

# ST. DAMIAN'S RC SCIENCE COLLEGE



## Attendance and Truancy Policy

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## Statement of intent

**St Damian's RC Science College** believes that in order to facilitate teaching and learning, good attendance is essential. Pupils cannot achieve their full potential if they do not regularly attend school.

We are committed to:

- Promoting and modelling good attendance.
- Ensuring equality and fairness of treatment for all.
- Intervening early and working with other agencies to ensure the health and safety of our pupils.
- Rewarding regular attendance.
- Following the framework set in section 7 of the Education Act 1996 which states that:

“The parent of every child of compulsory school age shall cause him/her to receive efficient full-time education suitable:

- (a) to age, ability and aptitude and
- (b) to any special educational needs, he/ she may have

Either by regular attendance at school or otherwise”.

### **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.

## 1. Legal framework

1.1. This policy has due regard to the following legislation and guidance, including, but not limited to:

- 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.
- The Equality Act 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 (as amended)
- DfE (2016) School Attendance Advice

1.2. All staff must ensure they adhere to and implement the requirements of any equality legislation.

## 2. Definitions

2.1. **St Damian's RC Science College** defines "absence" as either:

- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Not attending school for any reason.

2.2. **St Damian's RC Science College** defines an "authorised absence" as:

- An absence for sickness for which the school has granted leave.
- Medical or dental appointments which unavoidably fall during school time for which the school has granted leave.
- Religious or cultural observances for which the school has granted leave.
- An absence due to a family emergency.

2.3. **St Damian's RC Science College** defines an "unauthorised absence" as:

- Parents keeping children away from school unnecessarily or without reason.
- Truancy before or during the school day.
- Absences which have not been properly explained.
- Arrival at school after the register has closed.
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays.
- Day trips and holidays in term time which have not been agreed.
- Leaving school for no reason during the day.

2.4. **St Damian's RC Science College** defines "persistent absenteeism (PA)" as:

- Missing **10%** or more of schooling across the year for any reason.

## 3. Key roles and responsibilities

3.1. The **governing board** has overall responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the attendance policy and procedures of **St Damian's RC Science College**.

3.2. The **governing board** has overall responsibility for ensuring that the attendance policy, as written, does not discriminate on any grounds, including, but not limited to, ethnicity/national origin, culture, religion, gender, disability or sexual orientation.

3.3. The **governing board** has responsibility for handling complaints regarding this policy as outlined in the school's **Complaints Procedures Policy**.

- 3.4. The **headteacher** is responsible for the day-to-day implementation and management of the attendance policy and procedures of **St Damian's RC Science College**.
- 3.5. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for following the attendance policy, and for ensuring pupils do so too. They will also be responsible for ensuring the policy is implemented fairly and consistently.
- 3.6. Staff, including teachers, support staff and volunteers will be responsible for modelling good attendance behaviour and implementing the agreed policy.
- 3.7. Designated members of staff will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of each afternoon session.
- 3.8. The school will ensure that every pupil has access to full-time education and will act as early as possible to address patterns of absence.
- 3.9. The school will inform the LA of any pupil being deleted from the admission and attendance registers if they:
- Are being educated from home.
  - No longer live within a reasonable distance of the registered school.
  - Have an authorised medical note.
  - Are in custody for a period of more than four months and the proprietor does not reasonably believe they will be returning.
  - Have been permanently excluded.
- 3.10. **St Damian's RC Science College** may request that the LA issue a Penalty Notice Warning where a pupil accumulates 10 or more unauthorised absences in a 10-week period.
- 3.11. Parents will be expected to take responsibility for the attendance of their child/children during term-time.
- 3.12. Parents will be expected to promote good attendance and ensure that pupils attend school every day and be punctual.
- 3.13. Pupils are responsible for their own attendance at school and any agreed activities throughout the school year.
- 3.14. All pupils are responsible for their punctuality to lessons.

## 4. Training of staff

- 4.1. At **St Damian's RC Science College**, we recognise that early intervention can prevent bad behaviour. As such, members of staff will receive training in identifying potentially at-risk pupils.
- 4.2. Teachers and support staff will receive training on the Secondary Attendance and Truancy Policy as part of their new starter induction.
- 4.3. Teachers and support staff will receive regular and ongoing training as part of their development.

## 5. Absence procedures

- 5.1. Parents are required to contact the school BEFORE 9:00am, every day of their child's absence either by telephoning 0161 330 5974 or emailing: [attendance@stdamians.co.uk](mailto:attendance@stdamians.co.uk)
- 5.2. A phone call/text message/email will be made every morning to the parent of any child who has not reported their absence.
- 5.3. The school will always follow up any absences in order to:
  - Ascertain the reason for the absence.
  - Ensure that proper safeguarding action is being taken.
  - Identify whether the absence is authorised or not.
  - Identify the correct code to use to enter the data onto the School Census System.
- 5.4. Following an illness where your child has attended a medical centre/GP, school may require medical evidence to cover their absence.
- 5.5. Absence lasting longer than 3 consecutive days will not be authorised without supporting medical evidence.
- 5.6. In the case of persistent absence, arrangements will be made for parents to speak to the **attendance officer /head of year/ headteacher**.

