

The Sacred Heart Language College



Attendance and Punctuality Policy

***Confident in God's love for us,
we commit ourselves to His service***

Reviewed February 2018

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1. Introduction to the Policy

This policy operates within a legal framework set out by the Education Acts and their associated regulations governing attendance and punctuality.

These legal responsibilities are given in order of priority:

- Parents/carers have a legal duty to ensure that their child attends school regularly and punctually.

“Every parent of every child of compulsory school age has a duty to ensure that he/she receives efficient full-time education suitable to his/her age, ability and aptitude either by regular attendance at school or otherwise. If a child of compulsory school age, who is a registered pupil of the school, fails to attend regularly, the parent is guilty of an offence.” [Education Act 1996]
- The LA (Local Authority) has a legal duty to ensure that parents/carers carry out this responsibility.
- The School has a legal duty to record attendance and absence of registered pupils in compliance with the regulations.
- The Governing Body has a legal duty to ensure that the school register is kept in accordance with regulations and must publish figures in its Annual Report to Parents and the School’s prospectus.

2. Aims of the Policy

The school will:

1. encourage and promote a high level of attendance and punctuality from each of its pupils by fostering a warm, welcoming and secure atmosphere where pupils feel valued.
2. insist on regular attendance and good punctuality as a prerequisite to the pursuit of excellence.
3. provide every pupil with an orderly and disciplined atmosphere which supports the learning process and the pursuit of excellence.
4. ensure that each pupil’s pastoral development is promoted thus providing a sound preparation for her future life outside the school.
5. be fully committed to fulfilling its legal obligations as regards attendance and punctuality.

3. Objectives of the Policy

The School will:

1. record accurately the attendances, absences and lateness of all pupils using the School's SIMS Attendance program.
2. make every effort to authorise absences by seeking a valid reason provided by a parent/carer but register as unauthorised any unexplained absences.
3. produce weekly attendance figures by year group for poor attenders to allow scrutiny by the appropriate Head of Year.
4. produce a daily list of absentee pupils so that parents may be contacted if they have not contacted us.
5. pursue cases of particularly poor attendance or punctuality by follow-up by tutors/Head of Years and/or school sanctions in the first instance
6. refer to the MASH team or offices in Harrow for support.

4. Implementation of the Policy

A. Key Roles

Parents and Carers are required to ensure that their daughter/ward attends school unless alternative arrangements for their education have been made. All parents will have the Harrow Attendance and Penalty notice information sent out at the beginning of each school year. All parents will be asked to sign the attendance and punctuality agreement.

Form Tutors will:

- mark attendance registers at the beginning of each session (am) and all teachers must take a register for every lesson
- distinguish between authorised and unauthorised absences
- authorise absences on receipt of acceptable written or oral explanation from parents/carers
- not authorise an absence if no acceptable explanation is received
- be consistent in their practice of registration procedures under guidance from their Head of Year.
- look for patterns of absence in their tutees.

Heads of Year will:

- review attendance and punctuality on a weekly basis
- respond to attendance/punctuality concerns raised by tutors and other staff
- provide advice and support on attendance and punctuality issues
- take further actions where necessary when attendance/punctuality is unacceptably low in relation to the school's procedures and the LEA AIM policy
- refer concerns to outside agencies especially the MASH where necessary

- keep Tutors and the Deputy Heads informed of attendance and punctuality issues
- be responsible for making sure parents are contacted concerning absence and punctuality by text, phone or letter as deemed appropriate

An Admin Officer will:

- contact parents of pupils for whom the school has not been notified of absence on the first day of absence under guidance from Heads of Year.
- notify the relevant Assistant Head or the Deputy Head when problems are perceived.

The Learning Support Coordinator will:

- put pupils on the SEN register when long-term absence affects the learning process in order to support a pupil on her return to school
- involve the Educational Psychologist if absences are related to school phobia or social family issues
- consider the possibility of further referral or attendance contracts.

The MASH Team will:

- provide strategic guidance about the enforcement of regular attendance
- carry out this work in partnership with the school and other agencies to support the education and welfare of the pupils
- investigate individual cases where a pupil's attendance has dropped to an unacceptably low level
- consider, in extreme cases, an application by the LA for an attendance order or an education supervision order. [Children's Act 1989, Education Act 1996]

The Deputy Headteacher (Attendance) will:

- have overall responsibility for the School's Attendance and Punctuality policy and its implementation
- report on progress to the Headteacher
- produce relevant reports for the Governing Body

B. The Registration Process

Tutors should take the register each session using the SIMS system, entering registration marks on the computer. For each session there is one slot which can be filled in with a slanted line. One line in the appropriate place can signify presence or absence. L should be put in if a pupil is late, I is reason for illness is known and N when we know the reason for absence.

Parents/carers are responsible for informing the school if their daughter is absent by contacting the school on the first day of absence. Unexplained absence is followed up as soon as possible by a telephone call or text from the school on the same day.

Tutors should authorise absence on receipt of acceptable notification from the pupil's home. If a tutor has any doubts about the authorisation of an absence, they should refer the matter to the Head of Year. Tutors authorise absence their SIMS register on which they select the appropriate code letter for an authorisable absence by filling in the code in the appropriate place.

Written notes for absence should be signed, dated and retained by the tutor and similarly telephone calls should be recorded. Tutors must insist that pupils provide suitable parental notification of absence and refer difficult cases to the Head of Year.

Attendance and punctuality figures are available from the SIMS Attendance Manager program which logs all attendance data and can process the information in a variety of ways.

