



# DE LA SALLE SCHOOL

## ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Status	Internal
Responsible Governors' Committee	Behaviour and Welfare
Responsible Person	Deputy Headteacher
Ratified Date	For Committee 17 <sup>th</sup> May 2017
Review Date	



## DE LA SALLE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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### Equality statement

The Governors and staff are committed to providing the full range of opportunities for all students regardless of gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background and to take full advantage of the educational opportunities available to them at De La Salle School. All students have access to the curriculum and the right to a learning environment which dispels ignorance, prejudice or stereotyping. School aims to encourage students to achieve excellent levels of Attendance and Punctuality.

Crucial to our improvement of standards in education and ensuring all pupils can fulfil their potential is something we take for granted and so do not stress enough.

### **Pupils need to attend school regularly to benefit from their education.**

Government research shows that missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind and studies show that children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

Local authorities and all schools have legal powers to use parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices to address poor attendance and behaviour in school. In addition to using these powers, local authorities and schools can develop other practices to improve attendance.

Local authorities, police constables, school governing bodies, school head teachers (and staff authorised by the head) and teachers-in-charge of pupil referral units are required by law to have regard to the relevant parts of this guidance when carrying out their functions in relation to parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices.

This extract relates to and replaces previous guidance on *Ensuring Children's Right to Education, and statutory guidance on Education-related parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices* published in September 2007.

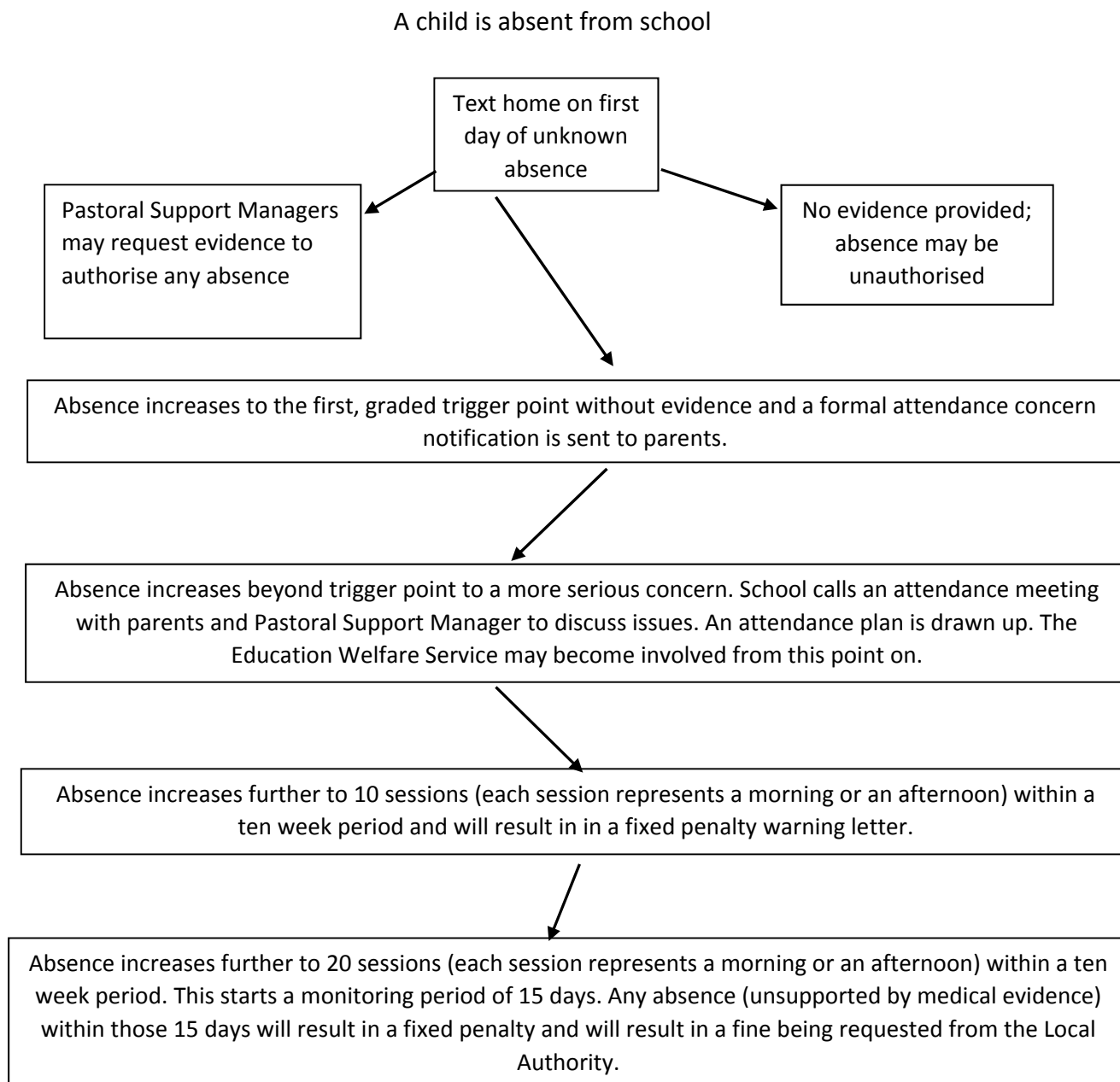
The government expects schools and local authorities to:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every pupil has access to full-time education to which they are entitled;
- act early to address patterns of absence.
  
