



STREATHAM & CLAPHAM HIGH SCHOOL

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Person(s) responsible for this policy		Senior Deputy Head, Deputy Head(Pastoral), Deputy Head Prep, Registrar	
Last review by	A Aristidou	Review date	November 2022
Date of next review		September 2023	

Whole School Policy

At Streatham & Clapham High School, pupil attendance is critical to academic success and social integration. We ask parents to familiarise themselves with the GDST Statement on School Attendance and these policy guidelines and to help us promote attendance and punctuality standards, which are essential for an orderly school environment where all pupils can get the maximum benefit from their education. This policy applies to the whole school, including the EYFS.

Whilst our aim is that all students should be in school every day, we acknowledge that this is not always possible. We treat attendance rates below 95% as a serious cause of concern.

GDST Statement on School Attendance September 2022

Absence, whatever its cause, is detrimental to any pupil's academic, social and emotional development. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school, with a cumulative effect. Frequent or persistent absence can also indicate a pupil welfare issue.

Parents have a legal duty to ensure their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly. Parents can only allow their child to miss school if they are too ill to go in or they have advance permission from the school. The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 clarify that Heads may only grant leave of absence in exceptional circumstances. As is required by law, the school will inform the local authority of any pupil who fails to attend regularly or has been absent without the school's permission for a continuous period of 10 days or more. The local safeguarding partners will also be informed if absence amounts to a safeguarding concern.

To maximize our pupils' potential, the GDST is committed to ensuring pupils do not miss out on their education through poor attendance rates. We expect all GDST schools to at least meet the national attendance average, and school attendance rates are monitored accordingly. A member of SLT is expected to review and analyse attendance across the school as a whole regularly, following up on trends or patterns of concern, and reporting to the School Governing Board/GDST as required.

Class teachers and tutors are expected to monitor and review the attendance record of the pupils for whom they are responsible. The school must follow up on an individual attendance record below 90%, as well as noticeable patterns or sudden or unexplained absences.

Purposes of the Policy

- To ensure that we fully comply with legal requirements of recording attendance and monitoring all absences, both authorised and unauthorised.

- To ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to education in line with our School Aims and Mission Statement.
- To develop a partnership between school, pupils and parents to ensure we are all working toward the same common purpose of regular school attendance.
- To establish clear, easy-to-use systems that enable us to monitor absences and use this information to help promote full attendance.

For this document, the Attendance Officer refers to the Senior School; the Prep Head, Pastoral Leader, refers to the Prep School.

Key contacts

The senior leader responsible for attendance at the school is Kate Renshaw, Deputy Head (Pastoral). For day-to-day attendance matters, please contact your child's form tutor copying in the absence email address: absence@schs.gdst.net. For more detailed support with attendance, contact Mrs Jane Hayes, Head of Pastoral at the prep school or for the senior school, contact the relevant Head of House or the Attendance Officer, Mrs Andreani Aristidou.

School Guidelines for Parents

Planned Leave of Absence

Leave of absence can only be authorised by the Head and may only be permitted in exceptional circumstances. Parents should submit their request to the Head no later than three days before the date of absence. If an absence is authorised in advance, parents will be notified, and an absence note will not be required on return.

If a planned absence is not notified to the Head in advance, the leave of absence will be unauthorised and cannot be changed retrospectively.

Unplanned Leave of Absence

It is the parents and guardians' responsibility to telephone or email the school by 8.50 am on the first day of absence and to provide information regarding the pupil's illness or the reason for the absence. If insufficient information is provided, the school will investigate further.

If the school is not notified of a pupil's absence, a call will be made to parents and guardians, and the absence will be noted as unauthorised until contact has been made and a sufficient reason received.

If a pupil is absent for more than a day, parents and guardians must continue to contact the school daily until the pupil returns to school.

If an absence occurs, it is the responsibility of the pupil to make up any lost work. If an absence is planned, the pupil must approach individual staff members for guidance.

