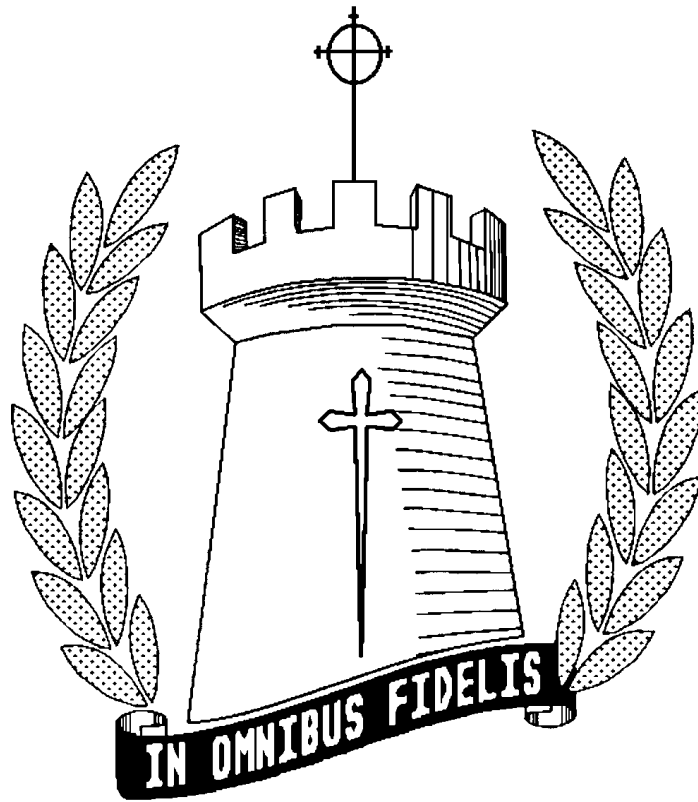


ST DAMIAN'S RC SCIENCE COLLEGE



Attendance Policy

Approved by Governors:	November 2016
Date to be reviewed:	annually

Attendance Policy

RATIONALE:

The Mission Statement of St Damian's RC Science College outlines the College's approach to the well-being and development of all young people. In order for the College to ensure the present and future success of pupils it is essential that each pupil attends regularly and punctually. Ensuring the regular attendance of pupils is more than a statutory obligation. At St Damian's, all pupils are welcome in the College community, and it is the intention of the Governing Body and all members of staff that pupils should find within the College, Learning experiences that are enjoyable, engaging and relevant to each individual's, present and future needs. Regular attendance is essential if the College is to 'foster the ability of each individual' by promoting his/her academic, spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The College's ethos demonstrates that students feel that their presence in the College is important, that they are missed when they are absent or late. The College will take appropriate action when necessary in order to promote the aims of the policy.

PURPOSES:

- To ensure that parents and pupils appreciate the value of continuous College attendance by maximising the attendance of each individual.
- To identify non-attendance and the reason for it at an early stage.
- To successfully re-integrate any pupil after long periods of non-attendance or interrupted attendance.
- To inform parents of their daughter's/son's attendance record.
- To monitor and support pupils whose attendance is a cause for concern and work in partnership with parents and carers to resolve the causes of non-attendance.
- To analyse attendance data regularly to inform future policy and practice
- To work closely and make full use of the support from the wider community including the Education Welfare Service and multi-agency teams.
- To provide an environment which encourages regular attendance and makes attendance and punctuality a priority for all those associated with the College.

The Education Act 1996:

The Education Act 1996 states that parents have the primary responsibility for ensuring that children of compulsory College age (i.e. 5 to 16 year olds) receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at College or otherwise. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to ensure that parents meet these responsibilities. Attendance enforcement is usually carried out by the LA Education Welfare Service following a period of partnership intervention by the College staff and the EWO with the individual pupil/family.

Pupil Registration:

The College is legally required to maintain two registers:

- an Admission Register (known as the College roll)
- an Attendance Register (unless all pupils are boarders).

The Admission Register contains a list of all pupils at the College. The College ensures that an Attendance Register for all pupils on the College roll is taken twice a day; once at the start of the morning session and once during the afternoon session. For each pupil, the register must be marked either as present, engaged in an approved educational activity away from the College site, or absent. If the pupil is absent, the register must say whether or not the absence has been authorised by the College.

Authorised or Unauthorised Absence:

Authorised absence is where the College has either given approval in advance for a pupil of compulsory College age to be absent, or has accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. All other absences must be treated as unauthorised.

Unauthorised absences are those that the Headteacher does not consider reasonable for which no 'leave of absence' has been given. These are an offence by the parent and can include;

- keeping children off school without a good reason
- truancy before registration has been marked
- absences that have never been properly explained
- children who arrive too late to school to get a mark (after 10am)
- taking holidays that have not been approved by the Headteacher in advance

Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on his behalf can authorise absences.

Responsibilities of Parents:

Parents have the prime responsibility for ensuring that registered pupils of compulsory College age attend College regularly and punctually. If a child does not attend regularly, parents should work closely with the College.

We encourage a good working relationship with parents by regularly publicising the arrangements for notifying absence and the College's policy towards authorised absence in the College.

A DfE Leaflet 'College Attendance: Information for Parents' (DfE Publications) is available for schools and Local Authorities to distribute to parents. It is published in English and eleven community languages.