- Parents to perform their legal duty by ensuring their children of compulsory school age who are registered at school attend regularly.
- All pupils to be punctual to their lessons.

## Rights and Responsibilities

Parents are responsible for ensuring that their child attends school regularly and punctually, properly dressed and equipped and in a fit condition to learn.

School will work closely with Parents/Carers if attendance and/or punctuality become a cause for concern. We will utilise a graded response to school absence as shown on page 3.



## Persistent Absenteeism (PA)

From September 2015 the government set the persistent absence (PA) threshold at 10% of a pupil's possible attendance. This means that any student who has 10% absence or above (90% attendance or below) fall into this category. The government do not distinguish between absence that is **authorised** or **unauthorised**. Schools are judged on the number of PA pupils they have in school and are expected to investigate, support and challenge absence that is approaching or meets the above threshold.

If a student is absent for 3 consecutive days and no message has been received then a home visit is done by the Educational Welfare officer or the Pastoral Support Manager.

For each student we expect a minimum attendance level of 95% to enable him or her to reach maximum academic achievement. Pupils falling below 95% will follow the pathway outlined above, up to and including a fixed penalty notice.

### **The school day**

The school opens to pupils at 7:45am

Pupils should be in their form room by 8:20am ready for the register to be taken.

The morning register is recorded at 8:30am and 'saved' ASAP after this time.

Pupils entering school after 8:30am are recorded as late 'L' on the register. They must now enter through the schools reception and must sign in at the front desk. Pupils must record the time they arrive and the reason why they are late.

If a pupil arrives late due to attending a medical appointment, they must provide evidence of the appointment to the reception staff in the form of an appointment card or hospital letter in order for the register to be marked appropriately.

On their designated assembly day students must not go to form they should instead assemble in the courtyard by 8.30am when the registers will be recorded by form tutors.

The registers close at 9.30am. Students arriving after this time without a valid reason will be recorded as 'U', this is counted as an unauthorised absence even though the pupil is in school.

Students arriving after 9:30am with a valid reason e.g. medical appointment must show the reception supporting evidence so that the register can be marked appropriately.

The afternoon register is recorded at the start of lesson 5 (2.00pm).

### **Consequences for punctuality issues**

- Any students arriving late for school on two occasions in a week will be given an after school detention.
- If a student develops patterns of lateness they be placed on an 'Attendance and Punctuality Report' card by the Progress Leader for their year group.

### **Safeguarding absent pupils**

School operates a first day response system; this means parents are expected to contact school on the first day of any absence to explain why their child is not in school by phone or 'Parentmail'.