Reasons for Planned Absence

Medical and Dental Appointments

Routine visits to the dentist, opticians etc. should be arranged during school holidays or out-of-school hours. Authorisation for medical and dental appointments can be given in an emergency or other unavoidable circumstances.

Religious Observance

Absence can be authorised on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which a pupil's parents belong; an email should be sent in advance to the attendance officer.

Special Occasions

Exceptional occasions may be sanctioned through authorised absence. Such events might include a sibling's graduation or a family wedding. Attending sports events or concerts is not sufficient cause for authorisation.

Study Leave

Study leave may only be authorised during the official examination period for Upper Fifth and Upper Sixth. A letter is always sent to parents before study leave commences. Parents are asked to note the dates on which study leave begins carefully.

Although most pupils prefer to study at home during examination periods, study facilities are always available for those who wish to work in school. Authorisation for absence for studying will not be given for periods outside those indicated to parents.

Study leave is a privilege which may be withdrawn if a pupil seems unlikely to use the time profitably.

Reasons for Unplanned Absences

Illness

Parents and guardians are requested to inform the school on the first day if their daughter is ill.

Bereavement

It is helpful if we are informed of family bereavement so that we can offer pupils sympathetic support. Absence under such circumstances will, of course, be authorised.

Family/Domestic Problems

The following are unacceptable reasons for absence under the law: Looking after other children, minding the house, or shopping within school hours.

Returning to School

Sometimes a pupil who has been absent for some time finds it difficult to return. In such circumstances, the school will work with the pupil and parents to support reintegration.

Pupils with Individual Needs

Whilst good attendance is an expectation for all pupils at the school, we recognise that this may be a challenge for some pupils, including those with special educational needs or disabilities or those suffering from long-term medical conditions or mental health issues. When working with pupils and their parents, the school will allow for these circumstances and develop individualised support approaches that meet their specific needs where appropriate.

Persistent or Severe Absence

Where absence or a pattern of absence appears to be at risk of becoming problematic, the school will meet with the parents to discuss how to support the pupil and remove barriers to attendance where possible. This may include referrals to external services and other organisations. These actions will be regularly reviewed and stepped up if there is no improvement to the situation. Where a whole family response is appropriate, this is likely to include a voluntary early help assessment. Ultimately, if voluntary support is ineffective, the school will work with the local authority to implement more formal measures. Persistent or severe absence is always treated as a safeguarding risk.

SIXTH FORM Specific Guidance

Flexible day

With permission, Sixth formers have a flexible day, recognising their growing maturity and bridging the gap between formal schooling and post-18 study or work. They must attend school every day, arriving in time for morning registration and form time. They must sign in at reception before AM registration begins. They must attend all timetabled lessons but will be able to leave the school during their non-taught sessions by signing out at reception.

All regular appointments, driving lessons etc., must be scheduled for these times. Permission to miss taught classes will not be given unless there are exceptional circumstances. Any pupil who does not attend lessons or whose progress is not satisfactory will have the privilege of a flexible day removed. If a pupil cannot attend school, parents/careers should notify the school in the usual way.

Open Days

Sixth Form pupils are expected to visit Universities and Colleges during school holidays. However, a maximum of two Open Days may be attended during term time if appropriate letters requesting authorisation for absence are brought in.

Interviews

Sixth formers must, of course, attend interviews at Universities and Colleges at the times and on the dates allocated by the institutions. It is essential that they keep their Form Tutors and the Attendance Officer informed of these dates.

Work Experience

Sixth-Form pupils are encouraged to gain work experience during school holidays. In addition to this, there may be a period of work experience for specific year groups scheduled on the school calendar. Some sixth-form pupils may also be permitted to carry out work experience during times of the day when they have a study period. The Assistant Head (Sixth Form) must agree to this.

Punctuality

Pupils are expected to be always punctual. If a pupil is late for registration, they must sign in at reception and proceed to their form room if they arrive before 8.50 am. If they fail to sign in at reception, the school will assume they are absent, and contact will be made with a parent or guardian.

