creating a safe, orderly environment where all members of the community work diligently in a spirit of co-operation and treat each other with courtesy and respect at all times.

Our primary role is to educate children and we uphold the principle outlined in the Bishop's Conference of England and Wales (2000) that:

"Education is holy ... the process of teaching and learning is a holy act"

At Saint Gregory's we recognise that attendance is a matter for the whole school community.

Our Attendance Policy should not be viewed in isolation; it is a strand that runs through all aspects of school improvement, supported by our policies on safeguarding, bullying, behaviour and special educational needs. This policy also takes into account the Human Rights Act 1998, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, the Race Relations Act 2000 and the DfE Statutory Guidance 2014.

Saint Gregory's helps students to establish patterns of regular and punctual attendance. We ensure that responsibilities regarding attendance are made clear to parents/carers and students. Unauthorised absence is not tolerated.

Parents/carers must telephone the school if their child is ill on the first day of absence and then write a short note to the Tutor when the student returns to school.

Absence for holidays will not be authorised as a matter of course, only in exceptional personal circumstances.

We closely monitor the attendance of our students and identify any attendance concerns.

Early intervention strategies are in place using appropriate measures to resolve attendance issues as soon as they arise.

## **Attendance -- What does the law say?**

### **Parents**

The Law says that parents of children aged between 5-16, who are on a school roll, must make sure that their child goes to school both regularly and punctually. This means that children are in school when they should be and that they arrive at school in time for both morning and afternoon sessions.

If a child who is registered at a school fails to attend regularly and there are no legitimate reasons, then parents are guilty of an offence under section 444 of the Education Act 1996. If convicted, parents will be liable to a fine of up to £2500/and or a prison sentence of up to 3 months. Magistrates may also impose a Parenting Order.

### **Schools**

Schools are responsible for the keeping and marking of attendance registers. Schools will want to know why students are absent and they must decide whether the absence is for an authorised or unauthorised reason.

Schools must report poor attendance to the Children Missing Education Service (CMES), who will then work with those involved to assess the reasons for poor attendance and help find a solution to the difficulties.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006, require schools to take an attendance register twice a day, once at the start of the morning session and then again during the afternoon session. The register must record whether the student was present, absent, present at approved educational activity or unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.

### **The Local Authority (LA)**

The LA is responsible for making sure that parents fulfil their responsibilities. In Bath and North East Somerset, the CMES fulfils this role and will consider legal action where other strategies to improve attendance have failed.

In addition to prosecuting parents, the Children Missing Education Service may apply to the Family Proceedings Court for an Education Supervision Order (ESO). An ESO makes the LA responsible for certain aspects of the child's education.

The aim of this policy is to raise levels of achievement by ensuring the highest levels of attendance, punctuality and involvement in the school, particularly among vulnerable groups within the student population (CLA, Pupil Premium, Forces, SEN, EAL).

## **1. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **1.1 Governors**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is

complied with.

- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data (especially of vulnerable groups) frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

#### 1.2 Headmistress

- Oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality.

#### 1.3 Director of Pastoral Care

- Oversee and monitor whole school attendance and punctuality, initiating whole school policies as required. This will be achieved by liaison with the Senior Leadership Team and other relevant members of staff, including Pastoral, Inclusion, PSA, and the Attendance Admin Officer.
- Support the whole school community in promoting good attendance and punctuality.
- Liaise with the Parental Support Advisor and Assistant Head for Attendance to devise any necessary programmes for students who are persistent absentees (PA) or at risk of long term absence.
- To make decisions on parental requests for holidays or pre-planned absences.
- Monitor any registers that are not taken each day and speak to the staff involved where necessary.

#### 1.4 Assistant Head for Behaviour and Attendance

- Compile all attendance data and information for relevant staff.
- Responsible for up-keeping and monitoring of attendance tracker and sharing with SLT each week.
- To monitor students slipping below target (whole school target) to instigate actions based on the individual student circumstances.
- Promote good attendance through assemblies and praise.
- Support tutors with resources and guidance including termly attendance sheets to monitor attendance on a weekly basis. (See Appendix 1)

#### 1.5 Heads of Year

- Monitor the attendance and punctuality for their year groups (including the monitoring of vulnerable groups).