Lateness:

Morning registration will take place in Tutorial time which begins at 9:00am. The registers will remain open until 10am. Any pupil arriving after this time will be marked as having a 'U' mark – this is an unauthorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival.

The afternoon registration will be at 12.35pm where the registers will close at 1.00pm.

Where students are regularly late for College, the College will contact parents informing them of the College's concerns and offering support and help to rectify the situation.

First Day Absence:

Parents are expected to contact the College on the first day of absence, either by telephone (0161 330 5974) or e-mail admin@stdamians.co.uk BEFORE 9AM

If the College does not receive a message and the pupil has a missing registration mark the parents are contacted via the text messaging system 'Keep Kids Safe'. This constitutes the College's 'First Day Absence Notification'. If no reply is made by the parent or carer the attendance team will make contact by telephone.

Frequent/Persistent Absence:

It is the responsibility of everyone in the College community to be aware of and bring attention to, any emerging attendance concerns. In cases where a pupil begins to develop a pattern of absences, the College will try to resolve the problem with the parent/s through consultation between Parents and Student Support Officers. Form tutors have a responsibility to monitor the attendance of members of their tutor group and to engage individual and groups of pupils in discussions regarding attendance as part of the learning dialogue.

Frequent Medical Absences:

Wherever possible, parents are asked to make routine medical and dental appointments outside school hours. It is always better to attend school for some of the time rather than missing a whole day as school will not authorise a full day's absence for a medical appointment.

The College will work with parents to minimise the negative impact upon learning of necessary medical absences and will consider what additional support may be required in order to improve and maximise a pupil's attendance. The form tutor plays a key role in this area working closely with the Student Support Officers and when appropriate, the School Nurse. Where necessary a referral will be made to the School nurse/Health Mentor for an evaluation of the child's health and educational needs.

It is important that on return from an absence that all pupils are made to feel welcome. This should include ensuring that the pupil is helped to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.

Absence notes:

The College requires written notes explaining reasons for absence for every period of absence recorded by a child. Where a note is not provided when a child returns to College, we will send out an 'unexplained absence letter'.

Attendance Monitoring:

The College monitors the attendance of all pupils on a weekly basis. Where the College have identified that a child's attendance has fallen below the level of 96% in any six-week period the College writes to the parents making them aware of our concerns and the importance of consistent and regular attendance at College.

If there is no subsequent improvement in a child's attendance a second attendance letter is sent home informing parents of College and national expectations and asking them to try to ensure that their child's attendance improves and offering support and advice where necessary.

If a child's attendance continues to be of concern a referral will be made to the Education Welfare Service. The College will endeavour to work with and support all children and families where ever possible. Working in collaboration with the EWO the college will issue Fixed Penalty fines and seek prosecutions as appropriate.

Holidays in term time:

From 1st September 2013 Department for Education legislation gives no entitlement to parents to take their child on holiday during term time. The Head teacher will not grant any leave of absence during term time (unless there are exceptional circumstances).

Parents must ask the Head teacher for permission in advance in writing who will decide whether the absence will be authorised or not and also how many days a child can be away from school if the leave is granted.

Parents who ignore the law and take their child out of school on holiday, if the holiday has been denied, will be issued with a £60 Fixed Penalty Notice per child per adult. Parents will have 21 days to pay or the fines will be doubled. If they are still not paid, parents could face court proceedings.

Police Powers:

Under the **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**, the police now have powers to remove truants found and to return them either to their school or a place designated by the Local Authority organised truancy sweeps.

Recording Absence Figures:

Each year, every school is required to submit to the DFE details of the level of absence within the school. Schools are required to inform how many half days were missed due to authorised and unauthorised absences. For more information, see the National Absence Tables available on the DFE website.

BROAD GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

1. By informing all parents of College policy and contacting parents of poor attendees by phone, letter or through the Educational Welfare Officer.
2. By obvious watchful monitoring of attendance by the form tutor so that, pupils will know that non-attendance will be noticed and require explanation.
3. By enquiring at home of unexplained absence, or regular patterns of non-attendance even when supported by an explanatory note, especially when groups of friends are involved.*
4. By recording all communication from home in the tutor file.
5. By SSO or using the EWO to contact home:
 - a. When enquiries prove difficult
 - b. To find reasons for non-attendance
 - c. To bring to bear external resources to assist in finding satisfactory solutions to problems.
6. By devising appropriate measures to establish the successful rehabilitation of non-attende to make sure the returning student feels comfortable and supported until he/she can take a normal part in the class.
7. By recording a pupil's attendance record on their annual assessment and termly progress checks.

The people responsible for attendance matters in school are;

- Mrs Hunter (Pastoral Support Officer – Attendance)
- Mrs Wright (Attendance Officer)
- Mrs Banks (Assistant Headteacher)
- Mr Logue (Headteacher)

Summary:

Reasons for non-attendance will usually be complex and require a combination of measures to bring SUCCESS.

The school has a legal duty to promote good attendance. Equally, parents have a duty to make sure that their children attend regularly and punctually. All of the staff at St Damian's RC Science College are committed to working closely with parents as the best way to ensure the highest possible levels of attendance.

*As part of Social Inclusion strategies parents are now contacted by text message, on the first instance, on the first day of absence via RSConnectEd (formally Keep Kids Safe).