Lateness without reasonable cause will be deemed to be an unauthorised absence. Lateness after 9 am will be considered an absence and require an explanation from a parent or guardian.

Timings of the School Day and Registration

Senior School - The school day starts at 8.25 am. Pupils can enter the school from 7.30 am and should wait in the Madeleine Dring Hall until 8.15 am, where they will be supervised. Pupils can make their way to their form rooms from 8.15 am and should be in their form room by 8.20 am.

The school must take an attendance register twice a day: at the start of the morning session and once at the beginning of the afternoon session. The register shows whether the pupil is present, engaged in an approved educational activity off-site, or absent. The comment function on the register must always be used to give detail about a pupil's absence.

The register is taken at 08.25, and any pupil arriving after this time will be recorded as late (an L will be placed inside the absent symbol). If a pupil is late twice in one week without adequate reasons, they will need to attend a detention during breaktime.

If a pattern of lateness develops, the form tutor should contact the parents. If there is no improvement, the Head of House should be informed, and a decision should be taken as to whether parents should be contacted.

Prep. School

The school day starts at 8.30 am for Years 1-6 and 8.40 am for Nursery and Reception. The playground gate is open from 8.15 am until 8.30 am. After this time, pupils need to enter through reception.

The register closes at 9 am, and any pupil arriving before this time (but after the class has been registered) will be recorded as late before the register closes (an L will be placed inside the absent symbol).

If a pattern of lateness develops, the class teacher should contact the parents. If there is no improvement, the Head of Prep should be informed, and a decision should be taken as to whether parents should be contacted.

Attendance

The register must show whether the absence was authorised or unauthorised if a pupil is absent. It is the school's decision whether an absence is authorised or unauthorised.

Authorised absence is where the school has either given approval for a pupil to be away or accepted an explanation offered afterwards as satisfactory justification for absence. This register code and a comment must be recorded on SIMS as soon as possible. It can be overridden later if circumstances change, but a comment should be entered to explain this.

All other absences must be treated as **unauthorised**.

If children and young people's services are involved with the family, they will be informed of the unauthorised absence.

If a child is absent for a continuous period of 5 days and we have been unable to contact the parents and guardians, the Education Welfare Officer at the LA will be informed.

Senior School: The attendance register is checked every week, and any unauthorised absences are reviewed. The Attendance Officer will contact parents and guardians by phone or email to discuss unauthorised absences.

Prep. School – Absence data is reported to parents on the end-of-year report. During the year, teachers report any consistent absence or concerns to the Head of Prep., who speaks to the relevant parents.

Absence causing concern

Unauthorised absences of more than three days in a term are a cause for concern, and the Attendance Officer/Prep Head will phone home.

If there is a pattern of occasional absence developing, e.g., more than six days in a term (even when authorised through illness, appointments etc.), the Attendance Officer/Prep Head should be informed, and a decision will be made as to whether a letter should be sent to parents.

If a pupil is absent for two weeks or more, this is deemed a long absence—the Attendance Officer/Head of Prep. Consultation with colleagues will monitor the situation and keep in regular contact with the parents. The school will be mindful of forced marriage and FGM implications when considering requests for absence.

Completing the Register

Senior School

Attendance is taken electronically using SIMS in all form periods and lessons. When there is difficulty accessing SIMS during form periods, the form tutor should ask another colleague to try to access their form's register. If this is not successful, the office should be informed of absent pupils. Cover and supply staff will access registers electronically, searching for the relevant form tutor or class teacher.

The relevant entry codes for presence, absence etc., can be entered using the keyboard or accessed by right-clicking in the box and selecting by left-clicking.

If the Form tutor believes the pupil is at school but has not seen them, they should enter an N and inform the Attendance Officer.

If a parent has sent an explanatory note for a child's absence, this should be sent to the Attendance Officer so the appropriate entry can be amended.