- Liaise closely with form tutors to reward positive attendance and support where there are concerns that require further action.
- Liaise with the FSA and Assistant Head where there are concerns about individual students.
- Meet regularly with the FSA and Assistant Head to sustain good communication and identify and intervene with individual students who are PA or at risk of becoming PA. Refer students to FSA and Assistant Head if they are a persistent problems or have reached triggers.
- Act on daily information from staff concerning student absences or habitual lateness.
- Liaise with parents/carers where attendance and/or punctuality are a cause for concern by following the attendance and monitoring procedure.
- Intervene early to arrange and attend meetings with parents and relevant staff where there are attendance issues (e.g. subject truancy).
- Promote good attendance through assemblies and praise.
- Offer support and work closely with the parents/carers of students who are persistent absentees or at risk of becoming so.

#### 1.6 Family Support Advisor

- Phone call made on first day of absence and where there are on-going concerns for vulnerable students.
- Co-ordinates sending of letters to parents of those students with attendance concerns and ensure that Assistant Head is informed in order to audit actions.
- Organises home visits as part of early intervention strategy.
- When no improvement is seen despite all previous interventions a home visit will also be made.
- Complete forms for Penalty Notices where applicable and inform Assistant Head and Director of Pastoral Care of this to be added to whole school tracker.
- Organise all panel meetings where necessary.
- Liaise with Assistant Head and Head of Year where there are concerns about individual students or forms.
- Issuing of Fixed Penalty Notice requests as per the LA guidance.

#### 1.7 Administration Assistant with responsibility for Attendance

- Make contact with parents/carers on the first day of absence for all students.
- Contact parents/carers should any student leave the site without permission.
- Work closely with the colleagues to monitor students who present concerns.
- Give tutors list of unexplained absences weekly.
- Inform Director of Pastoral care of incomplete registers from class teachers each day.
- Contacts parents/carers of Pupil Premium students each day they are absent.

#### 1.8 Form Tutors

- Encourage all students to maintain excellent attendance and punctuality.

- Direct any correspondence from parents/carers with regard to absences to Director of Pastoral care with responsibility for Attendance.
- Keep an overview of students' attendance; follow up unexplained absences and check patterns of absence and poor punctuality by completing sheet in Student Planner. (See appendix A)
- Liaise with Assistant Head to pass on concerns about individual students.
- Clear all unexplained absences each week.

### 1.9 Subject Teachers

- Take an electronic register at the start (within the first 10 minutes) of each lesson.
- Pass on any concerns about absentees from lessons to the Administration Assistant with responsibility for Attendance as soon as possible.
- Use the Student Planner and SIMS to record any issues with punctuality – pass on any concerns to the appropriate form tutor.

## 2. Responsibilities of Parents/Carers

Parents/Carers of children on role at school have a legal duty to ensure the full and regular attendance of their children unless there are reasons for absence acceptable to the school, or that the school agrees to authorise. Where parents/carers fail to carry out this responsibility, the LA, has a duty to take action against those parents/carers, either by issuing a fixed penalty notice; prosecution in the Magistrates Court; application for an Education Supervision or Order (ESO) under the Children Act 1989 in the Family Proceedings Court.

Parents/Carers of students in Years 7-11 are required to account for all absences so that, at the discretion of the school, they can be authorised. Being unable to attend because of significant illness is a reason that schools recognise as being unavoidable and will therefore authorise. In some cases the school will ask for a note from a medical professional. Parents/Carers are to make every effort to avoid any type of appointment for students during school time. If an appointment is unavoidable, they are to provide a letter of explanation.

If it is necessary to ask for leave of absence, for instance on compassionate grounds, parents/carers should write to the Director of Pastoral Care. Parents/Carers should not make any arrangements to take family holidays during term time. The school is not able to authorise such absence on the grounds of cost or convenience.