Unexplained absences will be followed up with a text or a phone call from pastoral staff.

For safeguarding reasons school will attempt to contact parents until we receive a response, this may also involve a home visit to ascertain the reason for the absence.

When a child returns to school following an absence they must bring a note in to school explaining the reason for the absence. The note must be signed and dated by their parent. Parents must provide a note for every absence even if contact has been made during the absence. Notes should be handed in at the Reception, with any associated medical evidence attached.

## **Medical appointments**

Only urgent or unavoidable medical appointments should be made during school time. Routine dental checks or medical appointments should be made outside school time whenever possible. Parents must provide evidence of appointments in the form of medical appointment cards or letters.

## **Medical Evidence**

When pupils have a high incidence of absence parents may be requested to provide medical evidence to support the absence. If medical evidence has been requested and that evidence has not been provided by the parent, the absence will be unauthorised by school.

Acceptable medical evidence can be:

- Sight of prescription medicine or prescription counterpart (copy on right of prescription)
- Signed and dated medical appointment card
- A copy of an Orthodontist's or hospital letter

Where children miss out on education without permission the Local Authority is required by law to take appropriate action. Please help us to support you by giving school as much information about any known absence or medical condition that could adversely affect attendance.

## **Pupils educated off site**

Pastoral Support Managers are responsible for monitoring the attendance of pupil's who are educated offsite by close liaison with the offsite education provider. Pupils will be marked with the appropriate registration code to explain the education provision being accessed.

## **Leave of Absence in Term Time (including holidays)**

**The Headteacher will consider applications for 'leave of absence' during term time in 'exceptional circumstances'. School cannot authorise time off for family holidays and Parents do not have the right to take their child out of school for such holidays.**

Parents must apply for leave of absence in writing using a 'Leave of Absence Request Form' (available on the website) and must attach any evidence for the school to take into consideration. The application must be submitted well in advance of the absence. The form should be returned to the child's Pastoral Support Manager.

The Headteacher or delegated lead will decide if the Leave will be granted and how many days will be authorised. Parents will be notified in writing of the decision within two weeks of the decision.

**If the Headteacher or delegated lead does not grant an application for leave of absence and parents decide to take the leave anyway, the absence will be unauthorised.**

Leave of absence cannot be authorised retrospectively. If a child is removed from school for a period of leave of absence without the school being informed the absence will be automatically unauthorised.

**Unauthorised holidays during term time may lead to Penalty Notice fines. Penalty Notice Fines can be issued to each parent for every child concerned.**

## Penalty Notices

The school follows the Local Authority Code of Conduct for penalty notices. Penalty notices are fines of £60/£120 imposed on parents. They are an alternative to the prosecution of parents for failing to ensure that their child of compulsory school age regularly attends the school where they are registered or at a place where alternative provision is provided. More information on penalty notice fines can be found at <https://www.sthelens.gov.uk/schools-education/education-welfare-service/legal-sanctions-for-unauthorised-school-absence>

## Authorised and unauthorised absence

The law states that a pupil is required to attend regularly at the school where they are a registered pupil. The school is obliged by law to differentiate between authorised and unauthorised absence. A letter or telephone message from a parent does not in itself authorise an absence. Only the school's acceptance of the explanation offered by the letter/message authorises the absence.

### Examples of absences from school that would be authorised (providing evidence may be necessary)

- Sickness
- Unavoidable medical/dental appointments
- Days of religious observance
- Exceptional family circumstances, such as bereavement
- Students' transport to and from school is affected and school is not within walking distance.

### Absences from school that will NOT be authorised are:

- Shopping
- Birthdays
- Minding the house/waiting for deliveries or workmen
- Family holidays that are not agreed prior to departure

The Head teacher will not authorise holiday requests that are unreasonable within this context. For your child's sake we ask you, therefore, not to arrange a holiday to take place within term-time at De la Salle.

