

# **Attendance & Punctuality Policy**

## 2023 -2024

St Albans Independent College

## Our Values

- To provide individual support to students in every aspect of their education and to help them prepare for their future.
- To provide an environment where students feel safe and their wellbeing is enhanced.
- To provide flexibility in subject choice within a broad, personalised and relevant curriculum.
- To support each individuals' personal development.
- To create an informal environment where students are comfortable in expressing their individuality and having respect for one another.
- To motivate and inspire students to succeed.

## Our Approach

St Albans Independent College is built upon the principle that the best way for students to achieve their academic potential is by excellent teaching in small group classes and by structured personal support.

Teaching in small groups allows for the emphasis of the lesson to be on discussion and interaction. This requires students to engage more deeply with the subject matter and ensures that learning is monitored throughout. Students also find that this interactive approach helps them to develop their confidence as well as their knowledge and understanding.

Each student is supported in their studies by a Mentor who will monitor their efforts and achievements and help motivate them to achieve their best. Although there is a strong academic ethos at the College, the environment is friendly and supportive.

St Albans Independent College continues to evolve and grow and is a thriving Independent College that provides over 20 subjects at GCSE and at A-level, to students from 14 to 19 years of age.

To this day we have remained true to our ethos on which the College was founded.

## **CONTENTS**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 Legislation and guidance

1.2 Aims

1.3 Objectives

### **2. RESPONSIBILITIES**

2.1 A Shared Responsibility

2.2 Students

2.3 Parents/Carers

2.4. Teachers

2.5 Teacher Mentors

2.6. The Attendance Officer

2.7 The Headteacher

### **3. ATTENDANCE**

3.1 Introduction

3.2 Definitions

3.3 Authorised absence

3.4 Unauthorised absence

3.5 Penalty Notices

### **4. REGISTRATION & NOTIFICATION OF ABSENCE**

4.1 Registration

4.2 Authorisation of absence

4.3 Parent/student notification of absence

## Introduction

At St Albans Independent College we recognise that improving attendance involves a wide range of people and is not solely the preserve of a single member of staff, or function within the college. It involves a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in college, the local authority, and parents.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, and are often specific to individual students and families. We believe the foundation of securing good attendance is that college is a calm, orderly, safe, supportive environment where all pupils feel safe with an environment conducive to learning.

However, some students find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, colleges have to work with students and parents to remove any barriers to attendance. This involves building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will reflect the school's behaviour policy and strategies, how it deals with bullying, the quality and effectiveness of special educational needs support, the pastoral it provides to support wellbeing, and effective use of resources.

We will also promote and support punctuality in attending lessons and interventions within school.

<b>97% + Attendance + Effort = Success</b>
--

### 1.1 Legislation and guidance

This policy meets the requirements of the Working together to improve school attendance 2022 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 (Pupil 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.

## **1.2 Aims**

This document describes St Albans Independent College's policy for attendance. St Albans Independent College believes that regular and punctual attendance significantly contributes to educational achievement. The overall aim of the St Albans Independent College Attendance Policy is to maximise student attendance in a manner consistent with educational achievement for all students within the school.

The specific aims of the policy are:

- To encourage all students to achieve excellent attendance throughout the school year.
- To continue to improve attendance rates for all students.
- To support students and parents in improving attendance.
- Ensure every pupil is provided with access to the full-time education to which they are entitled
- Move quickly to address unsatisfactory patterns of absence
- Building strong relationships with families to ensure pupils have the support in place to attend school

## **1.2 Objectives**

The objectives of the policy for attendance are:

- To ensure that students are aware of the need for excellent attendance and understand the link between attendance and achievement.
- To ensure that students and parents support the school in promoting excellent attendance.
- To ensure that parents and students are clear about the legal requirements in relation to attendance at school.
- To ensure that staff support students in promoting excellent attendance by following the procedures in this policy.
- To acknowledge and reward excellent and significantly improved attendance.
- To monitor attendance effectively.

## **Responsibilities**

A shared responsibility for maintaining good attendance.

### **2.1 A Shared Responsibility**

Roles and Responsibility for attendance is shared by:

- Students
- Parents
- Subject Teachers
- Mentors
- The Attendance Officer
- The SLT team
- The Principals and SLT team

### **2.2 Students will:**

- Attend school every day and arrive on time.
- Attend every timetabled lesson on time.
- Ask their teachers for catch up work if they have been absent, and make sure it is completed.

### **2.3 Parents/Carers will:**

- Support their children's learning by ensuring that they attend school every day.
- Only allow an absence in absolutely unavoidable cases of illness, or for other authorised reasons (See paragraph 3.3).
- Telephone the school on the morning of any absence to inform the College Attendance Officer of the reason, using the attendance phone (**01727 842348 Option 3**) or by emailing **[absence@stalbanscollege.co.uk](mailto:absence@stalbanscollege.co.uk)**
- Keep the school updated on a daily basis, by telephone or email, until the student returns to school.
- Not take their children on holidays during term time.
- Emphasise to their child the impact excellent attendance has on academic performance
- Ensure their child completes any work set if well enough to do so.
- Provides the college with more than 1 emergency contact number for their child

## **2.4 Subject teachers will:**

- Keep an accurate electronic attendance register for all classes, to be completed within the first ten minutes of each lesson.
- Remind students regularly of the impact of good attendance on their performance in the subject.
- Challenge all absences from lessons, stressing the negative impact on learning.
- Set catch-up work for students who have been absent from lessons.
- Ensure that the School's Attendance Officer is informed of any students who will miss registration due to a subject based activity (e.g. school trip, music lesson, sporting activity, etc). Teachers will also ensure that the absence of any student due to take part in a school-based activity is communicated, without delay, to the School's Attendance Officer without delay prior to the start of the activity.