Parents/Carers will be required to come into school to discuss cases of poor attendance or of lengthy absences through illness to discuss a strategy to secure appropriate attendance for their child.

Saint Gregory's expects parents/carers to support the school; take every opportunity to get involved in their child's education, form a positive relationship with school and acknowledge the importance of children receiving the same messages from both school and home.

There is a leaflet on the website with information of what you can do to help your child's attendance which outlines the importance of your child attending school and your role in supporting the school.

### **Responsibilities for Implementation**

There is a Whole School focus on improving attendance. Detailed below are the expectations and responsibilities of those involved.

#### **Governors**

- Ensure that the importance and value of good attendance is promoted to students and their parents/carers.
- Annually review the school's Attendance Policy and ensure the required resources are available to fully implement the policy.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Agree school attendance targets and submit these to the Local Authority within the agreed timescale each year.
- Monitor the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting at Governing Body Meetings.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance.
- Ensure that the school has clear systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site.
- Ensure that there are procedures for collecting and analysing attendance data (especially of vulnerable groups) frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Ensure that data is understood and used to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.

#### **The Leadership Team**

- Actively promote the importance and value of good attendance to students and their parents/carers.
- Form positive relationships with students and parents / carers.
- Ensure that there is a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.

- Monitor the implementation of the Attendance Policy and ensure that the policy is reviewed annually.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of the Attendance Policy and adequately trained to address attendance issues.
- Ensure that the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation is complied with.
- Ensure that there is a named senior manager to lead on attendance and allocate sufficient time and resource.
- Report the school's attendance and related issues through termly reporting to the Governing Body.
- Ensure that systems to report, record and monitor the attendance of all students, including those who are educated off site are implemented.
- Ensure that attendance data is collected and analysed frequently to identify causes and patterns of absence.
- Interpret the data to devise solutions and to evaluate the effectiveness of interventions.
- Develop a multi-agency response to improve attendance and support students and their families.
- Document interventions used to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Deletions from the attendance register follow LA guidelines on 'Children Missing Education' and 'Removing a pupil from the Attendance register'.
- The policy is reviewed and updated.

#### **Family Support Officer/Director of Pastoral Care**

Monitor the 90% (or less) attendance figures once a fortnight.

- Organise and attend Attendance Meetings when necessary.
- Interventions used are documented to a standard required by the local authority should legal proceedings be instigated.
- Students on fixed term exclusion are supported by the provision of work.
- Students with long term medical problems are identified and the necessary strategies are implemented.
- To prepare and send paperwork for Fixed Penalty Notices to the Local Authority.

#### **Assistant Head (Behaviour and Attendance)**

- Reports on attendance weekly.
- Monitors the 90% (or less) attendance figures once a fortnight.
- Maintains the register of students educated off-site



## **Heads of Year**

- Are aware of the attendance issues within their Year.
- Monitor the 90 - 95% attendance figures once a fortnight.
- Encourage their tutor team to make phone calls or meet with parents/carers, when necessary, to improve attendance.
- Attend Attendance Planning Meetings when necessary.
- Ensure the subject of attendance has a high profile by mentioning in assemblies, form briefings and all meetings and rewarding high attendance.
- Students on fixed term exclusion are supported by the provision of work.
- Students with long term medical problems are identified and the necessary strategies are implemented.

## **Tutors**

- Monitor students whose attendance is 95 - 100%
- Take daily registers accurately for their tutor group within the agreed time frame.
- Are alerted to patterns of attendance during the school day and follow up any unexplained absence during the school day within two weeks of the mark being entered. This includes marks for both morning and afternoon registration.
- Contact parents/carers and intervene early on if they have concerns.
- Meet with parents/carers, should the need arise, to discuss attendance concerns.
- Comply with the Registration Regulations, England, 2006 and other attendance related legislation.