## Safeguarding and Attendance

School considers safeguarding of all its students as one of its critical roles. Completion of registers and initiating first day response procedures for unexplained absence in timely manner is a priority to ensure students' whereabouts are known on a daily basis.

To ensure that pupils remain on the premises during the day and to safeguard our most vulnerable pupils De la Salle expects that 'lesson monitor' registers are completed by teaching staff at the start of every lesson. This enables school to spot students who may be at risk or, may be avoiding certain lessons and take steps to locate or safeguard them as soon as possible.

## Children Missing from Education (CME)

### When a pupil leaves with notice the school will:

- Agree with parent the last day the pupil will be attending the school.
- Request updated telephone numbers, e mail and address.
- Ask if the pupil has been allocated a place at a new school and if so collect the details.
- If a new school has been allocated contact the school to agree the date the pupil will be starting.

- If it cannot be established that the pupil will be attending the named / any school, De La Salle follows the LA CME procedures.

**Where a pupil leaves without advance notice or their destination is unknown, the school will:**

- If the pupil or family is known to Social Care we will inform the named social worker
- Check possible whereabouts with staff
- Contact parents using last known number or e mail
- Contact any emergency contacts held for the pupil
- Make a home visit to the last known address
- Check with neighbours and any known friends
- Contact any other agencies known to be involved with the child
- If the pupil is statemented or has SEN check with SEN services
- Contact the last known school of any siblings
- Ask the pupil's friends and their parents if they are aware of the pupil's whereabouts
- Check any social media sites e.g. Facebook.

If the pupil is still not located school will refer to the Safeguarding Contact Centre. This will enable the LA to make further enquires, as appropriate, to try and locate the pupil. School may also inform the Police.

The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006 state that schools are expected to make reasonable enquires to find the whereabouts of a missing pupil.

**De la Salle Strategies for Promoting Good Attendance**

1. School will offer an environment in which students feel valued and welcomed. The school ethos must demonstrate that students feel that their presence in school is important, that they will be missed when they are absent/late and follow up action will be taken.
2. A varied and flexible curriculum will be offered to all students. Every effort will be made to ensure that learning tasks are matched to student's needs.
3. Attendance data will be regularly collected and analysed in order to help identify patterns, set targets, correlate attendance with achievements and progress and support and inform policy/practice.
4. Attendance display on the plasma screens will be updated every half term.
5. Form tutors and Progress Leaders are given attendance percentages and other pastoral data every two weeks to check attendance patterns and to set targets.
6. Good attendance awards will be presented at the end of each term.
7. Students whose attendance is a cause for concern will be set targets for improvement and complete attendance action plans. The year team and form tutor will monitor and review these targets.
8. Parents will be reminded regularly via letters, texts, on the school website and at various meetings of the importance of good attendance.

9. The Deputy Head will make a report to the Governors at least three times a year on attendance matters.
10. The pastoral year teams will, when appropriate, liaise with other agencies – Educational Psychology Service, Social Services, and other agencies – when this may serve to support and assist students who are experiencing attendance difficulties.
11. The year teams will have regular, weekly attendance meetings with meetings with the Reception Staff, Attendance Reporting Officer and Attendance Lead. At these meetings we will decide on which cases to refer to our EWS officer.
12. Regular visits will be made to feeder primary schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible transition to secondary school. Discussions with primary school teachers will seek to identify those students who may require extra support during the process.
13. De La Salle will support students through all transitions including primary to secondary, from one key stage to another and in-year transfer.

### **Legislation links**

This policy should be read in conjunction with ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education 2014’ and ‘Keeping Children Safe in Education: information for all school and college staff’.

This attendance policy adheres to current government legislation and guidance. For further information please refer to: [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2010
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2011
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2013
- The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2016
- The Education Act 2002
- The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999
- The Changing of School Session Times (England) (Revocation) Regulations 2011
- The Education and Inspections Act 2006

### **Other relevant government guidance**

- Parental responsibility measures for school attendance and behaviour
- Children missing education