## 6. Contact information

- 6.1. Parents must provide accurate and up-to-date contact details.
- 6.2. Parents are responsible for updating the school if the details change.

## 7. Attendance register

- 7.1. The designated staff members will take the attendance register at the start of each school day and at the start of the afternoon session. This register will record whether the pupil is:
  - Present.
  - Absent.
  - Attending an approved educational visit.
  - Unable to attend due to exceptional circumstances.
- 7.2. Any pupil with permission to leave the school during the day must sign out at reception and sign back in again on their return.

## 8. Attendance officer

- 8.1. If they are persistently absent, pupils will be referred to their Head of Year who will attempt to resolve the situation through a parental meeting.
- 8.2. If the situation cannot be resolved, the school may refer to the LA, who has the power to issue sanctions such as prosecutions or penalty notices.

## 9. Punctuality

- 9.1. Morning registration will take place in form time which begins at 9:00am. All pupils are expected to register at 9am. Any pupils arriving after 9:00am will receive a late mark (L) and will also be given a 20-minute lunchtime detention supervised by a Head of Year unless, they have a valid reason for

their lateness. Any pupil arriving after 9:30am will be marked with a 'U' code – this is an unauthorised absence unless an explanation given is accepted as grounds for authorising the late arrival.

## 10. Truancy

10.1. Immediate action will be taken when there are any concerns that a child might be truanting.

10.2. If truancy is suspected, the **Attendance Officer** will contact the child's parents, in order to assess the reasons behind the child not attending school.

10.3. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a truancy:

- In the first instance, a letter of warning will be sent to the parents of the pupil, informing them of the truancy and stating that any future occurrences could result in further action being taken.
- If any further truancy occurs, then the school will consider issuing a penalty notice.

## 11. Missing children

11.1. Pupils are not permitted to leave the school premises during the school day unless they have permission.

11.2. The following procedures will be taken in the event of a pupil going missing during the school day:

- The member of staff who has noticed the missing pupil will inform the **Attendance Officer** immediately.
- The office staff will also be informed as they will act as a point of contact for receiving information regarding the search.
- A member of staff will stay with the rest of the class, and all other available members of staff will conduct a thorough search of the school premises.

11.3. If the pupil has not been found after a thorough search, then the parents of the pupil will be notified.

11.4. If the parents have had no contact from the pupil, then the police will be contacted.

11.5. The missing pupil's teacher will fill in an incident form, describing all circumstances leading up to the pupil going missing.

11.6. If the missing pupil has an allocated social worker, is Cared for, or has any special educational needs and/or disabilities, then the appropriate personnel will be informed.

11.7. The **Headteacher** will take the appropriate action to ensure the pupil understands they must not leave the premises, and sanctions will be issued if deemed necessary.

11.8. Parents and any other agencies will be informed immediately when the pupil has been located.

11.9. The **Headteacher** or designated member of staff will carry out an investigation, and will draw a conclusion as to how the incident occurred.

## 12. Term-time leave

- 12.1. At **St Damian's RC Science College**, our aim is to prepare pupils for their future lives and careers. With this in mind, we require parents to observe the school holidays as prescribed.
- 12.2. Leave during term time will be authorised only in exceptional circumstances.
- 12.3. Any requests for leave during term time will be considered on an individual basis and the pupil's previous attendance record will be taken into account.
- 12.4. If term time leave is not granted, taking a pupil out of school will be recorded as an unauthorised absence and may attract sanctions such as a penalty notice.
- 12.5. Only the Headteacher or a member of staff acting on his behalf can authorise absences.

## 13. Religious observances

- 13.1. **St Damian's RC Science College** will take advice from local religious leaders of all faiths to establish the appropriate number of days required for religious festivals.
- 13.2. Parents must inform the school in advance if absences are required for days of religious observance.
- 13.3. The day(s) of absence must be exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.

## 14. Appointments

- 14.1. As far as possible, parents should attempt to book medical and dental appointments outside of school hours.
- 14.2. Where this is not possible, a note and appointment card should be sent to the school office FAO The Attendance Officer.
- 14.3. If the appointment requires the pupil to leave during the school day, the pupil must be signed out by a parent.
- 14.4. Pupils must attend school before and after the appointment wherever possible.
- 14.5. **St Damian's RC Science College** will not authorise a full day's absence for a medical appointment.

## 15. Rewarding good attendance

- 15.1. Excellent attendance and punctuality will be rewarded in the following ways:
  - Postcards home
  - Rewards raffle
  - Aspire points
  - Enrichment activities
- 15.2. School trips and events are a privilege. Where attendance drops below **96%**, these privileges may be taken away.
- 15.3. Attendance to the Year 11 prom requires **excellent** attendance.

## 16. Monitoring and review

- 16.1. **St Damian's RC Science College** monitors attendance and punctuality throughout the year.
- 16.2. **St Damian's RC Science College's** attendance target is **97%**.
- 16.3. Details of our absence levels can be found on our website/ on the notice board/ upon request from the office.
- 16.4. This policy will be reviewed **annually** by the **Headteacher** and the **Attendance Officer** and **Governing Board**
- 16.5. Any changes made to the policy will be communicated to all members of staff