## **Teachers**

- Contribute to a whole school approach which reinforces good school attendance with good teaching and learning experiences that encourage all students to attend and to achieve.
- Register the class accurately, within the first ten minutes of a lesson.
- Inform the behaviour support team if a student is missing from their lesson.
- Inform the tutor if a student is missing from their lesson and liaise on the suitable follow up.

## Administration Team

- Ensure that Textcomms is used to contact parents / carers of students with unexplained absences at 10am each morning.
- First day absence calls are made home when absence continues to be unexplained.
- Check that all registers are completed for am/pm registration
- Check that codes for absent children are entered correctly
- Check registers for Lesson monitor are completed daily.
- Calls to parents/carers of Pupil Premium students who are absent are made on a daily basis.

## 6. Success Criteria for Policy

The success of this policy will be measured by:

- reduced figures for authorised and unauthorised absence
- reduced numbers of students classified as Persistent Absentees
- a reduction in the gap between vulnerable groups and the rest of the cohort
- improved figures for overall attendance.

***This Policy should be read in conjunction with:***

- Anti-Bullying Policy
- Behaviour for Excellence Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- SEND Policy

### Student registration requirements

There are four broad classifications in attendance registers:

**Present** – the student is on the premises at the time of registration.

**Approved Educational Activity** – the student is engaged in an approved, supervised activity off site, for example field trip, educational visit, sporting activity or work experience.

**Authorised Absence** – an absence authorised by the school which includes illness, medical appointments, bereavement or other circumstances where the school deems attendance to be inappropriate.

**Unauthorised Absence** – an absence where the student does not have good cause to be missing from school. Unauthorised absence can be defined in the following ways:

**Truancy** – this is action by students who fail to attend school when they should, including leaving the school premises after registration. It also includes action by parents/carers who initiate unauthorised absence by students or who collude with it. Shopping trips, day trips or absence to look after someone else would all constitute examples of unauthorised absence.

**School refusal** – this is chronic non-attendance over a period of time, usually an indicator of wider family, psychological or behavioural problems.

The school will aim to highlight and resolve any difficulties regarding a student's attendance as early as possible, using our rigorous monitoring and intervention procedures and pastoral support programmes to help solve any problems.

## **Attendance Procedures**

### **Registration**

- Registers must be taken promptly at the start (within the first 10 minutes) of each lesson and during tutor time. Staff must contact the Administration Assistant with responsibility for attendance as soon as possible if there are any concerns about absentees.
- Anyone taking students out of school for any reason must supply the Administration Assistant with responsibility for Attendance with a list of names and email the list to the appropriate teaching and support staff.
- Staff must inform colleagues of any students taking part in events in school that require students to be off timetable.

### **First Day Contact**

- Administration Assistant with responsibility for Attendance will organise first day contact, even when the reasons for absence are known. This will involve telephoning/texting/emailing all parents/carers when contact has not been made.
- There will be occasions when school staff visit homes when we have concerns about persistent or sporadic absence.

### **Outstanding Absences**

- Any outstanding or unexplained absence will be followed up by the Administration Assistant with responsibility for Attendance or Heads of Year via contact with parents/carers.
- Until contact is made the absence will remain unauthorised.

### **Exit/Entry to School during the Day**

- Students who need to leave during the school day must bring a letter from home and/or an appointment card. Students should bring the note from home to the Administration Assistant with responsibility for attendance.
- Students must sign out and sign back in at the front Office on their return.
- We would encourage all appointments to be made after 3pm, so as not to impact on your child's learning. This is stated on the website.

## Late arrivals

Students who arrive after 8.45am are considered to be late to school and they will be expected to sign in at pupil reception until 9am. After this point students need to sign in to school with the Administration Assistant with responsibility for attendance.

All these procedures are very important as in the event of a fire drill it is vital there is an accurate record of who is on site at any time. It is equally important that all Saint Gregory's staff sign in and out using the electronic registration system located in reception.

## Attendance Concerns

The Senior Leadership Team meet weekly and the first item on the agenda is attendance and punctuality concerns. During this meeting the attendance of all students will be tracked and the school's Attendance Intervention Protocol will be followed to ensure consistency across the whole school. The protocol has been developed around early intervention and constant communication with parents in order to maximise and maintain good attendance.