The registers will be taken at 8.25 am and during PM registration at 2.05 pm. Staff should only enter *present or N*. An *L* for late should only be entered if the pupil arrived after the registration period has ended. The Attendance Officer will enter any absences that have already been agreed upon, e.g., medical appointments, co-curricular activities, interviews or educated off-site. These should only be amended if the pupil is present.

Prep. School

The Prep uses Sims or paper registers as a backup. The registers will be taken between 8.30 am and 8.40 am and 1.25 pm and 1.50 pm. Any paper copy will be added to Sims by the administration staff.

Codes to specify: present, lateness and authorised absence are the only codes to be entered by the form tutor.

The principal entry codes are explained at the end of this document. The office will amend codes from those given above when a pupil signs in at reception or parents are contacted.

A register is collected from and returned to the admin office if electronic registration is unavailable. If a parent has sent an explanatory note for a pupil's absence, this should be sent to the office so the appropriate entry can be amended.

Absence

This table shows the types of reasons pupils may be absent. The office will enter these codes; if a pupil is absent, the Form Tutor should enter an N.

Reason for Absence	Comments	Recording
Illness	Where parents have advised that an absence is due to illness it is recorded as an authorised absence	I
Medical and dental appointments	Parents are encouraged to make appointments outside of school hours but an absence for a medical or dental appointment is an authorised absence. If the authenticity of the appointment is in doubt, refer to the Pastoral deputy who can investigate the absence	M

	further. Parents should give at least 48 hours' notice for medical appointments.	
Days of religious observance	Parents should give advance notice.	R
Interviews for a school (including entrance examinations)	Parents should give advance notice and proof of the appointment.	J
Family holidays during term time	<p>Parents should not normally take pupils on holidays in term time. All requests must be made in writing to the Head or Prep Head in the case of Prep School pupils. Parents should give at least one week's notice.</p> <p>The Head/Prep Head will consider each request for holiday absence on an individual basis, considering of the age of the child; the time of year proposed for the trip; its nature; the overall attendance pattern of the pupil; the child's stage of education and progress. If the time is agreed the information will be passed to the attendance officer.</p> <p>The school will only, exceptionally, agree to an absence of more than 10 school days in a school year (and does not regard 10 days as the norm).</p> <p>If the school does not agree to the absence and the pupil goes on holiday, the absence is unauthorised. If parents keep a child away for longer than was agreed, any extra time is recorded as unauthorised.</p>	H G if not authorised
Exclusion	Absence due to a pupil being excluded for a fixed term is an authorised absence	E
Family time	The school will respond sensitively to requests to attend weddings, funerals etc. and will use discretion to authorise such absence.	C if authorised
Special occasions or other authorised circumstances	The Head will consider each request individually, considering the nature of the event, its frequency whether the parent gave advance notice and the pupil's overall attendance pattern.	C if authorised
Public performances	<p>Parents must gain a licence from the local authority for pupils to take part in a public performance. The Head will consider each request individually taking into account the age of the child; the time of year, the overall attendance pattern of the pupil, and the child's stage of education and progress.</p> <p>Agreed participation is an authorised absence.</p>	C if authorised
Pupil not on roll	If electronic attendance registers require the school to make an entry for the days before the pupil joins the school, staff should use <u>Attendance Code Z (Pupil not yet on roll)</u> . Code Z cannot be used once the pupil has joined the school.	Z
Off-site educational activity	Attending an off-site educational activity that has been approved by the school and supervised by someone authorised by the school.	B

Absence Codes

Code	Meaning
/	Present morning session
\	Present afternoon session
U	Late (after register closed)
B	Educated Off Site
C	Authorised Circumstances
D	Dual registered at another school
E	Excluded
G	Family Holiday (unauthorised)
H	Family Holiday (authorised)
I	Illness
J	Interview
L	Late (before register closed)
M	Medical/ dental
N	No reason yet provided for absence
O	Unauthorised circumstances
P	Approved educational activity (sport)
Q	In school but not in class (LAMDA, Music)
R	Religious Observance
S	Study Leave
V	Educational Visit
X	Non-compulsory school age pupil not required to be in school
Y	Enforced closure
Z	Pupil not on roll
#	Holiday for all
*	Not on roll
-	All should attend/No mark recorded

Deleting Pupils from Registers

Note: 'removing' pupils from the register in the statutory sense does not mean deleting their records. On the SIMS system, deleted pupils should be flagged as no longer required to attend, usually by marking them as having left. Care needs to be taken in marking a pupil as having left, as any attendance record after that is deleted.