## **2.5 Student Mentors:**

- Use form time to promote the need for excellent attendance.
- Maintain an accurate daily attendance register.
- Use the weekly attendance update sheet to celebrate excellent and improved attendance and challenge poor attendance.
- Ensure that students update their attendance in their planners every week.
- Remind students that if they are absent their parents must phone the school every morning to keep the School's Attendance Officer updated.
- Target and provide increased pastoral support for all students whose attendance has dropped below 97%.
- Reward students whose attendance is Excellent or has improved.
- Refer on-going attendance problems to the Head of Year for support.
- Inform the school attendance officer if a parent of a child, or a child, in their form informs them of an appointment they are required to attend out of school.

## **2.6 The Attendance Officer will:**

- Contact parents/carers if they have not telephoned the school to report an absence.
- Telephone the parents if they have not responded to voice or email messages.
- Keep an electronic record of all reported absences.
- Reduce the number of unexplained absences by telephoning or writing to parents asking them to account for the absences.
- Produce cumulative attendance data reports for each year group every week and to report to the SLT.
- Check the attendance of any students in alternative provision.
- Inform the local authority of any student who is absent without authorisation for 10 or more days.
- Send letters to parents in relation to declining attendance at the direction of the College.
- Arrange home visits to 'hard to reach' parents, accompanied by a member of the school staff.

## **2.9 The Principal will:**

- Monitor attendance and investigate trends or patterns.
- Ensure the Implementation of the policy at the College
- Write to parents if their child's attendance is causing concern.
- Continually investigate and implement a range of strategies to improve attendance.
- Provide regular training and guidance for all staff on improving student attendance.
- Support Mentors in implementing attendance improvement strategies.
- Regularly meet with targeted students whose attendance is causing concern.
- Ensure that all attendance registers are completed in accordance with legal requirements.
- Ensure that the Attendance Policy is implemented and reviewed regularly Agree annual attendance targets with the Local Authority.
- Grant leave of absence for students in exceptional circumstances only.
- Request formal action to be taken in extreme cases of unauthorised absence.
- Promote attendance as a key focus across the whole school.
- Provide rewards for students, to celebrate excellent and significantly improved attendance.



## **Appendix**

### **3.0 Introduction**

Attendance and non-attendance are defined and associated procedures will be consistently applied across the school. This section defines authorised absence and unauthorised absence.

### **3.1 Definitions**

Attendance – the condition of being present at school and participating in timetabled activities, academic or non-academic.

Authorised Absence – a period of absence from school, when the student is expected to attend school, where that absence is caused by one or more approved conditions of absence.

Unauthorised Absence – a period of absence from school, when the student is expected to attend school, where that absence is caused by one or more unapproved conditions of absence.

### **3.2. Authorised absence**

Absence is authorised, if it is for one of the following approved conditions:

- Illness
- Unavoidable cause
- Day set aside for religious observance by the religious body to which the student belongs
- Family bereavement
- Student interview with a prospective employer or in connection with a place for further or alternative education
- Approved work experience
- Approved off-site educational activity or tuition
- Attendance at a student referral unit
- Participation at an approved public performance
- Granted study leave
- Exceptional special occasion e.g., graduation, or a family wedding (normally two days maximum).

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 other appropriate form of evidence.

We will not ask for medical evidence unnecessarily. If the school is not satisfied about the authenticity of the illness, the absence will be recorded as unauthorised and parents/carers will be notified of this in advance.

Application for authorised absence must be made in writing to the Headteacher.

### **3.4 Unauthorised absence**

Absence is unauthorised if it is for one of the following unapproved conditions:

- No explanation is provided, or the school is dissatisfied with the explanation
- Truancy
- Staying at home to mind the house, await deliveries
- Minding the house or caring for siblings (except in exceptional circumstances)
- Shopping
- Unexceptional special occasions (e.g., a birthday)
- Family holidays
- Any condition not included in the list of authorised absence conditions
- Absences on the last day of term (including half terms), unless explained by a medical note
- Absences on the first day of a new term (or half term) unless explained by a medical note.

### **3.5 Absences related to Covid-19**

Students who have symptoms of COVID-19 or have had a positive lateral flow test, should self-isolate and not come into college.

If a student tests negative and if they feel well, they can stop self-isolating and return to school.

### **Registration & notification of absence**

4.1 Attendance registers are legal documents that may be required as evidence in court cases.

Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and at the beginning of period 4 in the afternoon. In addition, an electronic register is taken at the beginning of every lesson during the day.

Their purpose is to:

- monitor attendance / non-attendance
- ensure students can be accounted for in an emergency
- ensure that a student removed from the school will not go unnoticed.

#### **4.2 Authorisation of absence**

Only St Albans Independent College can authorise an absence. The fact that a parent/carer has provided a note, or has communicated an absence in an alternative manner does not constitute an authorised absence.

#### **4.3 Parent/Student notification of absence**

Parents/carers must provide prompt notification of absence, by telephone, email or letter. The school in exceptional circumstances, such as English language difficulties, may agree to alternative means of communication.

**Reviewed by Assim Jemal (Principal) & the Safeguarding Team**

**Policy date: 4th September 202**

**Review Date: 3rd September 2024**