- **Medical Concerns and appointments** – We would encourage medical appointments to be made out of school hours at all times. If this is not possible we would encourage parents/carers to send their child to school both before and after their appointment.
- **Long term absence** – students who are long term absentees, for whatever reason, often find the return to school problematical. There are both academic and social difficulties which students may need time to overcome. For some students this may involve a personalised re-integration programme. The programme will be devised by the appropriate member of staff and may include the use of a partial timetable, pastoral support from the behaviour support team, Head of Year or other member of staff. Parents/carers will be involved throughout the reintegration process and staff will be informed of the re-integration plan.
- **Leave of Absence Requests and Holiday Absence** – From September 2013 government guidance states that **no absence should be authorised** in advance except as a result of 'exceptional circumstances'. Bereavement and life threatening illness are considered to be exceptional circumstances. Leave of absence forms can be downloaded from the school website or obtained from the school office. Where a parental request has been refused and parents/carers continue to take their child out of school this absence will be recorded as unauthorised. A form is available on the website for parents to complete and send to Director of Pastoral Care for a decision to be made. Please note that unauthorised absence can result in Fixed Penalty Notice being issued.

## Rewards and Incentives

Outstanding attendance is acknowledged and rewarded throughout the year in a variety of ways. Attendance is monitored weekly and students achieving above year group targets are recognised. We are also keen to acknowledge the support of parents/carers in working with us to maximise outcomes for our young people. Each term we have a rewards assembly where a reward such as a box of chocolates or ice lollies are given to the tutor group in each year with the best attendance. Students with 100% attendance within an academic year are celebrated with a badge for their lapel, a certificate sent home, their name on a noticeboard and are mentioned in the Name and Praise assembly. Parents are able to see their child's attendance by downloading the Schoolgateway app and can praise their children accordingly for excellent attendance.

### Weekly attendance summary

Key: RAG Red: Below 94% Amber: 96-94% Green: 96%

Week ending	% Attendance	RAG
06/01/17		
13/01/17		
20/01/17		
27/01/17		
03/02/17		
10/02/17		
END OF TERM 3		
24/02/17		
03/03/17		
11/03/17		
18/03/17		
25/03/17		
01/04/17		
07/04/17		
END OF TERM 4		

End of term one attendance target \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

End of term two attendance target \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## Escalation Procedures

Attendance Level	Procedures
Attendance falls below 95%	Tutor to agree with the student and parent/carer targets for improvement. This should be clearly communicated to parents/carers through a letter and/or a telephone call.
Below 92%	Warning letter (one) and attendance leaflet.
Attendance falls below 90%	<p>Nature of and reason for absence established.</p> <p><u>Attendance Meeting 1 (Attendance officer)</u></p> <p>Attendance officer to meet with student and agree targets for improvement. Letter (two) sent home to parents/carers by Attendance Officer. Improvement required within two weeks or this will trigger Attendance Meeting with Parents/Carers.</p> <p>In cases where parents/carers claim illness and there is doubt, evidence is required, e.g. a doctor's note, a prescription dated for the day of absence. If the absence is due to a recommendation from CAMHS, a letter from the Clinical Psychologist or Consultant is needed.</p> <p>Positive intervention from Assistant Head/FSA - Informal chat with the student to see why they are not attending, appropriate personalised action to take place as a result. Some examples include photocopying someone's book if they are worried they are too far behind, the attendance at Breakfast club to encourage them to wake up earlier and to give them mentoring sessions with a teacher to improve their morale. Informal plan put into place to support these interventions.</p>
Attendance falls below 85%	<p><u>Attendance Meeting 2 (Attendance Officer)</u></p> <p>Attendance Officer to meet with student and parent/carer. Letter (three) sent home warning of Fixed Penalty Notice. The letter will be sent even if the parents are absent from the meeting.</p> <p>Formal attendance plan put into place and shared with parents/carers. Prosecution Notice may be issued.</p>
Attendance remains below 85%	<p>Prosecution Notice issued.</p> <p>Letter sent warning that unless attendance improves there is the possibility of prosecution.</p>