Deletions other than those listed below are illegal and could result in court proceedings under a breach of Regulations against the Trust and/or the person responsible for such an unauthorised deletion.

Compulsory school-age children may only be removed from admissions and attendance registers in the following circumstances:

- completion of compulsory education;
- permanent exclusion: but only when the appeal process has been concluded, or the time limit for appealing has expired, and the pupil has taken up a place elsewhere. The school must inform the Local Authority of the permanent exclusion on the day it is confirmed;
- death of the pupil (on receipt of official notification of the death);
- transfer between schools: the school will remove pupils from the school registers from the day they are expected to start at the new school;

- a pupil is withdrawn to be educated outside the school system;
- a medical condition prevents their attendance and return to school before completing compulsory schooling;
- in custody for more than four months, and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil will return to school at the end of that period;
- 20 days continuous unauthorised absence and both the Local Authority and school have tried to locate the pupil, and the school does not have reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend the school because of sickness or unavoidable cause;
- failure to attend school within ten days following a period of at least ten days' authorised absence after both the school and the Local Authority have tried to locate the pupil;
- left the school but did not know where he/she has gone after the school, and the Local Authority tried to locate the pupil.

In exceptional circumstances, a pupil may attend an independent school under the terms of a School Attendance Order. In such a case, the pupil may be deleted from admissions and attendance registers if another school on a School Attendance Order replaces the school or the local authority revokes the School Attendance Order. This, however, is highly unlikely, and Trust Office should be consulted in such circumstances.

Non-compulsory school-age children can only lawfully be deleted in the following circumstances:

- left the school;
- 20 school-days continuous absence without good reason;
- death of the pupil;
- permanent exclusion; or
- The child admitted to the nursery is not transferring to the reception class.

Informing the Local Authority

Except for pupils subject to a School Attendance Order and pupils with special needs for whom the Local Authority has made arrangements, there is no requirement for Local Authority approval of deletions from registers. The regulations require schools to notify local authorities of deletions in the following circumstances:

- the pupil has been permanently excluded;
- the school medical officer or equivalent has certified that the pupil has a medical condition and is unlikely to return;
- the pupil is in custody;
- the pupil is leaving a non-maintained school and is not known to have registered at another school; and
- the school has received written notification that the pupil will be educated outside the school system.

In these cases, the Local Authority should be informed of the pupil's full name, their parents' address, and the grounds for deletion. The Local Authority should be informed of potential deletions as soon as SCHS become aware that they may be made; we will not, for example, wait for the completion of an appeal against permanent exclusion or for written confirmation that the parents intend to home educate, although great care should be taken not to inflame difficult situations. In any event, the local authority should be informed before the deletion is made, copying the letter informing the local authority of the impending deletion to the pupil's parents as a courtesy and to ensure that they know that the deletion will take place when it will happen.

Record Keeping

All attendance data is recorded in SIMS. The school administrative team will update and ensure all information is entered and accurate. The SIMS database is backed-up centrally.

The original entry and the amendment must be distinguishable whenever a change is made to a register. Every amendment to the admission register and the attendance register must include the following:

- the original entry
- the amended entry
- the reason for the amendment
- the date on which the amendment was made
- the name and position of the person who made the amendment.

At the end of each school year, “historical” copies of the admissions and attendance registers will be created via SIMS, which must show all of the information recorded that year. These copies will be stored electronically for a minimum of 7 years from the date the pupil left the school and backed up as part of the school’s normal disaster recovery routine.