C. Leave of Absence

It is school policy not to grant leave of absence for a holiday in term time. We recognise that parents may choose to take pupils out in exceptional circumstances against this advice, but should they do so, it must not be for more than 10 school days in any school year. Absences of 20 days or more (in a non-interrupted period) may result in a pupil being taken off roll.

D. Punctuality

Registration by all staff at 8:30 a.m. prompt. Pupils arriving after 8:30 but before 8:40 must be marked as late (with an L). Pupils arriving after 8:40 and before 9:00 am must sign the late book and will be registered as late by an office administrator. Any pupil arriving after 9:15 will be registered as code U, i.e. late after the close of registration.

Support staff currently take responsibility on a rota basis for ensuring pupils sign the late book.

If a pupil has a valid reason for lateness, e.g a medical appointment this will be reflected in their registration coding.

Each Head of Year will ensure that:

- lateness is recorded and monitored
- Pupils late will attend a 15 minute detention on that day
- An email is sent to the home of any pupil for whom 2 or more latest have been recorded in a week and pupils will do a 40 minute detention the following week
- repeated poor punctuality must be raised by the head of year with the parent, in the first instance by phone and ultimately in a face to face meeting
- persistent poor punctuality must be referred by the Head of Year to the Deputy Head (Attendance) for discussion of appropriate follow-up action in liaison with Harrow
- the Deputy Head (Attendance) is briefed on any attendance or punctuality concerns in their year group in terms of
 - individual cases
 - groups of pupils
 - unauthorised absences
 - patterns of absences / lateness in individuals and / or groups

It should be noted that poor punctuality, like poor attendance, can lead to a court summons in extreme cases as explained in relation to Harrow's AIM policy.

E. Promoting Good Attendance and Punctuality

Expected pupil achievements for attendance and punctuality are:

Attendance 97%, Punctuality 98%

Punctuality is also recorded as a percentage in school reports but no comment will be made unless punctuality has fallen below 96%.

Information will be issued to parents to promote good attendance and punctuality.

Classes with the best records will be praised in year assemblies.

At the end of the school year, pupils who have achieved 100% attendance and/or 100% punctuality will receive special certificates.

Year 10 pupils may apply for prefect roles in Year 11 only if they have an acceptable punctuality record, i.e. no more than 10 lates throughout Year 10.

An attendance panel comprised of a Governor, the Headteacher and the relevant key stage Deputy will meet with the parent(s) of pupils causing grave concern.

F. Children Missing for Education

The school follows the Harrow LSCB procedures “Identifying and Maintaining Contact with Children Missing or at Risk of Going Missing from Education 2009”. Contact MASH, Duty and Assessment Team, Pinner Road, Harrow. A MASH referral form will be filled in for any pupil whose attendance is unexplained and deemed ‘Missing in Education’.

G. Involvement of the School Governing Body

The school will provide attendance and punctuality figures to the Governing Body once a term. The governing body members may be part of any Attendance Panel which takes place.

**Policy Reviewed February 2018:
(Governing Body meeting 07/06/18)**



James Coyle, Chair of Governors

5. Appendices

Appendices are attached as detailed below:

Appendix 1

- Three sample letters used by Heads of Year to alert parents about problems to do with attendance or punctuality or both
- Attendance & Punctuality agreement

Appendix 2

Documents taken from Harrow's AIM Policy

- School Attendance & Education Penalty Notices (EPN's)
- First, second and final letters re attendance
- Model penalty notice letters for poor attendance / punctuality and unauthorised leave of absence.

Appendix 1

Three sample letters to parents used by Heads of Year to alert parents about problems to do with attendance or punctuality or both.

Date

Dear

I am extremely concerned at your daughter's poor attendance. I am sure you are aware of the efforts being made nationally and locally to improve attendance at school. Here at The Sacred Heart Language College, we take this issue very seriously. Whilst you are required to tell us the reason for an absence, legally, only the school can authorise an absence.

Failure to attend school is having a serious effect on your daughter's academic progress. She is missing valuable learning time and this makes it difficult for her to have a clear understanding of the work. It is also important for your daughter to develop effective organisational skills at this stage in her life.

These attendance figures are most important as they are included in her report and used for employment and college references, to which particular attention is paid.

Please find enclosed a copy of her registration record to date, this academic year. We hope that we can resolve this current problem with your help. Please feel free to contact me, should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year

Date

Dear

I am extremely concerned at your daughter's poor punctuality. Your daughter has been late on occasions since September 2017. Here at The Sacred Heart Language College, we take this issue very seriously.

Failure to be punctual to school is having a serious effect on your daughter's academic progress. She is missing valuable learning time and this makes it difficult for her to have a clear understanding of the work. It is also important for your daughter to develop effective organisational skills at this stage in her life.

These punctuality figures are most important as they are included in her report and used for employment and college references, to which particular attention is paid.

Please find enclosed a copy of her registration record to date, this academic year. We hope that we can resolve this current problem with your help. Please feel free to contact me, should you wish to discuss this matter further.

Yours sincerely

Head of Year

Date

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I am extremely concerned at your daughter's poor attendance and punctuality. I am sure you are aware of the efforts being made nationally and locally to improve attendance and punctuality. Here at The Sacred Heart Language College, we take this issue very seriously. Whilst you are required to tell us the reason for an absence, legally, only the school can authorise an absence.

Failure to attend school is having a serious effect on your daughter's academic progress. She is missing valuable learning time and this makes it difficult for her to have a clear understanding of the work. It is also important for your daughter to develop effective organisational skills at this stage in her life.

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Yours sincerely

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