### Categories of Absence

Only the following codings may be used in the registers

/	Present (AM)
\	Present (PM)
	Other activity or location (add note)
B	Educated off site (not Dual reg.)
C	Other authorised circumstances
D	Dual registration (attending other estab.)
E	Excluded (no alternative provision made)
G	Family holiday (not agreed or days in excess)
H	Family holiday (agreed)
I	Illness (not med/dental appointments)
J	Interview
	In isolation room
L	Late (before registers closed)
M	Medical / Dental appointments
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised Abs (not covered by other code)
P	Approved sporting activity
	In examination
R	Religious observance
S	Study leave
T	Traveller absence
U	Late (after registers closed)
V	Educational visit or trip
W	Work experience
X	Non-compulsory school age absence

### Support Systems

Saint Gregory's recognises that poor attendance is often an indication of difficulties in a child's life. This may be related to problems at home and or in school. Parents/carers should make school aware of any difficulties or changes in circumstances that may affect their child's attendance and or behaviour in school, for example, bereavement, divorce/separation, incidents of domestic abuse. This will help the school identify any additional support that may be required.

Saint Gregory's also recognises that some students are more likely to require additional support to attain good attendance, for example, those students with special educational needs, those with physical or

mental health needs, migrant and refugee students and looked after children.

The school will implement a range of strategies to support improved attendance. Strategies used will include:

- Discussion with parents/carers and students
- Attendance panels
- Parenting contracts
- Attendance report cards
- Referrals to support agencies
- Learning mentors
- Student Voice Activities
- Friendship groups
- Reward systems
- Time limited part time timetables
- Additional learning support
- Behaviour support
- Inclusion units
- Reintegration support packages

Support offered to families will be child centred and planned in discussion and agreement with parents/carers and students.

Where parents/carers fail or refuse to engage with the support offered and further unauthorised absence occurs, Saint Gregory's will refer the case to the local authority attendance team for possible use of legal sanctions.



## Legal Sanctions

### Prosecution

Where intervention fails to bring about an improvement in attendance, the Local Authority will be notified and legal action in the Magistrates' Court may be taken. The school will provide the Local Authority with evidence required for a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 and will appear as a prosecution witness if required by the court. This is to ensure that parents realise their own responsibilities in ensuring attendance at school and most importantly about returning children to education.

Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 states that if a parent fails to ensure the regular school attendance of their child if he/she is a registered pupil at a school and is of compulsory school age, then they are guilty of an offence.

A parent found guilty of this offence can be fined up to £2500 and or be imprisoned for a period of three months.

Alternatives to Section 444 prosecution are Parenting Contracts, Penalty Notices or an Education Supervision Order.

### Parenting Contracts

(Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) A Parenting contract is a voluntary agreement between school and the parent; it can also be extended to include the child and any other agencies offering support to resolve any difficulties leading to improved attendance.

The contract will outline attendance targets and will detail agreed actions that will help to achieve the target. The contract will be reviewed regularly.

The contract can be used as evidence in a prosecution should parents fail to carry out agreed actions.

### Penalty Notices

(Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003) Penalty Notices will be considered when:

- A student is absent from school for the purpose of a holiday in term time and the absence has not been authorised by the school.
- A student has accumulated at least ten sessions of unauthorised absence and further unauthorised absence has occurred following written warning to improve.

A Penalty Notice gives the parent/carer the opportunity to discharge themselves of their legal responsibility if a £60 fine is paid within 21 days or £120 if paid within 28 days of the date the Notice was issued. If payment is not made within this timeframe parents may be prosecuted in the Criminal Court where on conviction they may be fined up to £1000.

Failure to pay the Penalty Notice may result in a prosecution under Section 444 of the Education Act 1996.

## Attendance Handbook for Tutors

### The Role of the Tutor

The tutor has a responsibility to ensure that there is good attendance from all in the tutor group. It is the tutor who is most likely to know why a student is absent and of any welfare concerns. Registers are legal documents and must be accurate.

### School Procedures Registration

In order to learn and make good progress at school, students must attend regularly. In addition, schools have a duty of care and to ensure students are safe. It is therefore essential an accurate record of attendance be maintained at all times. It should be clear to parents/carers that attendance above 95% is what is required of all students. This should be communicated to students through tutors.

Formal registration will take place electronically twice daily, within tutor groups at 8.50am -9.00am and at the start of lesson 5 (1.30pm). If a student is not present at this point they should be marked absent.

Tutors must be able to account for students who are not present and explain where they are. The school office will assist in this by texting parents/carers on each day of absence.

The Data Manager will provide tutors with a list of students whose attendance is between 90-95% each week. Parents/carers of students whose absence is between 90-95% should be contacted by the tutor to establish the reason for the absence (if there has been no communication from the school office or from parents directly to the tutor). If there is no improvement following the telephone call, or if attendance gets worse, then the child should be referred to the Head of Year.

If attendance is poor because of illness, the tutor should request a doctor's letter if the complaint is ongoing. Alternatively, a dated prescription (showing attendance at a doctor's surgery) or an appointment card stamped by a receptionist of a GP practice will suffice as evidence that a child attended an appointment with a medical practitioner. An appointment with the school nurse should be made if there are any health concerns affecting attendance. This can be arranged through the school office or by a Head of Year.

The aim is that attendance across the school should improve and tutors should be able to give an account of the absences for the students in their by tutor group. Systems to support the tracking of attendance for tutors are in place. The attendance administrator will send a text to parents/carers on each day of absence. Reasons for absence which are telephoned through to the school office will be added into the register. This avoids unnecessary bureaucracy of telephone calls being repeated. However there may be a need to ask parents/carers about absences and this is the role of the tutor who may need to make a telephone call to clarify the reasons for absence.

### Heads of Year

Lists of unexplained absences will be issued to Heads of Year weekly of students with 85-90% attendance. Heads of Year should check on SIMS to see if any absences are authorised and whether there are circumstances which can explain absences. Unexplained absences will need to be checked with the attendance officer, tutors and the office staff. If no satisfactory explanation can be established then the Head of Year should contact home.

If the absences are due to an unauthorised holiday the Attendance Officer will issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

If the absences are arising out of illnesses an Attendance Meeting must be arranged with agreed timeframes and thresholds for improvement.

If the absences are due to a medical condition then absences must be supported by a letter from the student's consultant or CAMHS psychologist. (The LEA will no longer accept a GP letter for protracted illness, and for HERS to be authorised.)

Heads of Year will meet with the Assistant Headteacher (Behaviour and Attendance) fortnightly to analyse attendance and agree any actions.

### **Attendance Officer**

The Data Manager will provide the Attendance Officer with a list of students whose attendance is below 85%. They will also provide a breakdown of the attendance of vulnerable groups of students in the school.

The Attendance Officer will liaise with Heads of Year and the Attendance Administrator to establish whether the absences are genuine. Where absence has arisen because of unauthorised holiday the parents will receive from the Local Authority a Fixed Penalty Notice. The Attendance Officer will prepare the paperwork for this.

If a Home Visit is required the Attendance Officer will arrange this. Students educated through HERS will be overseen by the Attendance Officer.

The attendance of these students will be discussed at a fortnightly meeting of the Heads of Year and Director of Pastoral Care.

### **Absence codes**

A single set of absence codes is used throughout the school. They are on SIMS for easy reference and the right coding must be used for both absent and present codings. The codes used are those contained in the guidance notes for schools published by the Department for Education. The use of a consistent set of codes will allow comparison and analysis of data, particularly analysis of reasons for absence and not just analysis of whether absence is unauthorised or authorised.

### **Confirmation of absence**

Parents/carers should confirm reasons for absence by note and/or telephone call either before or on the day of absence before 9.30am by the Attendance Administrator. If no such confirmation is received a text message will be sent requesting authorisation. Until the absence has been confirmed the absence will be considered unauthorised by the school. Initially both the office staff and tutors will be responsible for obtaining confirmation of a pupil's absence. Tutors are responsible for following up unexplained absences and entering appropriate codes for both morning and afternoon registration. This must be done within two weeks of the unexplained absence code being entered.

Welfare concerns should be shared with Heads of Year and the school's Family Support Officer, particularly issues affecting attendance and progress.

## **Tutors and Punctuality**

It is the role of the tutor to promote and encourage punctuality. This is a requirement of all employers and as such forms part of the references which are written in Years 11, 12 and 13. Poor punctuality should, in the first instance, be recorded by the tutor.

Students arriving after 8.45am without a good reason should be given a warning (C1). Should they be late again within the term they will receive a lunchtime detention (C2). It is the tutor's responsibility to issue these C2s.

Nonetheless there are students who arrive after 9.05am. These students must sign in at the main reception. Any students who are late more than once without good reason will receive a C2 detention. This should be issued by the Tutor.

Students who need to leave school during the school day must have a written request from their parent or carer. If this is not in the planner they cannot leave the school. Students arriving or leaving during the school day must sign in and out as appropriate at the main office of the school.

## **Requests for Absence**

It must be explained to tutor groups that all requests for authorised absence (i.e. planned absences) must be made in writing/email to the Director of Pastoral Care who is in charge of attendance. It must also be made clear that schools can no longer authorise absences unless there are exceptional circumstances. This does not include holidays during term time. Examinations and sporting events which children are participating in will be authorised.

When the letter/email comes in from parents or carers, the Director of Pastoral Care will respond and copy the Attendance Administrator, Tutor and Head of Year into all correspondence. The Attendance Administrator will enter the correct coding for the day in advance of the absence if approved.

If the absence is not approved and parents or carers take a child out of school, the matter must be referred to the Attendance Officer immediately. If a child is taken out of school with no prior request, and the tutor knows from other children that it is an unauthorised holiday, the attendance officer should be notified immediately.

If a child is kept at home for social reasons the absence is unauthorised.

## **Holidays During term time**

Only the school can authorise an absence. Parents/carers must ask permission to take their children out of school. Holidays during term time will not, as a matter of course, be authorised by the school. The school calendar is published well in advance to give parents as much notice as possible of holiday dates. The school holidays are generous and the school will not grant permission for holidays because flights are cheaper during term time. If parents/carers take children on holiday when the school has not given permission, the school will ask the Local Authority to issue fixed penalty notices.

Requests should be made in writing to the Director of Pastoral Care who will make a judgement on the merits of each individual case. The most important consideration will be the effect that such an absence would have on the child's education. Saint Gregory's is committed to securing high rates of attendance and

operates the following procedure:

- Parents / carers who take their children on holiday without the absence being authorised by the school will receive a written warning that legal action may be taken if there are further unauthorised absences;
- If parents/carers take their children on holiday (five consecutive days) without the absence being authorised, the school will issue a Penalty Notice;
- In some circumstances, a Penalty Notice may be issued in respect of a first unauthorised absence; where a child would miss an exam or test for example;
- If students have poor attendance, parents will be required to be present at an Attendance Meeting. At this meeting an Action Plan will be drawn up and agreed upon by the parents/carers, school and student.
- Parents/carers will be reminded of the effect that absence can have on a student's potential achievement.

### **Reporting attendance and punctuality to students and parents/carers**

Attendance figures will be issued to all students and parents/carers as part of the progress reports, which are an intrinsic part of the school's reporting systems. These will be sent home via the students for parents/carers to read and discuss. This information will also be available electronically.

The tutor should, in the first instance, deal with parental queries regarding the attendance data. Time will be set aside for tutors to discuss aspects of the previous terms progress with students on an individual basis. Letters will be sent home praising students with good attendance records.